



RELAY TEXAS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2008

A Fond Farewell to Ed Bosson

By Michael Ligas

It is Sprint Relay's immense pleasure to bid a fond farewell to Roy "Ed" Bosson, who retired from the Texas Public Utility Commission as a Relay Administrator on Aug. 29. Bosson has made a major impact in millions of deaf and hard of hearing people's lives, not to mention their families, colleagues and friends.

A graduate of the Arkansas School for the Deaf, Bosson earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Gallaudet University in 1966. His fascination with and love of telecommunications began as a computer technician at State Farm Insurance Company. He served on the Relay Advisory Board in Texas, and was part of a group of Texans that was a driving force behind the newly created legislation that introduced relay services to the state in 1990. As one of the leading states



Ed Bosson

in relay service provision, Texas quickly became a model for other states before the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted.

Although Bosson is widely known as the "Father of VRS," his contributions to the community far exceed that awe-inspiring honor. His outstanding community and professional achievements are renowned to many.

For instance, Bosson worked closely with the Texas PUC advisory board to become the first state to implement TRS services that are commonplace today, such as: Voice Carry-Over, Spanish translations, dialed number verification, split-screen ASCII, time stamp macro, 900 TRS calls, automatic spelling correction, call branding, Hearing Carry-Over, among many others. He also served on several governing boards, including, NECA Advisory Board, National Association for State Relay Administration (Bosson was its second chairperson in 1994, then served as chairperson again in 2002 and 2004), and Texas PUC Advisory Board.

Bosson played a major role with the State Telecommunications Assistance Program/Equipment Distribution Program. He was also involved with various organizations, including the Texas Association of the Deaf, Interstate TRS Fund Council, National Association of the Deaf Technology Committee, National VRS Coalition, and TDI E911 Committee.

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Ten-Digit Numbers for Relay Now a Reality!

By Ed Bosson

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently released a Rule and Order, adopting a system for assigning ten-digit telephone numbers (TN) to users of Internet-based relay services such as video relay services (VRS) and Internet Protocol (IP) Relay. This means a real TN - not a proxy or fake TN - can be given to *both* hearing persons or deaf/hard of hearing persons.

Let's use the videophone as an example: if a hearing person uses your TN, he or she does not have to first call VRS; rather, the TN will automatically go through the VRS of your choice. This same TN can

also be used by a deaf person calling you through a videophone, whether it is a VP200, Ojo, V-PAD, MVP, or The Z. The system will recognize the call regardless of if it comes from a deaf caller or a hearing caller. Oh, yes, those darn IP addresses like 23.170.33.105 will not be needed anymore. Another nice thing is that toll-free numbers (800 or 866, for instance) will not be needed. Instead, your area code and seven-digit phone number will be used.

One important thing to know about the use of TN is that if you call 9-1-1 using VRS, the VRS provider will know who you are, and where you are located, without having the emergency dispatcher ask you who you are and where you live. This will

save time and possibly lives as well.

The FCC Rule & Order requires the availability of TN by Dec. 31, 2008. Once this happens, this is how it will work: Decide which VRS provider you want to be your "default" provider. Contact this VRS provider, which will assign you a TN. This TN can then be shared with anyone - hearing or deaf. For instance, give this TN to your doctor, car mechanic, or cable technician without worrying about missing calls from them. This *same* number will also be the one you give to other deaf people or videophone callers.

However, an important note is that you will need to "register" with a preferred VRS or IP provider. The provider will then verify that what you register is who you really are and actually live at the address you list. In other words, you will need to prove that the information you provide is accurate. This helps the provider in many ways, such as for emergency calls. One benefit of this is the reduction of scammers abusing the IP relay system because now they cannot prove who they are or where they are from (Nigeria, for example). Hopefully, this will reduce the amount of hang-ups from retailers and other companies.

To read the entire Rule and Order by the FCC, go to http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-08-151A1.pdf.

Speech Disabled Customers Benefit From Simplified Access to 7-1-1

Relay Texas now offers a new 7-1-1 access option for speech disabled customers in Texas. Relay Texas Speech-to-Speech (STS) is a service that provides voice assistance to persons who can hear and may have speech challenges speaking over the phone. Relay Texas has one of the largest STS programs in the country. In order to provide additional assistance to speech disabled customers, a new access method was developed.

When STS users dial 7-1-1 to access Relay Texas, they will now be provided the option to "press two" to directly access the STS service. This option allows quick and seamless access STS users dialing 7-1-1.

Relay Texas is the first telecommunications relay provider to offer this unique feature, with Sprint Relay as the contracted relay provider.

