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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
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ALBANY, N.Y.

April 28, 2000

BY OVERNIGHT MAIL

Ms. Debra Renner
Secretary
State of New York Department of Public Service
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223-1350

Re: Case 98-C-0689
Allegiance Telecom of New York, Inc.'s
Response to the Order To Show Cause

Dear Ms. Renner:

Allegiance Telecom of New York, Inc. hereby submits an original and three copies of its Response to the Commission's April 21, 2000 Order to Show Cause in Case 98-C-0689.

If you have any questions regarding this filing, kindly contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary C. Albert
Regulatory Counsel

cc: Robert W. McCausland

**STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

CASE 98-C-0689 Proceeding Pursuant to Section 97(2) of the Public Service Law, to Institute an Omnibus Proceeding to Investigate the Efficiency of Usage of Telephone Numbering Resources and to Evaluate the Options for Making Additional Central Office Codes and/or Area Codes Available in Areas of New York State, When and Where Needed.

**ALLEGIANCE TELECOM OF NEW YORK, INC.'S
RESPONSE TO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE**

Allegiance Telecom of New York, Inc. ("Allegiance") hereby responds to the Commission's April 21, 2000 Order to Show Cause in the above captioned proceeding. As demonstrated below, Allegiance is in full compliance with the Commission's directives relating to the 516/631 area code split and should not be subject to any penalty actions.

ISSUE 1: Failure to properly assign area codes to customers consistent with the Commission's order directing the area code split.

Allegiance has properly assigned area codes to customers consistent with the Commission's order directing the area code split. Allegiance has only two NXX codes that are assigned to rate centers in Suffolk County and that were affected by the area code split. All of Allegiance's Nassau County customers retain the 516 area code and its Suffolk County customers have been assigned the 631 area code. In addition, Allegiance has only one customer in a border exchange. That customer resides in Nassau County and its telephone number remains unchanged as a result of the area code split -- *i.e.*, it retains the 516 area code. Because Allegiance has fully complied with the Commission's order, there is no basis for commencing a penalty action against it.

ISSUE 2: Failure to provide accurate information to individual customers and the public at large about where the area code split would occur and which area code would be active in particular areas.

Allegiance has not provided inaccurate information either to individual customers or to the public at large about where the area code split would occur and which area code would be active in particular areas.

When individual customers call Allegiance with area code questions, the Customer Care staff is able to access an internal website that provides details on all area code relief projects underway. The Customer Care staff also has access to a commercial website that allows the representatives to initiate a to determine the correct area code using a customer's address information. Allegiance is unaware of any instances where it has given its customers inaccurate information about the 516/631 split.

With respect to information available to the public at large, the local newspaper of general circulation, *Long Island Newsday*, has run numerous articles about the area code split clearly stating that customers in Nassau County would retain the 516 area code and customers in Suffolk County would be assigned area code 631. A sample of those articles is attached hereto.

In the absence of any evidence that Allegiance has misled individual customers or the public at large about the area code split, the Commission has no basis for commencing a penalty action against it.

ISSUE 3: Failure to provide accurate information in intercepting calls dialed to the wrong area code after the implementation of mandatory dialing.

Allegiance has provided accurate information in intercepting calls dialed to the wrong area code after the implementation of mandatory dialing. Simultaneously with the

implementation of mandatory dialing on April 1, 2000, Allegiance began intercepting calls dialed to the wrong area code with a recording informing the caller that the area code had been changed. Allegiance customers attempting to place calls to Suffolk County with a 516 area code will hear a recording that states "We're sorry, the area code for the number you dialed has been changed. The new area code is 631. Will you please hang up, check the number and try your call again?"

Because Allegiance has *not* failed to provide accurate information in intercepting calls dialed to the wrong area code, the Commission has no basis for commencing a penalty action against it.

ISSUE 4: Failure to extend the permissive dialing period for certain alarm companies as directed by several Commission orders.

In Orders issued January 18, January 31, February 23 and March 24, 2000, the Commission directed that the permissive dialing period for the 516/631 area codes be extended through October 31, 2001 for 56 NXX codes assigned to certain alarm companies. Allegiance has performed the necessary switch translations to allow its customers to reach the identified NXX codes by dialing only seven digits.¹ This permissive dialing pattern will remain in place through October 31, 2001 as ordered by the Commission.

Permissive dialing was continued for the 52 NXX codes identified in the Commission's January 18, January 31 and February 23 Orders on and after April 1, 2000. In its March 24, 2000 Order, the Commission extended permissive dialing for four additional NXX codes not identified

¹ The Commission's January 18th and January 31st Orders identified three NXX codes for extended permissive 7 digit dialing – 752, 756 and 842 – that are assigned to both the 516 and the 631 area codes. If a call is placed to one of these NXX's from Nassau County using seven digits, the call will be analyzed as a 516 number and routed accordingly. Similarly, if a call is placed to one of these NXX's from Suffolk County using seven digits, the call will be analyzed as a 631 number and routed accordingly.

in its previous three Orders. Allegiance has no record of having been served with the March 24, 2000 Order and had no knowledge of the extension granted for the four additional codes until it pulled all of the 516/631-related Orders off of the Commission's website after receiving the Order To Show Cause. Although Allegiance retained permissive 7 digit dialing for the 516-671 NXX code on and after April 1, permissive 7 digit dialing was interrupted for approximately three and one-half weeks for the three 631 NXX codes -- 591, 689 and 751 -- identified in the Commission's March 24, 2000 Order. Allegiance immediately restored permissive 7 digit dialing for the relevant 631 NXX codes on April 27, 2000 when it became aware of the Commission's March 24, 2000 Order.

