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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

Monster storms don't have to shut down work Guide to "Emergency Telecommuting" keeps workers on the job

Pittsburgh, PA – February 12, 2010 -- Storms like the unprecedented blast that knocked out power, roads, and transit lines this past week haven't shut down the workplace for everyone. Even when workers can't get to the office, the workplace can be extended to home, allowing businesses to maintain operations and productivity.

"Getting work done is more about process and less about the place," said workplace consultant, Debra Dinnocenzo, president of VirtualWorks!, a training and consulting firm that specializes in the virtual workplace. "Planning ahead for situations like the recent weather crisis is a wise strategy. In reality, however, hundreds of thousands of workers are accidental telecommuters this week, without the best preparation."

To help organizations and workers face the challenges of telecommuting caused by emergencies like storms, flu outbreaks, or terrorism threats, VirtualWorks! has released the e-book, "Emergency Telecommuting," (www.emergencytelecommuting.com) with guidelines for working effectively from home. These guidelines include the following tips for teleworkers:

- Identify your best available communication methods – phone, e-mail, text, Internet. Which of these are accessible for keeping in touch with co-workers, clients, and necessary information systems?
- Determine the best available location for working productively. In a state of emergency, schools are closed and finding available quiet space at home may be a challenge. Choose a location that's conducive to productive work, phone conversations, teleconferences, and Internet access. Sometimes it's necessary to find an alternative location close to home, such as a cafe or library, where these requirements are better met.

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- When working from home while family members are there, it's important to set 'ground rules' about interruptions and distractions. This is a challenge with young children, but necessary when work must be done.
- Focus on the tasks that are most critical AND can best be accomplished while telecommuting. Tackling writing projects, e-mail, and phone calls are compatible with the circumstances most teleworkers face in working remotely.
- Keep in frequent touch with team members, clients, partners, and colleagues. This is especially true of work associates in areas not affected by the current emergency situation. For some people, where the roads are open or the sun is shining, it's just another normal work day. Being available and responsive is important to keep in mind.

Dinnocenzo believes that telecommuting has become more commonly accepted since both organizations and workers see the benefits. "During times of crisis we realize that even though roads and offices are closed, work can still get done. Teleworking is a powerful tool for business continuity. We've seen the advantages of it on many fronts during this current blizzard."

For additional information and interviews, contact:

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VirtualWorks! (www.virtualworkswell.com) specializes in the virtual workplace, offering training and consulting on telecommuting, virtual teams, and work-life balance in the digital age. Founded in 1990 by company president Debra A. Dinnocenzo, the firm is based near Pittsburgh, PA and works with organizations across a wide range of industries. Ms. Dinnocenzo is a nationally recognized expert and speaker on the evolving virtual workplace. She is the author of numerous books, including "101 Tips for Telecommuters," "How to Lead from a Distance," and "Working Too Much Can Make You Grumpy," as well as many e-books, including the newly released, "Emergency Telecommuting."

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