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March 22, 2010

Job Training Partnership with Microsoft Reaches More Than 16,000 Georgians

ATLANTA – Microsoft Elevate America, a public-private partnership providing free technology training to Georgia's displaced workers, has distributed more than 16,000 computer training vouchers and more are available to those seeking updated computer skills.

"I'm thrilled that so many people have taken advantage of this great opportunity to gain education and skills necessary for job success," said Governor Perdue. "I hope everyone who needs to learn or refresh their technology skills applies for this voucher and completes the course."

Microsoft partnered with the Governor's Office of Workforce Development to distribute a total of 30,000 training vouchers through on-line applications via its Georgia Work Ready, participating WIA One Stops and Good Will Centers across the state. Courses range from basic technology literacy to intermediate and advanced level technology skills training. A portion of the vouchers are being issued to Georgia residents for Microsoft Certification Exams, all at no cost to the recipient.

To date, Georgians have received 12,680 vouchers via the on-line process and 4,154 have been distributed through the job centers. Voucher recipients have until April 22, 2010 to use them for Microsoft Windows and Office online training, Microsoft Business Certification Exams and advanced technical professional level online training.

Vouchers are still available to Georgia residents. They are available online through the Georgia Work Ready Web site – www.gaworkready.org – and through participating Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One Stop Centers and select Goodwill locations.

- Each training voucher is redeemable for free online training in Microsoft Windows, or one of the programs in the Microsoft Office suite.
- Each certification exam voucher is redeemable for a Microsoft Business Certification Exam.
- Advanced technical professional level vouchers are redeemable for free online training for individuals in technical professional career tracks in areas such as web development or database management.

In its role as Microsoft's "designated partner" for administration of Elevate America in the state, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development is responsible for the overall distribution program. Vouchers will be available to citizens across the state on a first-come, first-served basis through April 22. Individuals must activate their vouchers for training and complete certification exams by that date.

Microsoft Elevate America is expected to provide up to 1 million vouchers nationwide for Microsoft e-Learning courses and select Microsoft certification exams at no or low cost to recipients. The program is designed to provide technology training for up to 2 million people during the next three years. Georgia's participation in the program makes it the tenth state to take part in this groundbreaking initiative.

For additional information regarding the Microsoft vouchers and locations where citizens can obtain a voucher in Georgia, please visit www.gaworkready.org within the "Job Seeker" portion of the site.