

HIGHWAY ADVISORY RADIO

The following is a description of some low-powered radio systems providing motorists with information on road conditions. These stations are apparently operated by state and local governments in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The source of the information is the March 24, 1978 issue of Industrial Communications.

- CA A station is in operation at the Los Angeles International Airport on 530 kHz. It operates 18 hrs a day, 7 days a week and provides information on traffic conditions, parking, and terminal locations. The antenna is a buried cable 15200' long and power output is 10 watts.
- CO A system in operation at the Eisenhower tunnel on I-70, west of Denver provides information on tunnel cx, road cx, traffic cx, etc. Information is gathered at the tunnel control center, recorded onto tape, & sent over phone lines to transmitters at Dumont & Dillon, which I assume are towns at either end of the tunnel. The xrs operate w/"up to 10 watts" into above ground monopole antennas on 1610 kHz. Effective range is said to be 2.5 miles. This stn has had problems w/unreliable xrs, which are being replaced.
- IA Two stations along I-80 were installed in July 1977. One is near Walnut Junction in western Iowa, the other is west of the Rte. 301 interchange in eastern Iowa. The stns are used to provide info on road & wx cx, highway construction info, & "welcome to Iowa" type messages. The stns operate on 1610 w/10 watts into vertical monopole antennas. Messages are prerecorded and operate NSP.
- MN A stn along I-35W between 66th & 76th Streets in Minneapolis operates with 20 watts into 6000' of RADIAX cable antenna. The stn is used to alert motorists of adverse traffic cx and operates on 530 kHz from 0600-1900 local time.
- PA Since 12/75 a stn has been in operation on the Walt Whitman bridge in Philadelphia. It operates 0630-0900 ELT advising motorists of traffic cx on the Schuylkill Expressway, and also provides PSAs promoting mass transit & carpools. The antenna is a 6000' cable suspended on the bridge and the xr operates on 530 kHz w/10 watts. This system has been so successful that the PA Dept of Transportation decided to build 4 more, 3 of which are now in operation. Unfortunately, no freqs or locations were mentioned in the article.
- WY Two systems along I-80 were installed in 1976, one at Laramie and the other at Walcott Junction. The system does not operate all the time, but is used in conjunction with a "variable message sign" along the highway to provide information on road cx, closures, bad wx, etc. Each xr operates w/4 watts into an 8 mile buried cable antenna on 530 kHz. So far, this system has had 2 major problems: rodents gnawing through the cable, and poor reception on cars w/wind-shield antennas.

Of the systems described, the ones most likely to be hrd at some distance are the two with vertical antennas. The one in Iowa was hrd by an NRCer in Ohio recently, so DXers in the western U.S. might want to try for the one near Denver. The buried cable antennas have somewhat limited coverage; my experience w/the one at the L.A. airport is that it is lost in the HNL about 4 blocks from the boulevard leading into the airport. The radiation characteristics of the cable suspended from the bridge might be kind of interesting. Most of the above systems have "experimental" licenses. On 7/29/77 the FCC authorized the Travellers' Information Service, whereby stations similar to these HAR stns could be regularly licensed. However, so far no TIS licenses have been granted because local governments have "improperly" filled out the applications and none of the commercially available low-pwr AM xrs are type accepted (approved for use) by the FCC.

The stations described in this article are not the only low-powered BCB stns in operation. Past issues of DXM have had accounts of stns in various national parks and one at the U.S. Customs stn between San Diego & Tijuana. There are also a few 100 mw operations scattered around the country which, due to their low power, need no license. If you know of any, why not mention them in a forum report.

--- Bruce Portzer

D18-2-2

TRAVELERS INFORMATION STATIONS AT
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

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PROPOSED OR OPERATING SITES AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF THE YEAR:

MAMMOTH HEADQUARTERS
WILLOW PARK - 8 MILES SOUTH OF MAMMOTH
MADISON JUNCTION
BEETLE TREE AREA - 4 MILES WEST OF MADISON JUNCTION
FOUNTAIN FLATS DRIVE JUNCTION
MIDWAY GEYSER BASIN
OLD FAITHFUL
GRANT VILLAGE CAMPGROUND
BRIDGE BAY CAMPGROUND
FISHING BRIDGE CAMPGROUND
STEAMBOAT POINT - EAST OF LAKE
SOUTH RIM DRIVE
CANYON CAMPGROUND
MT. WASHBURN PARKING LOT
TOWER FALLS RANGER STATION JUNCTION
LAMAR VALLEY RANGER STATION
FIREHOLE LAKE DRIVE
INDIAN CREEK CAMPGROUND
MUD VOLCANO
HAYDEN VALLEY
NORRIS GEYSER BASIN
NORTH ENTRANCE
NORTHEAST ENTRANCE
WEST ENTRANCE
SOUTH ENTRANCE
EAST ENTRANCE

ALL STATIONS OPERATE ON 1610 KHZ WITH 0.1 WATTS. SOME UNITS ARE
SOLAR POWERED. SOME OF THE STATIONS MAY BE OFF AT ANY GIVEN TIME
AND SOME STATIONS OPERATE ONLY SEASONLY.

INFORMATION AND LIST WAS SENT BY MR. DUANE TURNER, ELECT. TECH AT
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, UPON A REQUEST FROM BILL HARMS.

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