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Dial 511 for transportation information
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Stuck in endless traffic and wondering what's the hang-up down the road?
Call 511

Wednesday is the official public kick-off for 511, the Georgia Department of Transportation's new phone-in information service.

The federal government is trying to get all 50 states to establish a seamless nationwide 511 network for travelers by 2010. It's more than halfway there, according to Georgia DOT.

Georgia officials plan a 511 roll-out Wednesday studded with the state's transportation stars, a spokesman said, including Transportation Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl and Gov. Sonny Perdue.

The system is an expanded version of Georgia Navigator's call-in service. The old system will shut down in about 6 months, according to DOT.

Commuters dialing 511 in Georgia can get information about troublesome weather, congestion or accidents blocking their routes on major highways, as well as estimated travel times for metro Atlanta. They can also contribute to the information network by reporting accidents.

Parts of the service will be available for all state routes in all 159 counties. The HERO incident response units will be available through 511 on metro Atlanta major highways, said Anthony Bradford, who heads GDOT's Transportation Management Center.

"[The new system is] more comprehensive," said Bradford, and "means more reliability and predictability of all traffic and travel related information."

The system is automated and has voice recognition for those who don't want to punch in responses, but callers can still access a live operator if they want one. For some questions, callers will be routed to other agencies like MARTA, the airport, or the Clean Air Campaign for those interested in ride sharing.