



EDCNP Mission Statement: "TO BE THE REGIONAL ADVOCATE, CATALYST, INNOVATOR, AND PROMOTER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE IN NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA"

A Pennsylvania Local Development District

DAVID A. DONLIN, PRESIDENT • HOWARD J. GROSSMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 7, 1999

Mr. William E. Kennard, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

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CC Docket 92-10

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Common Carrier Bureau  
Network Service Division  
Office of the Chief

File #NSD-L-99-24

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Kennard:

It is my understanding that the Federal Communications Commission is accepting comments on the petition of the U.S. Department of Transportation for a three-digit common national telephone number for traffic and traveler information services. The Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP) is a regional research, planning, and development organization serving the seven counties of Northeastern Pennsylvania including Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne. We serve 965,000 residents and are designated as an Economic Development District under the Public Works and Economic Development Act and a Local Development District under the Appalachian Regional Commission. Additionally, we have several other federal and state designations. One of our current efforts is to serve as the technical administrator of a Rural Transportation Committee which includes five of our seven counties. Additionally, we serve on the Metropolitan Planning Organization which covers our two largest counties, Lackawanna and Luzerne.

It is our understanding that the U.S. Department of Transportation has petitioned the FCC for the adoption of a new, national three-digit telephone number - similar to 911 - giving drivers nationwide access to traffic and traveler information on traffic conditions, bad weather, construction or traffic jams, as well as local public transportation schedules.

We know that the internet and other new communication opportunities have enabled many additional ways to provide information and data to the traveling public. This, however, does not negate the need for a national telephone number similar to 911 to provide the type of information which would be best suited for the traveling public.

In Northeastern Pennsylvania, we have both an urban and rural setting. The fastest growing set of counties in Pennsylvania are located in the Pocono Mountains which are included in our region. On the other hand, we have a metropolitan area which is in the top 75 in the United States. As is true in many other regions, our highway mileage continues to increase, and we have five interstate highways which cross Northeastern Pennsylvania. These include I80, 84, 81, 380, and 476.

The tourist industry is one of the leading industry sectors in Northeastern Pennsylvania. It is a \$2.2 billion industry sector with over 30,000 employees. Tourism will continue to grow in our region in the future and is an important part of Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy.

We wish to point out the close relationship we have with the five tourist promotion agencies serving Northeastern Pennsylvania. We believe that a national telephone number would have great benefit in this region as it would have in many other parts of the United States.

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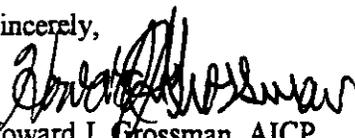
Some of the positive factors which cause the need for a national telephone number include the following:

- Since tourism as well as trucking are important activities in Northeastern Pennsylvania, we believe that a national telephone number would be of great benefit to those drivers or travelers not fully familiar with this region in both our urban and rural areas. A national telephone number would allow all travelers to access services wherever possible.
- We recently experienced the splitting of area codes and the creation of new area codes for increased telephone service in Northeastern Pennsylvania. We do not have a common number which serves the entire region. Therefore, a national telephone number would be helpful in creating a new opportunity for communicating and reaching out through a common and uniform system.
- With the experience shown on area code switching and the educational process necessary to accomplish changes, we believe that a national telephone number would be widely accepted and utilized accordingly. This would require only a modest investment in a public education process.
- The emerging EMS system in Northeastern Pennsylvania would be enhanced by a national telephone number. The EMS organizations (there are two) serving this region can be called upon to help promote the use and servicing of a national telephone number.
- Increases in use of automobiles and miles traveled across Northeastern Pennsylvania demonstrate why a national telephone number would be of significance to this region. Such a system would help reduce congestion and improve travel times and hopefully reduce the number of accidents.
- A common number would make public access easier in relation to the potential use of infrastructure and a telephone system which would be of benefit to the traveling public. As intelligent transportation systems proliferate, a three digit number would be desirable provided its growth is similar to the use of the 911 system.

In summary, it is the belief of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP) that a national telephone number which is widely disseminated and becomes important to urban and rural areas would be a helpful technological improvement to the current system which exists across the United States with respect to enhancing the use of transportation and traffic information and other types of traveler services.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these comments.

Sincerely,

  
Howard J. Grossman, AICP  
Executive Director

cc: Docket #92-105, Ms. Magalie Solas Roman, Mr. Al McCloud