Given the circumstances, the Commission should not commence a penalty action against Allegiance for the temporary interruption of permissive 7 digit dialing for three out of the 56 NXX codes for which the Commission extended the permissive dialing period. Allegiance's error was totally inadvertent and was the result of not having been served with the Commission's March 24, 2000 Order. As soon as Allegiance discovered the error, it was corrected and permissive 7 digit dialing is now in place for all 56 affected NXX codes.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Allegiance respectfully requests that the Commission find that it is in full compliance with all directives relating to the 516/631 area code split and that there is no basis for initiating a penalty action against it.

April 28, 2000

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary C. Albert".

Mary C. Albert

Regulatory Counsel

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Queens Gets New Area Code; LI Next

BY: By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER

EDITION: NASSAU AND SUFFOLK

SECTION: News

DATE: 10-01-1999

A35

New area codes are getting ready to make their debut on Long Island and in Queens as the demand for new telephone numbers has caused a shortage of numbers in the 516 and 718 area codes.

Long Island will be getting a new area code a month from now, but state regulators decided to split the Island geographically along county lines based on the public input it received earlier this year.

As of today, Bell Atlantic Corp. will begin assigning newly ordered phone numbers in Queens the 347 area code as part of the plan to relieve the shortage of 718 numbers. New numbers in Staten Island, the Bronx and Brooklyn also will be assigned 347 as of today as part of the state-approved "overlay" plan that allows current telephone customers to keep 718 but assigns 347 to new numbers.

For now, callers with a 718 number will have to dial only the seven-digit phone number when calling another 718 number, but that may change.

Federal rules require that all callers in regions with an "overlay" dial the area code plus phone number. That would mean a caller in 718 will have to dial 1 plus 718 plus the number even to reach someone across the street. However, New York State has been granted an exemption for at least one year from that rule.

Now, New York City phone numbers could have any one of five area codes: 347, 718, 212, 646 or 917. The 917 code was originally set aside for pagers and cellular phones, but Bell Atlantic has assigned regular phones that area code because of the severe shortage of 212 numbers that occurred before 646 was introduced July 1.

It's still possible for a new customer in Queens to get a 718 number. Numbers are assigned to neighborhoods in blocks of 10,000 numbers, so Bell Atlantic will still assign a new number the old 718 code as long as a number is still available.

As of Nov. 1, all business and residential lines located in Nassau County will keep the 516 area code while all phones in Suffolk will switch to the **631** area code. Cellular phones and pagers in both counties will be allowed to keep their current 516 number.

It's a little trickier identifying customers that are right on the border of Nassau and Suffolk Counties, said Dennis Wax, director of regulatory affairs at Bell Atlantic. "People's addresses don't contain the county," he said.

However, Bell Atlantic is relying on the 911 database to determine on which side of the county line a phone number falls, he said.

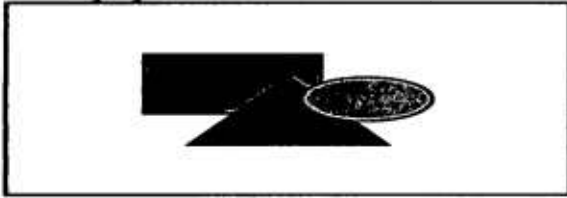
Other telecommunications companies also are getting ready for the

new number.

Long Island Telephone Co. is sending a newsletter to its customers and educating its sales force to prepare for questions, said Kerry Cheshire, marketing manager.

Callers will have some time to get used to the new area code during the "permissive dialing," or phase-in period. Until April 1, callers will be able to reach Suffolk telephones by dialing either the 516 or **631** area code. After that, all calls placed to Suffolk County using the 516 code will get an error message.

Bell Atlantic will start advertising the **631** area code toward the end of October after company officials have finished reprogramming all its equipment.



Suffolk residents can expect to see the **631** area code on their phone bills after February.

Telecommunications companies won't be able to assign the same seven-digit phone number in both **631** and 516 area codes until after the permissive dialing period ends April 1.

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By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER, Queens Gets New Area Code; LI Next, 10-01-1999, pp A35.

New Code for New Numbers / 347 goes on the dial in assignments today

BY: By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER

SECTION: News

DATE: 10-01-1999

A06

New area codes are getting ready to make their debut in Queens and on Long Island as the demand for new telephone numbers has caused a shortage of numbers in the 718 and 516 area codes.

