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Call 511 or visit Go511.com: Transportation officials go511.com on an iPad to deliver the latest in traffic and travel news available 24/7 online or by telephone. From left, OCTA Board Member Peter Buffa, Metro Exec. Director Highway Programs Doug Failing, CHP Asst. Chief Dan Bower, and Caltrans District 7 Deputy Director Frank Quon.

Transportation officials unveil new 511 service to "outsmart traffic" in SoCal 24/7

- Public invited to test drive automated traffic and travel information system. The service debuts Monday, June 14, but will continue in a test mode as it is fine-tuned.
- **511** free phone and web service provides traffic, transit and commuter service information in Southern California.

By José Ubaldo
Media Relations

(June 10, 2010) Transportation officials from Metro, Orange and Ventura counties joined Caltrans and CHP today in introducing a new automated toll-free phone and Internet service that provides 24/7 on demand updates on traffic, trip planning for public transit or connections with car or vanpools throughout Southern California.

The service, which debuts Monday, June 14, also offers extras like bike information, links to area airports and taxi services, even the latest local weather reports. Commuters can simply call 511 or visit Go511.com to get help with their travel in Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties. On the Internet, traffic and travel information for these counties as well as neighboring San Bernardino and Riverside counties is available.

"Building new freeways is not the way to beat traffic," said Ara Najarian, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Los Angeles County. "We don't have the money or the land. But thanks to freeway monitoring and other technology, we do have real time information on traffic bottlenecks so we can avoid getting stuck. We also can steer commuters to public transit, carpools and vanpools simply by calling 511 or Go511.com on the Internet."



Board Chairman Ara Najarian to media: "Yes, 511 can help drivers steer away from traffic hot spots but I want to encourage the public to use 511 to connect with a carpool or vanpool or plan their trips on public transit."

OCTA is proud to be a partner in the development of Southern California's 511 service," said OCTA Chairman Jerry Amante. "By dialing 511, commuters can instantly access the latest traffic and transit information anywhere within the region."

The 511 phone and internet service is being fine-tuned and new features such as making it accessible on mobile devices and the ability to handle Spanish voice prompts will be added in coming months. The service will debut in a test mode so that the public can give feedback to further improve 511. Both the phone and the Internet connections have prompts for feedback.

"Caltrans is pleased to be a partner in Southern California 511, providing the system's real-time traffic information," said District 7 Deputy Director of Operations Frank Quon. "An important part of our mission is to optimize mobility and reliability. 511 helps us do that by giving motorists the timely data they need to make informed transportation choices, which translates into safer, more efficient use of our roadways."



OCTA Board Member Peter Buffa takes the podium to announce delivery of 24/7 traffic and travel information system at tri-county news conference held at Union Station June 10.

511 is the three digit number synonymous with travel information. That

number can be called in cities and counties throughout the United States for local traffic and related information. Callers will be given automated voice prompts to access the information they need.

"We are excited to help launch the 511 system, said California Highway Patrol (CHP) Assistant Chief for Southern California Division Dan Bower. "Southern California motorists will benefit tremendously from the cell phone 511 service as well as the 511 website component. The CHP/Caltrans Traffic Management Center will assist in providing first hand traffic information to motorists, assisting them in navigating their way around incidents and planned closures. This will result in a significantly positive impact on traffic flow."

511 traveler information services are provided by the Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE), in partnership with Metro, the Orange County Transportation Authority, Ventura County Transportation Commission, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Caltrans.

In Los Angeles County, Metro will also keep the 1 (800) COMMUTE phone number where the public can speak to a live operator weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Operators speak English and Spanish.

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