



Mandatory 1 plus ten in effect

Published 10/30/2009 - 9:36 a.m.

After months of announcements and reminders, it's here: 1-760.

Starting Saturday, Oct. 24, Ramonans attempting to telephone Ramonans via a landline were told "you must dial a 1 and the area code to call this number." Those calling from a cell phone do not have to dial 1 before the area code.

It's how the California Public Utilities Commission dealt with opposition from northern San Diego County in 2008 to the commission's decision to split the 760 area code.

The commission on Oct. 16, 2008, responded to the opposition and at the same time met the demand for more telephone numbers by approving an overlay that added a new 442 area code to the same geographic region as the existing 760 area code.

The 760/442 area codes cover nearly one-third of California geographically—from the eastern and southern Sierra Nevada of Inyo and Mono counties, through Death Valley National Park and the Mojave Desert to the Nevada and Arizona state lines, then south to the Mexican border, and including major parts of Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial counties as well as northern San Diego County, including Ramona, Santa Ysabel, Julian and other northern county communities.

Callers not using the new dialing procedure are not having their calls completed. Instead, a recording tells them to hang up and dial again.

Some people were prepared for the change. Others spent time over the weekend or early this week reprogramming automatic dialing equipment such as fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, alarm and security systems, gates, speed dials, mobile phone contacts, call forwarding settings and voicemail services.

Consumers are advised to check their Web sites, business stationery, advertising materials, personal checks, contact information, and pet or personal identification tags to ensure the area code is included.

As a result of the overlay, a person's existing telephone number, including current area code, will not change, nor will the cost of a telephone call, coverage area, or other rates and services. A local call remains a local call, regardless of the number of digits dialed.

Consumers can still dial just three digits to reach 911 as well as 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 and 811. Beginning Nov. 21, new telephone lines or services may be assigned numbers with the new 442 area code.

More information about the 760/442 area codes is at www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/generalInfo/Area+Codes/818+Area+Code.htm.

For more information on communications issues, visit www.CalPhoneInfo.com. Commission information is at www.cpuc.ca.gov.