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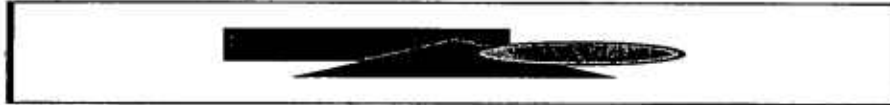
Suffolk residents can expect to see the **631** area code on their phone bills after February.

Telecommunications companies won't be able to assign the same seven-digit phone number in both **631** and 516 area codes until after the permissive dialing period ends April 1.

KEYWORDS: TELEPHONE NUMBER

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By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER, New Code for New Numbers / 347 goes on the dial in assignments today, 10-01-1999, pp A06.



Conversion Slow For Suffolk's Area Code

BY: By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER

EDITION: ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: Business

DATE: 12-08-1999

A59

Mike McBride thought that getting an early start in telling his clients about Suffolk County's new **631** area code would be the best way to make sure customers for his promotions business could reach him. Before long, some customers dialing his number with the new area code weren't getting through.

After making a few calls, McBride, who is vice president of Dependable Promotions Co. in Bohemia, learned that not all companies have updated their equipment.

"My posture now is I'm not going to tell anybody that my area code has changed," McBride said.

While most Long Islanders know that Suffolk County's area code became **631** on Nov. 1, some other parts of the country haven't all adjusted to the new code.

Although Long Island has a "grace" period until April 1 when the **631** area code must be dialed to reach Suffolk phones, several companies said that people trying to contact them from other regions of the United States aren't getting through if their company's equipment hasn't been properly updated.

In this era of more complex and increasing sophisticated equipment, thousands of telecommunications systems around the country all must be adjusted whenever a new area code shows up. Equipment that picks up and sends through calls placed from pay phones, wireless phones, homes, businesses and other locations all must be taught to recognize new area codes, a task that can take some time to update.

Even Bell Atlantic Corp., the dominant local telephone company, said that it isn't changing its directory-assistance systems nor its customers' numbers on phone bills until late January or early February even though it has reprogramed switching equipment to handle calls using both 516 and **631** area codes.

John Bonomo, a spokesman for the company, said its customer service representatives haven't heard of an overwhelming number of complaints from people having trouble with the new area code.

"The calls have not been coming in to the point where we need to count them," Bonomo said.

Problems in dialing new area codes also lies in PBX, or "private branch exchange," systems that many companies use to route calls. Businesses can use PBXs to block certain extensions within an office from placing certain types of calls such as international or directory assistance calls. The same PBX keeps a database of area codes that tells the system how to send calls through. If a new area code is not listed, the PBX doesn't know how to route the call, said Don Simons, a consultant who once managed 30 PBX systems.

"This is an ongoing problem that companies face routinely," said Simons, who owns RMTS Consulting, a company located outside of Sacramento, Calif. While companies located in a new area code are usually on top of area code changes, businesses in other parts of the country don't have a set way of finding out.

And it's the responsibility of each company that owns the PBX, and not the telephone companies such as Bell Atlantic Corp., to keep those databases up to date.

Some companies contract the work to third-party vendors, but many just rely on their internal staff to update the information. Simons said he used to rely on GTE Corp. to supply him with area code updates, but not every company has a standardized way of reprogramming area code changes.

Companies such as Lucent Technologies Inc. that manufacture PBX systems offer a fee-based service to update area code systems but most companies usually handle it themselves, said Ed Dyl, former manager of the North American Numbering Plan at Lucent. But Dyl said that most places are ready.

"It's a normal course of their job," Dyl said. "Our comfort level is that it has become a routine function." But some Long Islanders say the problem is more widespread. Jim Cooke, a sales support manager for Electronic Data Systems, said at least 15 people from various parts of the country, including his supervisor in Texas, have had trouble reaching his home office in Sayville using the 631 area code.

"Thinking I was doing the right thing, I notified all my business associates, my customers and my company about the change," Cooke said. Now, he's going back and telling everyone to use 516 if they cannot reach him.



Number's Up, Suffolk / As the county loses (516) for (631), it loses a bit of its identity, too

BY: By Fred Bruning. STAFF WRITER. EDITION: ALL EDITIONS. SECTION: Part 2. DATE: 10-28-1999. B03

SUGARLESS GUM arrived in 1951 - likewise, Dacron suits, push-button garage doors, power steering and Park's sausages. On Long Island, something else showed up: Area Code 516. Since then, the three digits have snuggled with Island phone number like a beagle on a pricey throw pillow. (516) helps define the place, sets it aside - not that Nassau and Suffolk lack for personality. Around the country, Long Island frequently is portrayed as an odd domain where females have hair like haystacks, men commute in tank tops and language is limited mostly to "whatevuh." If Long Islanders have a vivid image, (516) deserves some of the credit. The combination of numbers has a certain spunk and swagger typical of the place, said Joanne Sherman, features editor at the weekly Shelter Island Reporter, and a backer of the status quo when it comes to area code issues. "516 was kind of kicky," Sherman said. "5-1-6! You could make a cheer out of it."

