PROJECT NUMBER:
03401

PROJECT TITLE:
Overview Study: 511 Travelers Information

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:
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PROJECT OBJECTIVE:
The objective of this project is to study potential implementation of the “511 Traveler Information” telephone number system in Alabama. The project will focus on determining where and how to implement 511 by investigating the potential costs and resources that would be needed to develop a highly functional traveler information system.

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 511 as the “national traveler information telephone number” for the United States. While providing this number for use, the FCC has left nearly all implementation issues and schedules to state and local governments and telecommunications carriers. 511 Deployment Coalition guidelines indicate that the 511 number is intended to provide travelers “basic” transportation information like the following:

- Roadway Construction/Maintenance Projects
- Road Closures and Major Delays (e.g., traffic congestion)
- Major Special Events (e.g., sporting events, fairs, etc.)
- Weather and Road Surface Conditions
- Public Transportation Providers
- Major Public Transportation Services Disruptions/Changes

After working with project stakeholders and evaluating the feasibility of implementing various services, the project will develop a sample schematic detailing the interaction of the various 511 stakeholders and describing their roles in the 511 system. The schematic will be accompanied by a cost estimate for implementation.

PROJECT TASK DESCRIPTIONS:
1) Project kickoff meeting  
2) Review of 511 initiative  
3) Review of Alabama telecommunications infrastructure  
4) Potential application of 511 in Alabama (procedures and costs)  
5) Final report  

MILESTONES AND DATES:  
Task 1: Oct 1 – Oct 31, 2002  
Task 3: Jan 1 – Feb 28, 2003  
Task 4: Feb 1 – Aug 31, 2003  
Task 5: Aug 1 – Sep 30, 2003  

TOTAL BUDGET:  
Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT SPR funds): $80,613  

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT:  
A graduate student will contribute to the research effort.  

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS:  
This project is indirectly related to three other UTCA projects with roots in Intelligent Transportation Systems:  

- Project 00110 - Feasibility of an Integrated Traffic Management and Emergency Communication System for Birmingham, Alabama, by Drs. Mickey Bunn and Grant Savage  
- Project 00103 - Providing Technical and Management Expert Services in Intelligent Transportation Systems for Alabama, by Dr. John McFadden  
- Project 01101 - Integrated Traffic and Emergency Response: Success Factors, by Drs. Mickey Bunn and Grant Savage  

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITIES:  
The results of this research will be reported first to the ALDOT, but because 511 will be a component of Alabama’s ITS system, the results will necessarily reach all members of that community. The researchers also plan to prepare conference presentations and refereed journal articles.  

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT:  
The project will provide benefits for both areas of UTCA’s theme: management and safety of transportation systems. It will help ALDOT plan a safety system that will apprise drivers of weather conditions, road condition, and construction projects. The system also forms a management tool that will help route travelers around construction, disruption, and other events but will also alert travelers to alternative transportation systems.  

TRB KEYWORDS:
safety, traveler information, 511, ITS