

**\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\***

**Area Code 403 Running out of Numbers**

Canada, along with most of the industrialized world, is experiencing an increasing need for telephone numbers. The region covered by area code 403, located in southern Alberta, is the latest Canadian locality to experience this phenomenon. The rapid proliferation of fax machines, wireless phones, Internet connections, pagers and data services, as well as the advent of local telephone competition means the supply of area code 403 telephone numbers is being depleted at a faster rate than expected. When area codes exhaust, new area codes must be added to make more numbers available.

In July 2004, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC Canada), which serves as the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA), initiated a Relief Planning Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast, the results of which indicated area code 403 is expected to exhaust in the fourth quarter of 2009. In accordance with Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) approved guidelines, the CNA is required to commence area code relief planning 72 months in advance of the Projected Exhaust Date for an area code. This six year relief planning window ensures that there is sufficient time to prepare for introduction of a new area code 12 to 18 months in advance of the exhaust date of the original area code.

At the time the CNA identified the projected exhaust date for area code 403, some representatives of the Canadian telecommunications industry identified that area code 780, located in northern Alberta, may be impacted by any relief plans implemented for area code 403. Although area code 780 is just outside of the relief planning window, relief planning for this area code has been advanced to enable consideration of relief plans and methods for area codes 403 and 780 on a province-wide basis in Alberta.

Relief planning committees, comprising local telecommunications service providers, local interest groups and representatives from government, will be formed in November to collectively formulate relief plans for implementation of the new area code(s). Relief planning committee meetings and conference calls are open to public participation, and are facilitated by the CNA. The initial area code 403 relief planning meeting will be held in Calgary, Alberta on November 22 and 23, 2004, while the area code 780 initial planning meeting will be held in Edmonton, Alberta on November 25 and 26. These committees will develop proposed area code relief plans, including the proposed method and schedule of implementation for the new area code(s), and will forward the plans to the CRTC. The CRTC will then issue a Public Notice, soliciting comments about the proposed area code relief plan.

The depletion of telephone numbers is not a new phenomenon. Over the past few years, the CNA and CRTC have initiated public processes in other parts of the country to develop and implement relief plans that best suit the needs of each specific area. In 1999, area code 780 was created by creating a North/South split of the 403 area code with a horizontal boundary line drawn north of the Red Deer and Stettler Exchange Areas. All areas and communities south of the boundary line retained area code 403 and the areas and communities north of the boundary line were given the new area code 780.

Area code relief activities are administered by SAIC Canada, which was selected to serve as the CNA by the Canadian Numbering Administration Consortium Inc., which operates under the jurisdiction of the CRTC. The CNA is a neutral, third-party administrator that works with the telecommunications industry in developing area code relief plans as well as performing the administration of all Canadian telecommunications numbering resources. The CNA's website address is: [www.cnac.ca](http://www.cnac.ca).

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