

Business News

Make Working In Winter A *Virtual* Breeze

(NAPSA)—Missed workdays caused by winter weather don't have to snowball into lost wages—or profits. Over 40 percent of today's companies have adopted some type of telecommuting policy and technology. Many of the businesses use the technology to let snowed-in employees telecommute to the office.

WorldCom Conferencing, an industry leader in conferencing services, offers the following tips for people who are new to telecommuting:

- **Have a telecommuting plan down cold**—Make sure your home-office has the proper equipment to telecommute (PC with modem, fax, etc.) and the proper computer applications (word processor, e-mail, etc.). Keep a list of company employee and client phone numbers handy. Also, it's a good idea to always carry duplicates of important company documents in your briefcase in case you're unexpectedly snowed in.

- **Don't give your fellow employees the cold shoulder**—When you telecommute, it's important to check-in to your workplace regularly, by phone or e-mail. Stay connected with your immediate supervisor and team members. Set up a "to do" list and report on progress at mutually agreed upon intervals. Don't forget to check-out at the end of the day.

- **Don't let a winter storm blow your plans**—If you have a presentation the day you're snowed in, a Web conference may "wow" your client. Hundreds of people can view a presentation at once or collaborate on a docu-



Workers who telecommute can put the freeze on driving to the office in treacherous winter weather.

ment in real-time while discussing it on a separate audio conference.

- **No need for staff meetings to stall, just because your car did**—If you have a staff meeting planned, or want to organize a virtual one, there are services that will set up audio conferences—some do it in less than 20 minutes. Even if there is no staff meeting planned, it's a good way to touch base with everyone on your team.

- **Don't forget to chill**—Be sure to take a break every now and then. While enjoying a quick lunch or even shoveling the driveway, let calls go to voice mail. Just be sure to return the calls in a timely fashion.

- **It doesn't take frostbite to be a virtual worker**—If you've enjoyed your day of working from home, and your company doesn't have a telecommuting policy, suggest one.

For more information, visit www.worldcom.com/conferencing.