

# Enterprise Ledger

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Phone 347-9533

## Country tunes into Coffee County

By **Kerry Brock**  
*Ledger City Editor*

Courtesy of a satellite uplink, hundreds of health care professionals across the country got a bird's eye view of a program originating in Coffee County.

Some 225 men and women crowded into the Coffee County Health Department Wednesday, while hundreds more across the country were connected via the information superhighway as a home health care training session took place.

The Southeast Alabama Home Health Training Center broadcasted its first live satellite teleconference for home health aides, personal care attendants, and homemakers to almost 500 viewers across the United States. The live conference originated from the Coffee County Health Department's studio on highway 167 North by a state-of-the-art uplink mobile truck to satellites stationed across the country.

The teleconference was scheduled Wednesday as part of National Public Health Week, which runs April 3-9.

Several speakers gave presentations on various issues surrounding public health care. Guests on the show included: Betty Ford, R.N., director of the Alabama Department of nursing for the northwest region of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH); Charlotte Crysel, director of infection control with ADPH; John Wibel, general counsel for ADPH; Enterprise Police Corporal Steve Russell; and Sandra Wood, personnel director for ADPH.

The program was available to all counties in the state and to others throughout the country. Some 485 participants from Alabama, Utah, Arkansas, Nebraska, and Kansas signed on for this first-ever teleconference.

Ann Edwards, public relations representative for ADPH, said the entire department is excited about the future possibilities this teleconference technology presents. She said the broadcast allows them to simultaneously train state health employees.

"We can train the whole state and other states in one shot," Edwards said. "The economical savings in this project can be phenomenal. Before this came about, we had to pay employees to travel to the training site and then pay them a per diem rate—all of those costs add up. Now participants are charged just \$10 per person to be registered for the program."

Edwards said the sessions will be taped for future use in training new employees.

Participants had an opportunity to interact with the panelists using a toll-free number. Questions broaching a wide-range of topics were answered live by the panelists. Each participant will receive a Certificate of Continuing Education.

Registration for the broadcast was open to county and state agencies as well as private health organizations. When registration was completed, the participating agency was given the satellite coordinates which allows them to link their receiver into the program.

Visitors viewing the broadcast at the



Ledger/Kerry Brock

Mack Carmack, John Wibel, Sandra Wood, Corporal Steve Russell, and Janice McIntosh were panelists for a public health week teleconference viewed live by hundreds of health care professionals across the country.

Coffee County Health Department complex included Ron Scott, executive director of the Alabama Association of Home Health Agencies and his assistant Janice Charlesworth; and Dr. Don Williamson, the Alabama State

Health Officer.

Future teleconferences are scheduled for June 15, Aug. 24, Sept. 21, Oct. 26, and Dec. 14. The topic for the June conference will be "Rehabilitation in Home Health."

For more information pertaining to the live broadcasts contact the Southeast Alabama Home Health Training Center at P.O. Box 1316, Enterprise, Ala. 36331 or Fax (334) 347-7104.