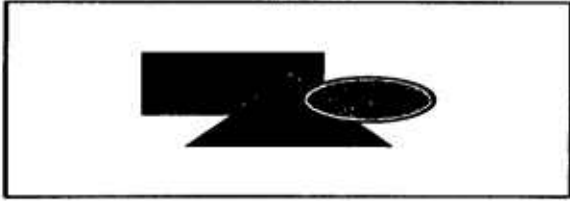
After Monday, Sherman and like-minded Suffolk County neighbors have no more to cheer about than fans of the Kingston Trio. Nassau County stays the same but in Suffolk, Area Code 516 is kaput - final phase out is April 1 - and will be replaced by the entirely respectable but totally un-kicky "631." "631 goes downhill," said Sherman. Declining standards? Maybe, but the Nassau-Suffolk split was inevitable, according to the phone people and state Public Service Commission. Such was the increased demand for service - fax, Internet, cell phones, pagers, private lines for everyone in the house including the parakeet - that new combinations were sorely needed. Something had to give. In Suffolk, it was (516). Oh, officials could have implemented something called an "overlay" - a scheme whereby new customers in either county received (631) and old customers continued in (516) - but then even sending out for pizza would have required dialing a "1," plus area code. A person might as well be ordering from Alaska. "The commission tried to make a decision in the best interest of as many people as possible," said Edward Collins, a spokesman for the PSC. "It's a question of balancing issues and concerns."

Bell Atlantic, Long Island's largest supplier of local telephone service, urges an upbeat view of area code proliferation. "Yes, there is an inconvenience," said John Bonomo, Bell Atlantic's staff director for media relations. "But a new code probably is an indication that your area is doing pretty well." Understood correctly, Bonomo says, Suffolk's new code is not a sign of surrender - but a salute to progress and prosperity. At public hearings earlier this year, Suffolk residents said they had worries about the new code. Something else to remember. New stationery for businesses. Maybe the elderly would be upset.

Folks fretted over the (516) identity issue, too - but nothing like Manhattan. When city dudes learned their world-famous (212) was to be joined last summer by upstart (646), it was as though Saks had been rehabbed for a bowling alley. What was the point of paying \$2,000 a month for a West Side studio and parking the car in New Jersey if your phone number began with the cachet-less (646)? Instant urban angst. By comparison, Suffolk telephone customers seem stoic. The arrival of (631)? "Doesn't bother me - as long as I can remember it," said Lillian Fromm of Patchogue. Perspective is essential. Compared with termites, tax reassessments, the presidency of Donald Trump, a new area code isn't such a big deal. "Oh, well," said Pat Milowsky, owner of the Windsong Country Store in Southold. "There's a lot more that can happen to you." In Wyandanch, Venetia Miller said she'd deal with the switch, but hoped friends in Massapequa will adjust to calling her at 1-631, and she to dialing them at 1-516. "Four more numbers," she said, sighing. Weren't there enough already? Joanne Sherman said she'd cope, too. "I'm not losing any sleep over it," she said. At least she'll get new business cards now, Sherman said. Her employer had the order on hold until 631 was a sure thing. Ed Dart, an insurance agent in Riverhead, said he'd miss (516), but longs even more for the East End-y letter prefixes - Southold, PEconic, Atlantic, Greenport - that went numeric some 20 years ago. "That's when towns really lost their identities," Dart said. But, he said, there was no way to halt what some call progress. "Everybody is afraid of change," he said. "This is only one of many we all have to accept as the world expands." For some, it's not so easy. Marshall Fishwick, a pop culture expert who teaches American Studies at Virginia Polytechnic and State University in Blacksburg, says the surge of technology scares many people and the constancy of even something as inconsequential as an area code is comforting. "It becomes more than a number," Fishwick said. "It's part of your life, like a tattoo. People are saying, 'Enough is enough. I want something to hold on to.' " Doesn't everyone? "If we can't trust our telephone numbers, what the hell can we trust?" Fishwick asked. To use a term prevalent before voice mail: No answer.

ILLUSTRATION/PHOTO: Newsday Illustration Bob Newman - A telephone receiver with "516" and "631"

KEYWORDS: TELEPHONE NUMBER. SUFFOLK COUNTY.



sign of Splitsville: Suffolk Phone Bills Now Will Bear 631

BY: By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER

EDITION: NASSAU AND SUFFOLK

SECTION: News

DATE: 02-16-2000

A07

Suffolk County residents should soon begin seeing **631** on their phone bills as part of Long Island's area code split.

The new code may not have appeared on the bills of Bell Atlantic Corp. customers in Suffolk who received statements dated earlier this month, such as on the first or the seventh, but it will be on their March bills, company spokesman John Bonomo said.

Last week, Bell Atlantic's directory-assistance service made the switch to the new area code, so when customers ask for a number in Suffolk, they'll be told that the area code is **631**. And customers' Caller ID boxes should now be displaying **631** as the area code if the incoming call is from Suffolk County.

The new code went into effect Nov. 1 but state regulators set up a five-month grace period during which callers should be able to use either 516 or **631** to reach Suffolk County phones. However, the transition hasn't been smooth for several Suffolk County businesses.

