



The Future of 511 Phone in the North/West Passage States

National Rural ITS Conference

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Outline

- NWP Overview
- Background
- Project Summary
 - History of 511 Phone Service
 - NWP State 511 Phone Services
 - Trends for NWP 511 Phone Service
- Future of 511 Phone
 - NWP States
 - Other States

North/West Passage Overview

- North/West Passage has been a Transportation Pooled Fund since 2003
- Members
 - 7 States from Washington to Minnesota along I-90 and I-94





North/West Passage Overview

- States share common challenges
 - Commercial and recreational travel corridor
 - Extreme weather conditions
 - Road closures and transportation management
- North/West Passage vision is to develop effective **methods for sharing, coordinating, and integrating** traveler information and operational activities across borders

- Since the advent of 511, traveler information dissemination has changed:
 - Web sites have evolved and added new dynamic information (e.g. travel times, speeds, images)
 - Mobile applications provide information en-route
 - In-vehicle navigation or infotainment systems provide real-time information
 - Third-party services are popular with travelers (e.g. Waze, HERE, Google Traffic)



Background

- 511 phone has decreased in use nationally and in the NWP states
- States are considering how 511 may change:
 - Change phone service
 - Deemphasize phone in marketing
 - Reduce funding for phone
 - Discontinue phone service



Background

- This project assessed:
 - Trends in 511 phone use in NWP states
 - The plans for 511 phone in NWP states
 - Why other states either discontinued or did not implement 511 phone service
 - Kentucky
 - Missouri
 - North Carolina



Project Summary

- Interviews
 - Interviews/surveys were conducted with all seven NWP states
 - Two non-NWP states were interviewed
 - One non-NWP state was used as a case study
- Data Collection
 - Call volumes by year, month and day
 - Call characteristics
 - Costs to provide 511 phone