Relay Texas Hosts Town Hall Meetings



*Left: Robert Giuntoli, Relay Texas account manager, shares the latest in 7-1-1 technology in Brownsville.
Center: Relay Texas customers enjoy pizza and socializing before the town hall meeting in Brownsville.
Right: Relay Texas customers in Corpus Christi get ready to learn more about Relay Texas.*

Town hall meetings are when the Sprint Account Manager and Relay Texas Administrator go to various communities around the state to answer questions and to gather feedback, ideas, concerns and compliments from Relay Texas customers. These meetings are informal and comfortable settings, where Relay Texas serve free pizza and drinks prior to the meeting. The manager and administrator communicate via American Sign Language, and their words are voice-interpreted and captioned. Usually after discussing Relay Texas, new relay technologies and wireless devices are discussed, as well as new state and federal regulations. Between 40–80 customers attend each of the five town hall meetings held every year across the state.



With his owner out for the day, Maxwell orders a large double bacon pizza through TRS.

What is Relay Texas?

Relay Texas provides telephone interpreting service between people who can hear and those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled. Relay Texas agents have equipment that enables them to hear the voice user as well as read the signals from the text telephone (TTY) user.

This service is available for Texans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are no restrictions imposed on Relay Texas calls. Texas and United States laws assure confidentiality for relay users and operators.

To learn more about Relay Texas and its services, visit www.relaytexas.com.

CapTel's Next
Generation
is here . . .

Sprint
Relay

WebCapTel®

www.sprintcaptel.com

- This service will be available in March 2008.
- No special equipment needed – just a phone and a computer with internet access.
- Captions of everything heard on the phone are displayed through your Internet browser.
- Catch every word of the whole conversation with ease.
- Save or print your conversation!

For more information:

www.sprintrelay.com/captel

To register to use WebCapTel:

www.sprintcaptel.com/registration.asp

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Sprint WebCapTel®

CapTel's Next Generation.

Service begins in March 2008



No special equipment needed. All you need is:

- ▶ a desk telephone, cordless telephone, or cell phone.
- ▶ a desktop computer or laptop with an internet connection.



How to make a call with WebCapTel:

CapTel - Place a Call Via the Web
www.sprintcaptel.com

Login

Username:

Password:

My Telephone Number

Number To Dial

- 1 Go online to: www.sprintcaptel.com
- 2 Login with your **username and password**. **NOTE:** New users must register first.
- 3 Click on the **Logon** button.
- 4 Type your phone number in the **My Telephone Number** box.
- 5 Type the number of the person you are calling in the **Number To Dial** box.
- 6 Click the **PLACE CALL** button.
- 7 When your phone rings first, answer it and wait for your caller to answer.
- 8 Then the captions appear on your screen.
Enjoy your call.



How to receive an incoming call:

- 1 Have your phone ready.
- 2 Login to SprintCapTel.com. (New users must register first.)
- 3 On the **Wait for Call** field, type **your phone number**.
- 4 Click **"Start Waiting For Calls"**.
- 5 Inform your callers to dial **800-933-7219** and input your phone number.
- 6 When your phone rings, the captions appear on your computer screen.
- 7 Answer the call and enjoy your conversation.

Wait For Calls At:



NOTE:
If your computer is in "sleep mode" or you are not logged in, incoming phone calls will not be captioned.

Sprint Relay Customer Service Contact Information:

Phone: 1-888-269-7477 (Voice)
1-800-482-2424 (TTY)
Email: captel@captelmail.com
Website: www.captionedtelephone.com

CapTel - Place a Call Via the Web

(Dialing Your Telephone Number: Dialing 4105559876) ~~
Waiting for Captions... (CapTel CA # 4321) Ringing 1... 2... Hello This is Sam.

Font: Arial Font Size: 14 pt Text Color: Black Background Color: White Save Display Settings

End Call
Logout

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WebCapTel®: Enjoy the Phone Again

Sprint Relay recently launched a new captioned telephone service that helps an estimated 28 million Americans with hearing loss communicate comfortably over the telephone.

Sprint WebCapTel® is a free, revolutionary web-based service that allows a person who prefers to use his or her own voice, but has difficulty hearing over the telephone, to read word-for-word captions on a computer monitor or a laptop.

Using the service is easy. Prior to making a call, the Sprint WebCapTel user logs onto the CapTel website and provide both the 'calling to' number as well as the number to call the user back. This enables the user to speak directly during the telephone conversation, while reading captions of what the other party is saying. Captions appear virtually at the same time as the person speaks, allowing participants to enjoy the natural flow of an interactive telephone conversation.

The user can listen to the other person speaking through any telephone, including wireless phones, cell phones or landline phones, as long as he or she has access to a telephone and the Internet.