Herb Valfer, president of Cutting Tools in Deer Park, said he had at least four or five customers calling in from states such as Ohio and Minnesota who told him that when they used the **631** code, they heard a recorded message saying his phone number was disconnected or no longer in service.

"Things have been quiet over here, and we think it's because people haven't been able to use the new area code," said Valfer, who put the **631** area code on all his new catalogs.

Those in the telecommunications industry say that area code changes aren't always easy because thousands of pieces of telephone switching equipment are involved and many pieces must be changed.

Local phone companies, long-distance carriers, cellular companies, paging firms and a host of other companies get updates once a month on area code

Changes through a master list.

But sometimes, one or two switches are forgotten or programmed incorrectly, keeping an entire neighborhood from dialing that new area code.

In some cases, equipment that businesses use hasn't been correctly updated. Many large companies use "private branch exchanges" or PBXs. That equipment allows employees to dial internal extensions, but can also be programmed to restrict long-distance calls on certain telephone lines within a company. If the company's telecommunications department or contractor hasn't entered the new area code, employees will get an error message.

The New York Public Service Commission mandated the new area code because Long Island's 516, in use since 1951, is running low on numbers that can be Assigned.

Despite any glitches, in less than seven weeks the **631** area code will be mandatory. As of April 1, people calling from Nassau to Suffolk or vice versa will have to dial 11 digits: 1 + the area code + the seven-digit phone number.

Telephone rates are not changing, however, and calls currently billed as Local will stay at a flat rate of 10.6 cents per call while regional calls- from Riverhead to Glen Cove, for instance- will be billed by the minute.

For more information on recent area code changes, customers can call Bell Atlantic's toll-free line at 1-800-322-3558 for a recorded message in English; 1-800-882-7818 for information in Spanish; and 1-800-299-2630 to use teletype machines for the deaf and hearing impaired.

KEYWORDS: AREA CODE.SUFFOLK COUNTY.TELEPHONE.
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By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER, Sign of Splitsville: Suffolk Phone Bills Now Will Bear 631, 02-16-2000, pp A07.

CONNECTIONS / Telephone Service By the Numbers. SIDEBAR: How Voluntary Pooling Works (SEE END OF TEXT)BY: Pradnya Joshi. Pradnya Joshi can be reached via e-mail at joshi@newsday.com.
EDITION: NASSAU AND SUFFOLKSECTION: BusinessDATE: 02-23-2000A40
Now that the new **631** area code is a reality, how long will it be until Long Island needs another new area code? Just five or so years, believe it or not, if current trends continue.

But it's just not because Long Island will have too many faxes, pagers, cell phones and other telecommunications devices demanding phone numbers. The problem is that too many phone numbers go unused. So now, regulators say they are testing a new system of pooling unused numbers and reassigning them to telephone companies as they need them.

A big culprit of the area code explosion has been so-called "stranded" phone numbers. Right now, telephone numbers are assigned to a telephone company by neighborhood in blocks of 10,000, such as 843-0000 through 843-9999. When Ma Bell was the only telephone company around, the system worked fine because the company could easily add numbers by the 10,000s as neighborhoods grew.

However, that process became more complicated after new telecommunications companies came in to compete. These competitors (Long Island has more than 50 of them) must get 10,000 numbers in every area for every area code, regardless of whether they want or need that many numbers. Even if a company has only 100 customers in an area, it will be assigned 10,000 numbers.

It's not the fault of the new carriers; it's just the way things have been done in the telecommunications industry since area codes were introduced 1948. However, something has to change, otherwise the whole nation may face a numbers crisis, of sorts. In 1999, Long Island's 631 was just one of 22 area codes introduced in the United States, and 21 codes are already scheduled to be introduced this year. If the explosion of area codes continues unchecked, North America could run out of three-digit area codes in seven years, according to a report that came out last year. If that happens, we'll have to add another digit to phone numbers, something that industry projections say would cost the country as much as \$150 billion, said Susan Baldwin, senior vice president of the Boston consulting firm Economics and Technology Inc.

"It's critical right now that we make those area codes last," Baldwin said. "The point is not to sit on our hands and give up."

So now, the industry is trying a system of giving out numbers to carriers in blocks of 1,000 instead of through number pooling. Sounds easy enough, but it has taken several years to test the system. If it works, number pooling would mean the country would not run out of area codes until 2051 if all companies including wireless carriers participated, according to Neustar Inc., the company that has the federal contract to administer the way area codes and phone numbers are allocated in the United States.

To be sure, it's a bit of a bureaucratic process requiring committees, rules, administrators and planning. For about two years, telecommunications companies have been testing a solution to preserve numbers in places such as the New York City area and Chicago, and federal regulators are expected to finalize the rules for pooling numbers early this year.

Neustar, a company that was recently spun out from Lockheed Martin Corp., has also been handling a test of number pooling in New York's 212 and 718 area codes.

Under voluntary pooling, nine companies donated 34,000 phone numbers in the 212 area code and 23,000 have been assigned to other companies, according to Neustar.

