

Switch to goky.ky.gov will save taxpayers up to \$750,000 annually

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 1, 2016) – Motorists traveling throughout Kentucky can now navigate the highways and by-ways of the Bluegrass with a modernized tool. Goky.ky.gov, an online traffic and roadway information portal, has replaced the traditional 511 travel and weather phone system.

The improved, user-friendly platform provides travelers access to reliable, up-to-date information regarding traffic conditions, construction activity, and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s (KYTC) response to weather-related events. The new GoKY website includes reports from KYTC as well as from Waze – a real-time traffic reporting application based on crowdsourced information.

“After almost two decades of 511 use, today’s travelers are bypassing the dated phone line for visual, on-demand road and weather conditions,” said Sec. Greg Thomas. “Goky.ky.gov is the perfect solution to satisfy the needs of the traveling public while stewarding state dollars. Our Cabinet employees and partners have worked diligently to deliver a platform that tells the public what they want to know before hitting the road.”

Now, motorists who dial 511 will hear a brief phone message informing them of the change. To request Safety Assistance for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) Patrol in cases of vehicle breakdown or to report incidents, motorists will be directed to call 877-FOR-KYTC. In addition, the former 511 smart phone application will no longer be offered or operational. The text and email alert feature has also been discontinued.

To provide travelers with a mobile option, KYTC encourages motorists to download the free Waze application. Since 2014, the Cabinet has participated in a public-private partnership with Waze CCP (Connected Citizens Program). Both entities provide a free exchange of real-time data every two minutes, giving drivers a clearer understanding of roadway events. The app provides turn-by-turn navigation as well as traffic reporting.

“Helping drivers have a better experience on Kentucky roads is important but not at the expense of safety. We advise drivers to use GoKY to plan ahead before they drive. To avoid distracted driving, ask your passenger to report delays and incidents using Waze,” said Dr. Noelle Hunter, executive director of the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety.

Over the last two years, call volume to 511 has dropped by nearly 40 percent. This drastic decline prompted Cabinet officials to evaluate the hotline’s effectiveness. Phasing out the phone system will save taxpayers up to \$750,000 annually.

In addition, the 511 phase-out shifts all data management to in-house Cabinet staff, which eliminates the need for contractor services. Using existing enterprise infrastructure technologies, Cabinet engineers will now be able to save, capture and process data for future planning and highway safety purposes, a function not available with the old 511 mapping and phone system.

When 511 was conceptualized, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) recommended that the three-digit number serve as the single travel information hotline, which eliminated the need for multiple phone numbers. States are not federally required to implement 511; however, Kentucky chose to adopt 511 in 2000 after the Kentucky Public Service Commission permanently assigned the number.

Motorists can access travel and traffic conditions at <http://goky.ky.gov> or contribute their own reports at <http://www.waze.com> or via the Waze mobile application. Follow us on Twitter @KYTCGoKY.