Sprint WebCapTel users do not pay long distance charges for calls that they make through the service. Cell phone users, however, may be charged for the actual use of minutes by their cell phone provider.

During a Sprint WebCapTel call, when the person on the other line speaks to the WebCapTel user, everything heard is turned into words that can be read on the user's computer screen. In addition to reading captions of the conversation, a Sprint WebCapTel user also has the ability to save the conversation and cus-



tomize the screen to his or her preference, including the background, font size and color. When a call is completed, the user can save the captioned conversation for later review, allowing for concentration on participation in the phone conversation.

Although the service is free, users must register to use the service. To sign up, a user can simply go to the Sprint WebCapTel registration page and enter all of the required in-

formation; the caller can select a user name and a password. There are security measures in place to prevent unauthorized users from signing up. Sprint WebCapTel users are then e-mailed a link to click on to verify that their e-mail addresses are valid, and then they can make and receive calls using Sprint WebCapTel.

Dialing 9-1-1 Using WebCapTel

In case of an emergency, a user can reach 9-1-1 with captions by using Sprint WebCapTel. When dialing 9-1-1 via Sprint WebCapTel, the caller must be able to speak to the location agent to determine where then emergency is. Only then will the user be connected to the correct emergency services to explain the emergency.

9-1-1 services through Sprint WebCapTel is different than if 9-1-1 were dialed on a regular phone. Dialing 9-1-1 using a phone will almost always get to the right emergency center faster than dialing 9-1-1 via Sprint WebCapTel.

For more information about Sprint WebCapTel and how it works, visit www.sprintcaptel.com or www.sprint-relay.com/webcaptel.htm.

Voice Carry-Over Tips

If you use Voice Carry-Over (VCO) as your relay service, here are some tips to make your calls easier.

- When the relay operator answers your call, begin your call by saying “Hello” or “Please call...” or “Area code...” rather than speaking the number right away. This prevents your having to repeat the number to the relay operator.
- It also helps the relay operator if you sound out each number individually and clearly. For example, for the number 7614, speak out “seven – six – one – four” rather than “seventy-six fourteen.” Numbers such as fourteen can sound like forty, fifteen can sound like fifty, and so on.
- If you frequently call the same person(s), you can have frequently dialed numbers included in your Customer Database Profile. Once this is set up in your profile, you will not have to give the relay operator the phone number each time. Instead, you can ask the relay operator to “Call Mom,” “Call Bill’s cell phone,” “Call Alice,” or other names you have included in your list.
- If you do not need the relay operator to type out an answering machine message but you want to leave a message, tell the relay operator this at the start of the call. For example: “Relay operator, if there’s an answering machine, I’ll leave a message.” Or if you do not want to leave a message, you can say to the operator, “If an answering machine picks up, just hang up.”
- If you have relatives and friends who call you regularly, please remind them to let the relay operator know that they are calling a VCO user. This helps the operator have the call already processed and set up for when you answer.
- Relay operators want to dial your number quickly, but occasionally they will ask you to verify the number you gave. They do this occasionally even with voice/hearing callers as well.
- It takes a moment for the relay operator to switch communication modes. For example, if you want to switch from VCO to TTY mode or vice-versa, let the relay operator know. When the operator has switched the mode, s/he will let you know then you can type or speak, thereby avoiding having to repeat yourself.

Bosson Retires Aug. 29

Bosson, from front page

Bosson has received recognition for his immeasurable contributions, including the Smithsonian Institute Award for Technology Innovation in 1996, the TDI Robert H. Weitbrecht Telecommunications Access Award in 1999, Gallaudet University Laurent Clerc Award in 2007, and an honorary doctorate from Gallaudet University in 2008.

The Sprint Relay team has worked with Ed for over 18 years. It has been a wonderful partnership where we have continually learned from and challenged each other.

We will miss you, Ed Bosson!

Visit the Relay Texas website at:



WWW.RELAYTEXAS.COM

RELAY PHONE NUMBERS

7-1-1 <i>Relay Texas (TTY/Voice)</i>	1-TRS-VCO-1RTX 1 (877) 826-1789 VCO	1 (877) 826-6608 <i>Speech-to-Speech/VCO</i>
1 (800) RELAY-TX 1 (800) 735-2988 Voice	1 (900) 320-2303 <i>To make a 900 call</i>	1 (800) 662-4954 <i>Spanish Translation</i>
1 (800) RELAY-XI 1 (800) 735-2991 ASCII	1 (877) 826-6607 <i>Speech-to-Speech</i>	1 (888) 777-5380 <i>French Creole</i>

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