But carriers have had to make changes. For instance, telephone switches are taught to transfer calls to a certain telephone company based on the area code and the first three digits of a phone number; with number pooling, they have to be reprogrammed to use four digits. In addition, industry billing systems and a host of other equipment need to be adjusted too. Telephone carriers also need to have equipment that knows how to allow customers to keep their phone number even if they change phone companies.

"It was a pretty massive job and it's still not completed," said Dennis Wax, director of regulatory affairs for Bell Atlantic.

Bell Atlantic has been supporting the pooling trials in New York and has "donated" 29,000 numbers to the pool, though Wax said that the company has been pressing for federal rules so that the same procedures are in place from state to state.

In New York, pooling has been voluntary so far, but state regulators are going to make it mandatory in the 716 area code as of April 1. A spokesman for the New York Public Service Commission said the staff is considering having a voluntary system to pool the 516 and the new 631 area codes, but staff members are still evaluating proposals. Several carriers say that they are happy with the concept and the way trials have been going.

"It gets us numbers quicker," said Dan Meldazis, senior manger of regulatory affairs at Focal Communications Corp., one of the new competitors in New York City. "I was still able to get numbers in 212 when I couldn't get a full [block of 10,000 numbers]." If everything works, the pool could be expanded to dole out numbers one by one a few years down the road, Wax said.

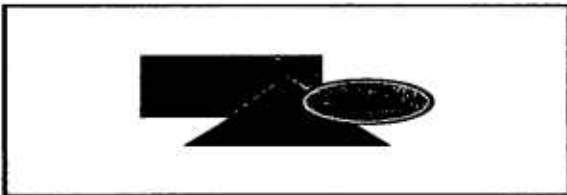
How Voluntary Pooling Works

How carriers get new phone numbers in an area code:

Phone numbers are assigned to telecommunications companies in blocks of 10,000 by the "central office" administrator, which is now part of a company called Neustar Inc. That process takes 66 days.

Under a voluntary "number pooling" system, a telecommunications company that meets the requirements can instead ask the pooling administrator of Neustar for a block of 1,000 numbers. If a block of numbers is available, it takes up to 28 days to be assigned.

Under mandatory number pooling (such as what will be required in the 716 area code as of April 1), all carriers must go through the pooling administrator whenever they need a new set of phone numbers. And perhaps one day, the new area codes coming out will stop stranding phone numbers.



Switch Backed Up / For thousands, 631 area code delayed

BY: By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER

EDITION: NASSAU AND SUFFOLK

SECTION: News

DATE: 03-01-2000

A08

Procrastinators rejoice. Thousands of phone numbers scattered throughout Suffolk County will not have to switch to the **631** area code just yet.

After an active campaign waged by Long Island alarm companies, the New York Public Service Commission has decided that many Suffolk phone numbers will get a 19-month extension-until Oct. 31, 2001-before they'll receive calls exclusively with the new **631** area code. The previous deadline for all Suffolk County numbers was April 1.

Whether you get the extension depends on the first three digits of your phone number, what the industry calls telephone exchanges or NXX codes. Thirty-three of Suffolk's 254 unique three-digit prefixes will get the reprieve, officials said yesterday, affecting about 330,000 telephone numbers.

This means that for the next 20 months, anyone dialing one of those numbers from outside of Long Island should be able to connect whether they dial 516 or **631**, officials said. And no area code will be needed for dialing these numbers between counties.

However, if your number does not carry one of the 33 exempt prefixes, callers trying to reach you from outside Suffolk County must use 1+ 631 as of April 1. Otherwise, these callers will get a recorded message notifying them that the area code is changed. After six months, calls will not go through.

The commission also decided that, through Oct. 31, 2001, all Suffolk callers dialing one of 190,000 numbers in Nassau County identified by 19 three-digit prefixes will get through with or without dialing 1+516. This means that as many as 520,000 phones Islandwide may be affected by the delays.

Fred Leonardo, president of Electronix Systems Central Station Alarms Inc., in Huntington Station, said the reprieve "took a load off" alarm companies struggling to reprogram systems to recognize the changed area code. "It would have been a total impossibility" to finish adjusting 12,000 alarm accounts that needed reprogramming by April 1, he said. "Now, we can go out and get them done on a timely basis."

Andy Lowitt, vice president of Metrodial Central Station, an alarm company based in Hicksville, which services thousands of clients in Suffolk County, said he also was relieved.

If there was a burglary or a fire before the firm could reprogram an alarm in Suffolk County, the alarm call would get a recording, he said. "It's good that there's some attention to this."

The area code change was key to about a dozen alarm companies that are located in one county, but serve customers in another, the PSC said. Alarms programmed to automatically dial monitoring stations in another county will need to be reprogrammed to dial 11 digits. In many cases, the alarm companies must physically visit their customers to reprogram.

The indirect beneficiaries of the change, meanwhile, include thousands of homes and businesses that share the same telephone exchanges as one of the alarm companies that petitioned the state regulators for an extension.