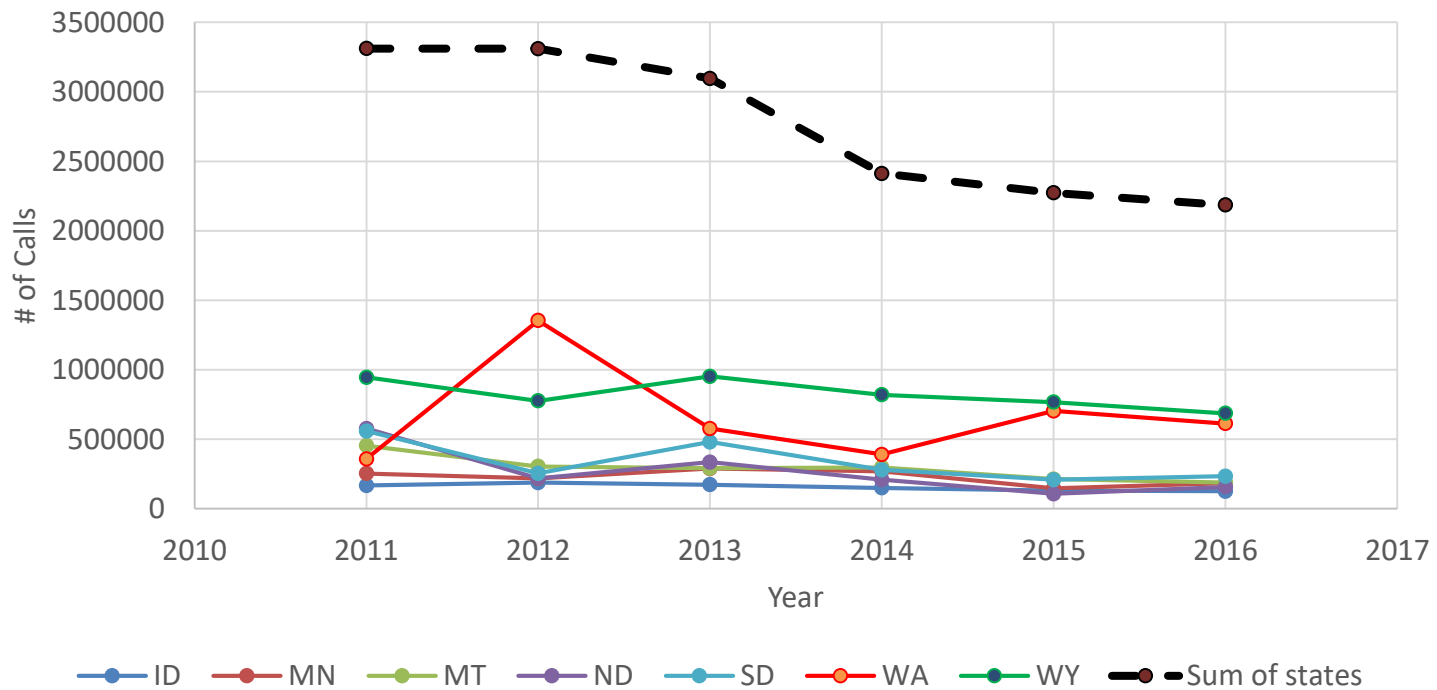
Project Summary

- NWP 511 Phone Services

State (National 511 #)	Traffic		Weather		Commercial Vehicle Specific Info	Transit	Tourism	Other
	Traffic Conditions	Incidents	Weather Conditions	Winter Road Conditions				
Idaho 1-888-432-7623		✓		✓	✓	Transfer / Contact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides seasonal load restrictions - accepts caller comments - Voice or keypad input
Minnesota 1-800-542-0220		✓		✓	✓	Transfer / Contact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accepts caller comments - Voice or keypad input
Montana 1-800-226-7623		✓	✓	✓			Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accepts caller comments - Voice or keypad input
North Dakota 1-866-696-3511		✓		✓			Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides seasonal load restrictions - Provides commercial vehicle information in traffic information but not through a specific "trucker" menu - Accepts caller comments - Voice or keypad input
South Dakota 1-866-697-3511	✓	✓		✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accepts caller comments - Provides commercial vehicle information in traffic information but not through a specific "trucker" menu - Keypad input
Washington 1-800-695-7623	✓ <i>Congestion in metro areas</i>	✓	✓	✓		Transfer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides ferry info - Provides express lane info - Provides mountain pass weather information - Voice or keypad input
Wyoming 1-888-996-7623		✓		✓			Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides commercial vehicle information in traffic information but not through a specific "trucker" menu. - Accepts caller comments - Voice or keypad input

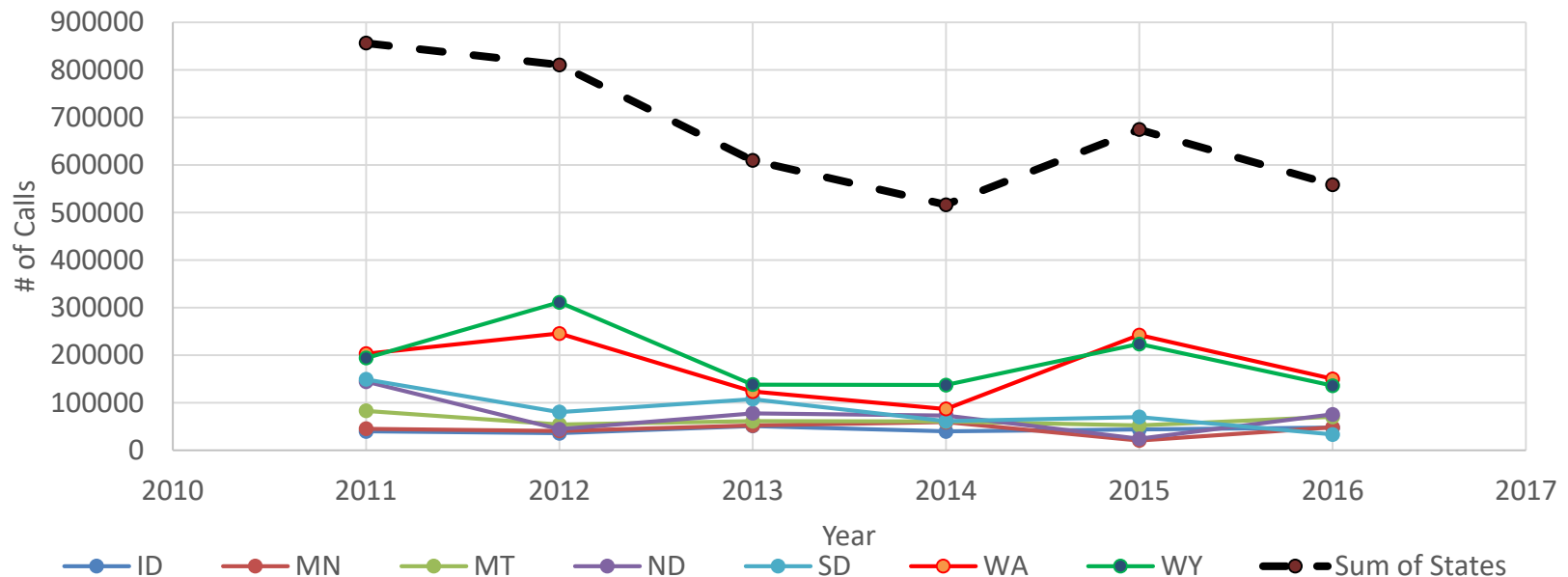
Project Summary

- NWP State 511 Phone Use by Year
 - Decreased 34% from 2011 to 2016.



