

**POSITION OF SUPPORT**

for

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**U S DOT'S PETITION FOR THREE-DIGIT NATIONAL  
TELEPHONE NUMBER  
TO BE USED FOR TRAVELER INFORMATION SERVICES**

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**File Number:** NSD-L-99-24

**C C Docket No.** 92-105

**To the Secretary:**  
**(Original and Four Copies)**

Federal Communications Commission Secretary  
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**U S DOT'S PETITION FOR THREE-DIGIT NATIONAL TELEPHONE NUMBER  
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**Pierre Pretorius and Henry Wall wish to go on record in support of the United States Department of Transportation's petition of the Federal Communications Commission for a three-digit, national telephone number for traffic and traveler information services.**

The Phoenix regional area illustrates a prime example of conditions which would readily promote the use of the national **three-digit traveler information number**.

**The AZTech Initiative**

AZTech is a unique partnership of public agencies and private corporations in the Phoenix metropolitan area which is implementing a regionally based, integrated Intelligent Transportation System. Already the recipient of the FHWA's Award of Excellence, the consortium is using advanced communication technology to integrate the region's transportation system and improve both travel conditions and air quality.

As a result of the AZTech Model Deployment Initiative, eight high-volume traffic arteries in the region have been instrumented with traffic detectors. More than 20 additional instrumented (smart) corridors will come on line in the next few years. In addition to this accelerated schedule of development, instrumentation infrastructure is now being incorporated as a routine part of arterial construction or reconstruction throughout the region. Augmenting these instrumentation efforts is the installation of variable message signs and closed circuit television cameras at numerous locations.

All of these installations have been integrated into a single, region-wide communication system. The result is that traffic monitoring information (speed, volume, occupancy) is centralized and available to transportation managers throughout the region. But AZTech has gone a big step further, making this real time data, together with road closure, emergency incident, and transit schedule information available to the traveling public. Information on route diversion options is

scheduled to be added soon. A **three-digit traveler information number** would provide easy access to this vital information.

So, while instrumentation and monitoring devices provide real time traffic information for better system management, this same information can be of great use to Phoenix travelers, in part, through a uniformly recognized, three-digit telephone number. While AZTech has worked to make traveler information available to the public (toll free telephone lines, local products and service "hotlines", and installation of information kiosks) none of these services has the potential of an easily accessible, uniform, national **three-digit number**.

### **Traveler Information and Phoenix Area Growth**

The Phoenix area continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in the country, and is not exempt from the telephone area code splits that are happening in high growth areas. With residents and visitors used to a single area code for the entire region for many years, the region has just divided into three. Much work is now being done in the region re-educating the public on using new, unfamiliar area codes. Being able to sidestep at least a portion of that issue with a short, easily remembered national **three-digit number** for traveler information will help ease that burden.

The population and economic growth in the Phoenix area has resulted in steady increases in miles traveled in the region, and also results in constantly increasing congestion. The area is a huge tourist destination; there is a great influx of visitors into and out of the city over the course of a year. Visitors are unfamiliar with the correct number to use to get traffic information. Maintaining a single, common, national **three-digit number** would greatly facilitate access to necessary traffic information in less than familiar surroundings.

Summer temperatures in the Phoenix area are uniquely high, bordering on the extreme. Especially during these times, when motorists are confronted with traffic delays, a commonly known **three-digit traffic information number** will be paramount in providing quick information on alternate routes.

The **three-digit number** concept strongly supports the ITS premise that we cannot build our way out of increasing congestion and general travel demand, but must look to technology to aid us in getting better use from our existing systems. The more comprehensive and up-to-date information that can be quickly accessed by travelers, the easier it will be for transportation officials to manage the system itself. Congestion and accidents will be reduced, and those incidents that do occur can be handled quicker and easier with less interfering traffic. And better system management results in improved motorist travel times as well.

The Phoenix region, through its planning arm of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), has already been considering concepts for assisting the implementation of abbreviated access code numbers. The national **three-digit number** for traveler information will be a logical extension of this activity.

## Summary

Nearly all of the Phoenix residents and visitors to the region use the transportation system, in one way or another, every day. The most widely used communication device for these travelers is the telephone---available at any place, at any time, regardless of economic status. Because of AZTech, a great deal of traveler information has become newly available. The establishment of a single, easily remembered, national **three-digit number** for accessing a variety of up-to-date, route specific travel conditions would be an instant benefit---to both travelers and transportation system managers.