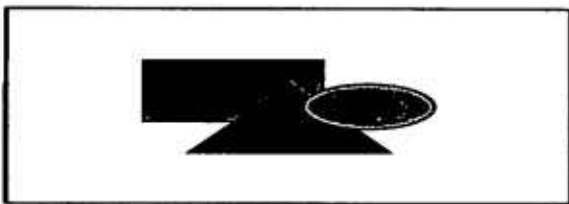
For instance, The Honda Men, a Copiague-based auto-repair shop, thought it had only until April 1 to notify its customers to adjust their phone number. Now, they have almost two years.

"I've been pressing customers to use the new area code," said manager James Mitchell. "I just went out and ordered new stationery."

While Mitchell seemed unconcerned about the delay, some who didn't get the Extension yesterday expressed annoyance.

"It would've helped us [to have the extension] because we would not have had to change things around so much," said Mike McBride, vice president of Bohemia-based Dependable Promotions Inc., a company that still faces the April 1 deadline. He argued that the original PSC schedule "didn't give anyone the time [to adjust to a new area code]."

Dave Flanagan, a spokesman for the PSC, said the decision to grant an Extension was made last month, but the current list of exempt numbers was



not completed until last week.

"This is not something we've been playing up to avoid any potential confusion," he said. "We had this special circumstance and we were able to come up with what we thought was an addressable solution."

Exchange Reprieve

The central office (NXX) codes in Nassau and Suffolk Counties for which Permissive dialing using either the 516 or the H5H5631H7H7 area code will be extended through Oct. 31, 2001.

Nassau: 294, 333, 338, 379, 433, 479*, 681, 741, 752, 756, 842, 873, 876, 931, 932, 937, 938, 942, 997.

Suffolk: 207, 232, 234, 271, 289, 321, 342, 351, 385, 421, 423, 424, 425, 427, 447, 475, 547, 582, 585, 588, 654, 665, 666, 673, 696, 727, 736, 737, 738, 752, 756, 758, 842.

*-Assigned to Teleport Communications Group; all other codes are assigned to Bell Atlantic.

ILLUSTRATION/PHOTO: Newsday Chart - Exchange Reprieve (see end of text)

KEYWORDS: SUFFOLK COUNTY.TELEPHONE.

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By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER, Switch Backed Up / For thousands, 631 area code delayed, 03-01-2000, pp A08.

code before the end of the decade. And Nassau is close to a second of its own. How long before area codes designate blocks, then single streets, then individuals?

I have always felt alienated, anyway. What better way to validate myself than to have my own area code?

What do you say? The spokeswoman considered my request, which I made during a telephone interview.

"There are a finite number of three-digit numbers," she said. To be exact, there are 679 possible combinations within the requirements of the industry, she said.

How many are in use?

"Two hundred and twenty," she said.

That leaves 459 area codes, one of which has got to be just perfect for me. Something that starts with a nine or a seven would be nice. Those are my favorite numbers. . .

She was polite, but then she hung up.

CONNECTIONS / Nothing Easy About The Switch to 631

BY: Pradnya Joshi. Pradnya Joshi can be reached via e-mail at pjoshi@newsday.com. EDITION: NASSAU AND SUFFOLK SECTION: Business DATE: 03-08-2000 A62

The area code change seemed so straightforward just a year ago: Any phone number in Nassau County would get the 516 area code, and all numbers in Suffolk County would get 631 as of this April.

Easy, right? Yeah, right.

In this era of competition, public forums and technological advances, though, nothing is easy. So let's look at some of the disparate issues accompanying the change. First, there's the schedule, which some are concerned is just too tight.

After April 1, callers who use 516 to dial Suffolk numbers won't get through. Instead, they'll hear a recorded message informing them that the area code has been changed to 631.

That's all fine and dandy. But beginning in May, just one short month later, that notification will be dropped. Instead, callers will likely hear only an error message, such as one that says "your call cannot be completed as dialed; please check the number and try your call again."

Dennis Wax, director of regulatory affairs at Bell Atlantic, said that keeping the recorded warning longer would just prolong the adjustment. "All it does," Wax argued, "is proliferate bad behavior."

But some businesses are concerned that if the phone companies begin assigning identical seven-digit numbers in the two counties beginning in May, as could be the case, it will cause confusion and possibly lose them customers.

Many have said they would like to get mirror numbers in both counties, but the assigning of these numbers is a complicated process that can take months, or even years, according to phone company officials.

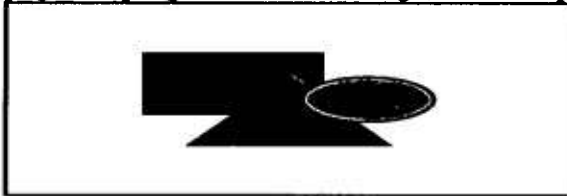
But scheduling isn't the only issue that has people concerned. For instance, if you have a pager or cellular phone, you may want to double check with the company providing the service to see whether the area code is changing.

Originally, all pagers and cellular phones were supposed to be "grandfathered" into the 516 area code, although state regulators have said since then that customers would have the option of keeping 516.

