Development of the Nation’s First Self-Sustaining Statewide 511 Advanced Traveler Information System

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511 Background

• Huge improvements over the years since creation of #SAFE/511 services.
• As functionality increases, the number of users increases dramatically.
  – Increase cost for operations
  – Budget cuts
• Public approval of 511 as a necessary service.
Background

• ITSA – 2001
  – Shenandoah Valley Telephone Company
  – Other efforts have had limited success:
    • Area served is limited to city or small metropolitan area.
    • Income generation is only a small part of the system costs.
    • The system is only providing limited information and is not widely utilized by the public.
Georgia 511

- Summer Olympics in Atlanta in 1996 brought huge ITS growth to the state.
  - NaviGAtor
  - Atlanta TMC

- GDOT contracted with Meridian in Summer 2006 to build the state’s first 511 system, launched in 2007.
  - Taken over 3 million calls
  - Growing annually, now 2 million calls/year.
Georgia 511

• System is truly statewide
  – Road reports available on all Interstates, US, and State Routes.
    • Point to Point travel times in Metro Atlanta.
    • Incidents/Accidents, Construction, Road Closures, detailed weather report.
    • Transfers including transit, airports, ride-share, tourism, and other surrounding state 511 systems.
Offsetting 511 Operating Costs

• Georgia started investigating alternative revenue sources.
  – Growing budget concerns
  – DOT dedicated to providing superior service

• Issued RFQ Spring 2009
  – Continue equal or greater services at no cost to the state.
  – Enhancements that could be funded from generated revenue.
• Selection of Meridian Environmental Technology, Inc.
  – Contractual Agreements required much re-writing from standard state contracts.
  • Contractors would provide services to the state at no cost from day one of the contract.
  • In exchange, GDOT contracted to launch private franchise of 511.
    – Retaining governance over content, etc.
  – Business Model employed for incentive for all parties to maximize revenue flow through a profit sharing agreement.
  • First offset operations then pool profit.
Lessons Learned

• Sign requirements
  – Highly recommend developing a state acknowledgment sign policy.
    • Require that sponsoring organizations comply with State and Federal laws prohibiting discrimination and other applicable laws.
  – Keep communications open with Federal Highway.
    • MUTCD requirements
MUTCD Requirements

• Logos *must* follow MUTCD requirements.
  – Any logo cannot be included on the TRAVEL INFO CALL 511 sign itself.
    • Logos and text pertaining to sponsors are displayed only on the acknowledgment panel.
    • Logo area is up to 8 square feet.
  – “Sponsored by” must be included on all acknowledgment panels.
  – City names and neighborhoods allowed.
MUTCD Noncompliance

• Cannot post names of individuals or their contact information.
• Cannot contain internet addresses or telephone numbers.
  – Anything with .com or url
• Cannot contain exit numbers, street names, or commercial area names (such as malls).
• No multi-media logos
  – Flashing, moving or animated features, luminescent panels, external or internal illumination.

• Text within a logo should be large enough to be quickly and easily read from a distance and/or inside a vehicle.
  – “Taglines” verses name with smaller text should not be included.
  – Signs are only installed on Interstate, US and State Routes.

• GDOT also limited sponsorships from casinos, lawyers and alcohol.
Sign Examples

• Compliant:
  - Sponsored by Krystal CUMMING
  - Sponsored by MOE'S Southwest Grill
  - Sponsored by Piccadilly MARIETTA
  - Sponsored by golden corral WINDER

• Noncompliant:
  - Sponsored by EXIT 224 HUDSON BRIDGE
  - Sponsored by LISA DOBBS AGENT VININGS
• Shared Risk-Shared Reward
  – Importance of this was evident in earlier attempts.

• Sponsorship Market
  – Timing
  – Location

• Choose team wisely
  – Skills in all areas
• Georgia 511 has become the first self-sustaining statewide 511 system in the nation.
  – Continued efforts to continue success.
  – Impact to state budget cannot be ignored.
Questions?

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