



LASAFE

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MARCH 2, 2010

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY *ATL*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: DOUGLAS R. FAILING *DRF*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAY PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 511 – BETA UPDATE

ISSUE

This is an update on the status of the beta deployment of Southern California 511.

BACKGROUND

On November 23, 2009, LA SAFE deployed a beta version of Southern California 511. During this time, staff has worked with our partners, Caltrans, CHP, MTA, OCTA and VCTC, to use the system and identify bugs and opportunities for improvement prior to authorizing a full scale public deployment. In addition, staff conducted consumer research on the 511 phone system usability. In this testing, 40 users were asked to try 511 and were interviewed about their experience. This information, combined with feedback received from our partners, has helped identify issues that need to be addressed to ensure a good user experience and a successful 511 product.

Staff is currently working to resolve issues including data reliability, transit trip planner deployment, improved voice recognition and improvements to the display of road work/closure information. Staff is also addressing user comments received during the beta phase. So far the system has received over 53,000 calls and 12,000 website visits from approximately 32,000 unique callers and 2,000 unique visitors. As of February 26, 2010 the system has generated a total of 202 comments (0.62% of all callers). Considering the higher degree of likelihood of users leaving negative rather than positive messages, the low number of comments received overall can be viewed as a generally satisfactory performance for the 511 beta system.

With respect to marketing and outreach, there has been no formal marketing program initiated. The marketing of Southern California 511 has been limited to the following: a posting in Metro's "The Source" regarding the launch of the 511 beta, internal employee newsletter from Caltrans, and "Commutesmart News" newsletter. Recently staff was informed of a brief mention of 511 in AAA's Westways magazine. Despite the lack of a marketing program, the 511 beta system has seen steady use since its November 23, 2009 deployment. 511 beta usage statistics (from November 23rd-February 26th) are listed below:

IVR:

- Total calls: 53,026
- Total unique callers: 32,703
- Average daily calls: 530
- Most popular feature: Traffic Information

Website:

- Total visits: 12,637
- Total unique visitors: 2,196
- Average daily visits: 126
- Most popular feature: Traffic Incident/SigAlert Information

User Feedback Messages:

- Positive: 51, 0.15% of unique callers
- Negative: 80, 0.25% of unique callers
- Neutral (includes improvement suggestions): 71, 0.22% of unique callers

NEXT STEPS

Beginning in March, LA SAFE and OCTA will begin a marketing campaign to invite all MTA and OCTA staff to use the 511 beta system. Other partner agencies and interested parties will be encouraged to invite staff members to test the system and provide feedback. The marketing/outreach will consist of internally distributed and posted materials such as posters, email blasts, paycheck stuffers and employee newsletter articles. Staff and the contractor will continue to monitor the overall performance of the system, and make the needed improvements to ensure the system is ready for launch to the general public.

Staff anticipates that the beta stage will be completed during the 4th quarter of FY10 and 511 will be ready for full system acceptance. At that time, 511 will be introduced to the public and additional marketing will commence. This outreach will include a press event, press releases, community meetings and a media advertising campaign, including radio, outdoor and internet advertising. In addition, staff is working with participating transit agencies and encouraging them to advertise 511 on their vehicles with brochures and internal car cards.

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