Last October, the Public Service Commission slightly modified that order. After several cellular and paging companies said that many Suffolk customers wanted 631 area codes, the PSC ordered that wireless carriers could choose whether to switch certain "telephone exchanges" (the first three digits of a phone number) to the new area code.

Even if you live in Nassau County, your pager or cell phone could be served from an office located in Suffolk County, so it's important to check with the company providing the service to see whether the area code is changing.

Bell Atlantic Mobile customers that currently have pagers or cellular phones through the company will keep the 516 area code. But if they want to change their device to the 631 number, they can go into any Bell Atlantic Mobile store in Suffolk County and have their cell phones or pagers reprogrammed at no charge, said company spokesman Robin Nicol.



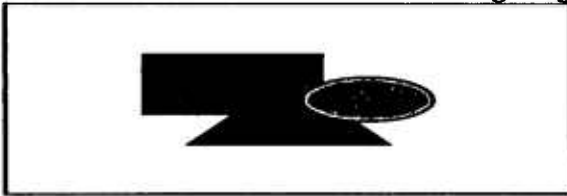
PageNet Inc. is informing its customers through inserts in their bills as to whether or not their pager will get the new 631 area code or will stay in 516.

In some cases, new Long Island cellular customers are getting phones with the 917, 646, 347 or 718 area codes because of the shortage of 516 numbers. MCI WorldCom's cellular operations on Long Island, for example, have said they are assigning all of those numbers because there just aren't enough 516 numbers available for their customers.

But the company is compensating those customers by giving them free long-distance when they use their cell phones while in the home area.

Finally, some companies have complained already that their customers weren't able to get through to them using the 631 area code. So, whom do you call if that happens to you? It's not an easy answer.

Because of the nature of telephone switching equipment, the problem could be anywhere. For instance, the problem could be located in the caller's own equipment, if he or she is calling from a company. Many companies have what are called PBX switches, which allow the company to restrict certain extensions from making long-distance calls.



If the PBX administrator has not programmed in 631 as a valid area code for that extension, the caller will hear an error message.

Next off, the problem could be with the caller's local or long-distance company. Telephone company routing switches look at the area code and the first three digits of a phone number before they figure out where to send each particular call.

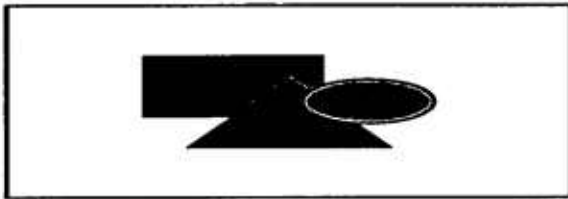
All phone companies are notified once a month about new area codes and new "telephone exchanges" that have been activated so that they can reprogram their equipment to recognize new numbers. But given that thousands of pieces of equipment need to be reprogrammed, it's possible that one piece of equipment along the route was not changed or was reprogrammed incorrectly.

Finally, the problem could sit with your individual phone company. Bell Atlantic is not the only telephone company anymore, and in fact, more than 100 companies are authorized to provide telephone service in New York State.

New 631Area Code Dials Up Trouble

BY: By Pradnya Joshi. STAFF WRITER EDITION: NASSAUSECTION: BusinessDATE: 04-11-2000A53

A week after the 631area code was supposed to take effect, several businesses and residence lines near the Nassau-Suffolk border continue to report problems with people using the new number.



Bell Atlantic Corp. had planned on taking an extra week to make the 631area code mandatory for Suffolk County lines served by its offices in Farmingdale, but the company acknowledges that some problems have continued.

For instance, Schwing Electrical Supply Corp. in Suffolk County and was supposed to switch to the 631area code as of April 1. However, Monday morning, callers trying to reach them using either 631 or 516 area codes were either hearing a busy signal or were told that the number had been disconnected or was no longer in service.

"I can't live without calls from my customers," said Peter Schwing, president of the 85-employee Farmingdale-based company that distributes electrical construction supplies.

Bell Atlantic officials said the company had problems with its equipment in the Farmingdale switch yesterday but that most of the problems should have been fixed.

"Any problem that any customer has, there is no excuse for that," said Dave Rosenzweig, Bell Atlantic's vice president of network operations for New York and New England.

Another firm, Web developer Axl.net Communications, said that its problems are persisting. One of his customers from New Jersey sent the company a frantic e-mail when he heard the message that said Axl.net's Farmingdale number had been disconnected or was no longer in service.

President Alexander Foley said his company gets its telephone service from Cablevision's telephone subsidiary Lightpath, who said it was a Bell Atlantic problem. But when he called Bell Atlantic to report the trouble, he was told to call Lightpath.

Bill Valane, the Bell Atlantic manager who has been in charge of the switch, estimates that only 100 phone lines out of the 80,000 lines served out of Farmingdale would have been affected by the problems.

But several of the companies that reported having problems yesterday said they have dozens of lines affected.

The problems occurred because Bell Atlantic had to figure out what phone numbers belonged in Suffolk County and what numbers belonged in Nassau County as a result of the area code split.