Project Summary

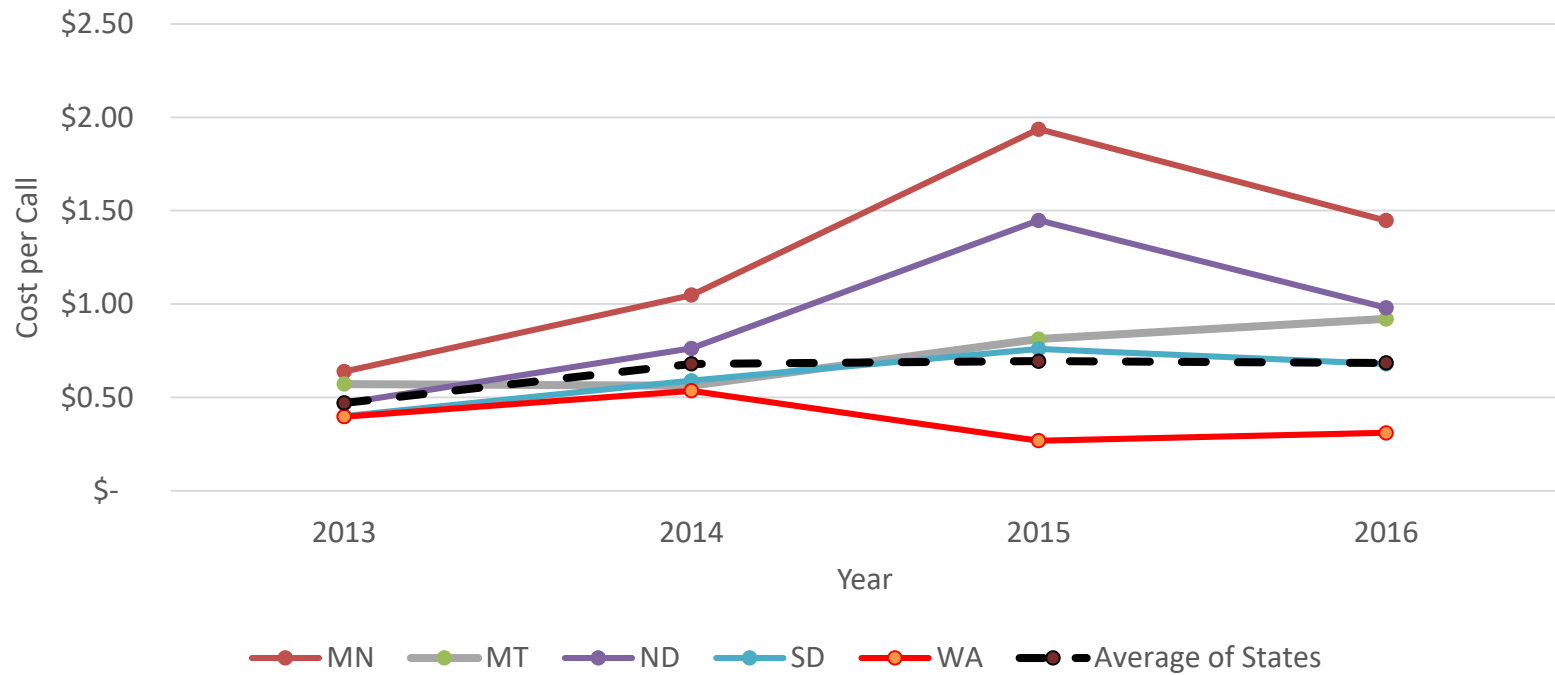
- NWP State 511 Phone Use by Peak Month
 - Decreased 35% from 2011 to 2016.
 - Higher volatility shows peak demand is still strong.





Project Summary

- Cost per Call for NWP States 511 Phone
 - Cost per call has risen 45% from 2013 to 2016.





Project Summary

- Changes in NWP State 511 Phone
 - States have updated advances in IVR and telecommunication technologies
 - South Dakota added alerts for potentially worsening road conditions
 - In general states have not invested in significant improvements
 - Investment is in other traveler info technology
 - Not significant demand from public for change

