Foundation Funded WiFi2Go Mobile Hotspots a Hit With Library Patrons

Thanks to $36,000 in funding from the Foundation this past April, Alachua County residents who lack broadband internet service can now check out mobile hotspots from the Alachua County Library District with its new WiFi2Go pilot program. "The Library District created this program to help bridge the digital divide in Alachua County," said Library District Director Shaney T. Livingston as the library launched the program. One hundred hotspots were made available for checkout for seven days from any ACLD branch. They can connect up to five devices to the Internet.

As a June 18 article in the *Sun* on library services noted, "One hot item at the library is the mobile hotspot." Clearly, the WiFi2Go hotspots are a big hit and have proven to be a wise funding support decision on the part of the Foundation. Widespread media coverage generated by the library made the public aware of the new service. Thus, within two weeks of the program's start on April 1, library patrons had checked out 97 of the mobile hotspots. By late June, users had checked out the hotspots 698 times, and there was a waiting list of 30 who wanted to use one of the devices. As Director Livingston noted back when the pilot program began, "we know the need for this service is great." The high level of demand for the hotspots shows just how correct her assessment was.