Wi$e Up Teleconference Call
September 30, 2005
Facing a Financial Crisis
Opening Remarks by Shinae Chun, Director, Women’s Bureau and
Mason Bishop, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training
Administration

Coordinator Good morning and good afternoon and thank you all for holding.
I’d like to remind all parties that your lines have been placed in a
listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today’s
conference call. The call is also being recorded. If anyone has any
objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to
turn the call over to Ms. Shinae Chun. Thank you, ma’am, you
may begin.

S. Chun Thank you. Welcome to the 16th Wi$e Up teleconference call.
This event is being co-sponsored with the Department of Labor
Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. My name is
Shinae Chun, Director of the Women’s Bureau, and thank you all
for participating today.

You know, when we first chose the topic for today’s call, Facing a
Financial Crisis, little did we know how timely it would turn out to
be. As the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, has stated, “Our hearts
go out to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.” Earlier this month,
she announced that the Department of Labor has and would
continue to reach out to workers dislocated by the hurricane with
immediate income support through temporary jobs, unemployment insurance and disaster unemployment assistance. You will be hearing more about this in a moment.

After hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Women’s Bureau decided to dedicate its September WiSe Up teleconference call to provide information that might help both the people affected by the hurricane and service providers who are assisting them. So we have invited an excellent group of speakers today from the American Red Cross and the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, which is based in New Orleans, and the National Endowment for Financial Education in Colorado. I can’t tell you how much we appreciate having experts take the time to address us today, and I would really like to thank the speakers for making yourselves available to us.

Now I would like to introduce Mason Bishop. Mr. Bishop is a Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration here at the Department of Labor. He has agreed to join us to talk about what the Department and ETA are doing to help workers affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Welcome, Mason.
Thanks, Shinae. I appreciate the opportunity of being able to describe a number of the things we’re doing, and I’ll try to be as succinct and to the point as possible. There’s been a lot happening in this area.

Let me first say that one of the things we’ve been doing is obviously working very closely with the governors from Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas in terms of getting resources into those states to help individuals affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Our primary objective has been to be able to provide, in the short term, temporary income support and supportive services to individuals affected by the hurricane, with our long-term goal being helping people transition back into employment and meaningful careers. We’ve been assisting also states that are hosting evacuees as well, and so I’ll go ahead and give you some examples of what we’ve been doing.

The first thing we’ve done is Secretary Chao has awarded up to $191 million to the states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, with about $62 million available initially to help individuals with employment and training assistance as well as allow those states to create temporary jobs whereby people can enter into temporary jobs, actually earn a paycheck and help with disaster...
recovery, cleanup, humanitarian assistance and other things. We also have awarded $12 million to four additional states – Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina – initially to help provide services as host states to evacuees in those states, and they’re states with large numbers of evacuees. Again, these monies are there to help provide employment and training services as well as temporary jobs.

We also have given out, in order to specifically train workers in community colleges in the Gulf state area, again Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, we’ve awarded another $12 million for specific training whereby people can enter community colleges and begin training in construction, health care, energy, transportation, other industries where there’s going to be jobs to help with the rebuild.

We’ve spent a lot of time providing assistance to the Gulf States regarding their unemployment insurance and disaster unemployment assistance systems and assuring that they have the funds and the assistance available to be able to meet the needs of all the individuals who are calling in and need temporary income support. So that’s been a major effort that we’ve done.
And then finally, we have again been really trying to help connect employers who want to hire individuals affected by the hurricane, either within the Gulf coast region or in evacuee host states. And so we set up a Katrina job site. You can access that off of America’s Job Bank at www.ajb.org. And on our Katrina recovery job site employers can post jobs, individuals can post their resume or look for work and available opportunities. And in addition, our Business Relations Group that’s within the Employment and Training Administration has really been working as a broker between states and employers in terms of trying to get businesses linked up with available workers. And we’ve been supporting states as they host job fairs and the like.

I also want to point everyone to a toll free number that the Department has set up. It’s 1-866-4-USA-DOL, so that’s 1-866-4-USA-DOL where individuals can call and if they’re looking for the One-Stop Career Center nearest them, if they’re looking for referrals to services and other things, they can receive it through there.

And then finally, the Secretary will be announcing a number of other initiatives targeted to different kinds of individuals and groups of people who need specialized assistance. We’ll be
announcing, we’ve been doing some service interventions and delivery around individuals with disabilities and trying to help provide more intensive services there and some other things.

So again, Shinae, thanks for the opportunity, and we’ll have folks on the phone to answer questions later in the call.

J. Walstedt Thank you very much, Mr. Bishop. Jenny, would you now like to introduce Meloni?