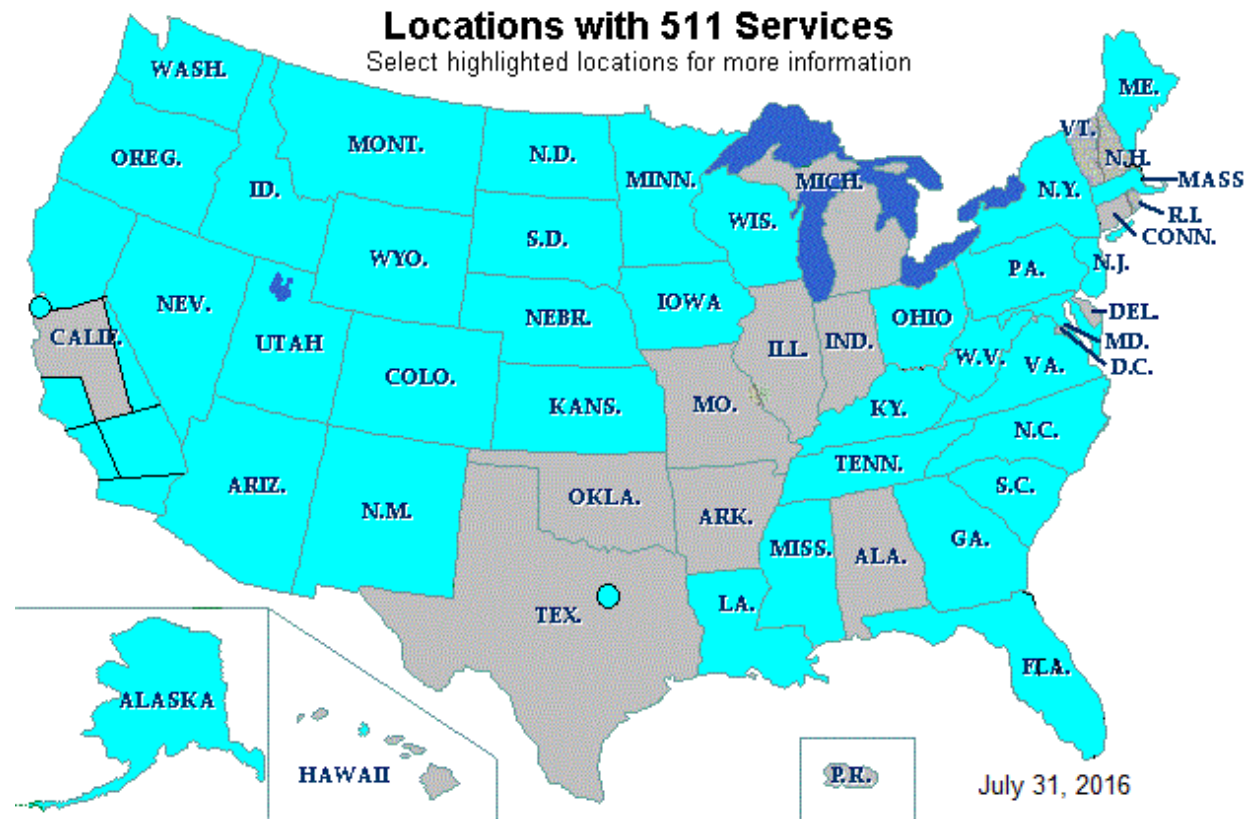


Project Summary

- Role of 511 Phone in NWP States
 - Serves rural areas with limited Internet and Cellular Coverage
 - Is used by older populations that may rely on landline phones
 - NWP states are comprised of 14%-16% 65 or older
 - Provides redundancy in case of disruption in Internet traveler information
 - Peak time demand (i.e. winter storms) for 511 is still strong

Future of 511

- States without Statewide 511 (in gray)



Future of 511 Phone

- Case Study – State that discontinued 511 Phone
 - Kentucky
 - Conducted a study of current traveler information options
 - Found travelers preferred third-party information (e.g. Google, Waze)
 - Saw a steep decline in phone use (40% drop in previous two years)
 - Discontinued 511 phone and mobile application in 2016, at a savings of \$750,000
 - Brought all traveler information data management in-house
 - Teamed with Waze to provide mobile traveler information
 - Upgraded traveler information web site



Future of 511 Phone

- Interviews with States without Traditional 511 Phone
 - Missouri
 - Had ad-sponsored traveler information in urban areas
 - Service provided free to the state
 - Could not find a vendor to continue the ad-sponsored service on a statewide or local basis
 - Provide traveler info through web site
 - Travelers can call a 24/7 customer service line

Future of 511 Phone

- Interviews with States without Traditional 511 Phone
 - North Carolina
 - Discontinued IVR system in 2016. Did not want to deal with complexity and costs of procurement and operation
 - Uses inmates at women's prison during the day to answer calls
 - Inmates can view traveler information web site
 - Each inmate is paid \$1 a day
 - Customers are very satisfied
 - Because inmates can handle limited volume, NC has deemphasized marketing the 511 number



Future of 511 Phone

- NWP States will Continue to provide 511 Phone
 - FHWA study indicates it is still an important traveler information tool
 - States have legislative and funding support for foreseeable future
 - 511 phone complements other traveler information strategies

Future of 511 Phone

- NWP States will assess the impact of:
 - Generational shifts to younger, more tech-adept travelers
 - Shifting transportation patterns to transit, rideshare, decreased car ownership
 - Increased connectivity and access to Internet in rural areas
 - “Big Data” resulting in more tailored real-time information
 - Increased third-party traveler information
 - Connected vehicles and in-vehicle systems



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