

## Time, temp number is back

Even in a digital age,  
some still like  
old-fashioned service

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**RALEIGH** A telephone number that will ring a bell with many long-time Raleigh residents is back in action.

The city's time and temperature number for 50 years starting in 1941, 833-2511, is again available as an information service.

The amenity may seem as archaic as drive-in waitresses in roller skates, but it actually represents an under-the-radar source used by millions of Americans annually, say professionals in the field.

"I still think there's a lot of life in time and temperature," said Bruce Robertson of Apex, president and founder of RTI Media. The company works with dozens of communities across the country to provide the service, but not with Raleigh.

The number was initially known as TE-3-2511 in the days when the exchange, or first three digits of a phone number, stood for words, in this case "Temple." It was sponsored for decades by Raleigh Federal Savings Bank and was wildly popular - accepting 278,000 calls monthly in the summer of 1958 - until the line went dead in 1991, at the time of the savings and loan crisis.

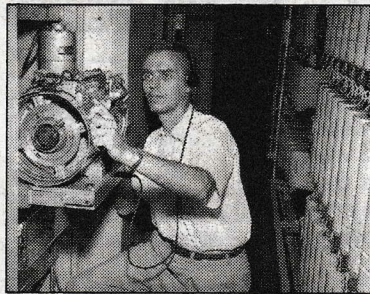
Some services have never gone away, and new ones are popping up. That's the case in the Cary-specific line set up, with Robertson's help, by techie Matthew Furman.

"I remember calling a number in New York State when I was a kid," said Furman, who runs the Cary service mostly as a hobby.

The newest version of the Raleigh standby 833-2511 appears to be a trimmed-down, 21st century adaption, using Voice over Internet Protocol technology and open-source software. No one has apparently claimed it for advertising, but news of its reappearance has gotten hundreds of "likes" on social media.

"I remember calling that number in the '70s," Apex resident Kati Rodgers Bourque said. "It was great for pretending you were on the phone with someone, when you were too young to actually know any phone numbers of your friends."

But in 2015 why would anyone  
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NEWS & OBSERVER FILE PHOTO

William B. Farrior checks Time of Day Service equipment in 1958, when thousands a day called.

### Time and temperature phone line returns

**RALEIGH** The time of day and temperature will be available again in Raleigh by dialing a telephone number, a service that may seem archaic in the digital age of smartphones. **2A**

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## TIME

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call a time, temperature and forecast number when clocks, smartphones, TV and Internet sites supply the information constantly?

"It's convenience mainly," said Robertson, a radio veteran who is also the voice that RDU travelers hear, urging them not to leave bags unattended.

"Think of it this way, it's five o'clock in the morning, it's Jan. 8, you're about to get out of bed, you want to know how cold it is, you roll over, pick up your phone and hit speed-dial."

Several companies continue to market time and

### Who are you gonna call?

**Apex**, Weather Now in  
Apex: 919-362-1226

**Cary**, 468-TIME: 919-468-8463

**Raleigh**, 919-833-2511

temp equipment, including Atlanta-based Weatherphone.

"It's nothing more than a digital announcer that is capable of handling multiple telephone lines and providing this information," said Randall Hinton, head of Weatherphone.

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