



511 Traveler Information Program in Wisconsin

30 June 2006

Background

The nationwide 511 Traveler Information Program began in July of 2000, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated the number "511" as a telephone number to be used for traveler information. The goal of the program is to provide travelers with easy access to accurate, real-time traveler information via the internet or by dialing 511. This information includes congestion, construction activity, weather conditions, incidents, and special event notices no matter their location. Currently, 511 services are available in 25 states and to 32 percent of the U.S. population. Use of the 511 system has been frequent, with over 53 million calls to date. Benefits of the 511 Traveler Information Program include the following:

- Safety – reduce incidents, especially secondary crashes
- Mobility – improve travel time and travel time reliability
- Productivity – reduce early/late arrivals, saving lost time
- Efficiency – better utilization of existing infrastructure
- Energy & Environment – reduce fuel consumption and vehicle emissions
- Customer Satisfaction – informed customers modify their departure times, routes, and travel modes

Status in Wisconsin

Planning and engineering for a statewide 511 Traveler Information program continues in earnest, and a 511 program manager was hired in April 2006. As of today, a planning study for the 511 program has been completed, and preliminary engineering continues. The program is planned to deploy in 2008, with several development phases occurring before then, including:

- Complete preliminary engineering
- Orchestrate data flows, management, storage, and integration
- Coordination with land line and cellular telephone carriers and switching
- Refinement of start-up and operations cost estimates and funding sources
- Develop and issue a request for proposals for system development
- Proceed with commissioning the Wisconsin 511 Program

For more information see the U.S. Department of Transportation's 511 Traveler Information Program website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/511.htm>