



Preface: On June 24, 2008, the FCC issued an historic ruling and handed to the deaf community a civil rights victory by requiring relay providers to provide real, 10-digit phone numbers to their customers. The concepts that brought about this ruling were conceived of and championed first by important community advocacy groups like the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI), and the NorCal Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and soon joined by a small coalition of relay providers, lead by GoAmerica and AT&T.

On June 26, 2008, just after 10 AM Pacific Time, the first 10-digit phone call after this historic ruling was placed using a 10-digit number between Edmond Routhier, president and vice chairman of GoAmerica and Sheri A. Farinha, CEO of NorCal Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The transcript of this call appears here.

HEARING CALLER TO DEAF RECIPIENT CALL TRANSCRIPT:

Ed Routhier: Sheri? Hi, it's Ed Routhier.

Sheri A. Farinha: Hi, Ed. How are you?

Ed Routhier: I am excellent. It is such a pleasure to make history today with you, and I wanted to thank you personally for all the hard work, dedication, and perseverance you have demonstrated in leading the efforts that led to the historical FCC ruling this week on 10-digit numbering and 911. I'm sure I speak not only for our company's deaf staff, but all deaf people who would love to give you a much deserved hug of thanks for everything you've done to accomplish this historical civil rights victory. You are once again at the forefront of deaf history, and it's a pleasure to be able to talk to you today.

Sheri A. Farinha: Thank you very much!

Ed Routhier: It is my honor to be the first hearing person to make a call using a 10-digit number directly to a deaf person, following this historic ruling. It is really a great pleasure to be able to do it across the Hands On VRS platform, and to demonstrate to the industry that this technology exists and is easy to implement. With your help, and the help of other deaf leaders, by the end of this year, all deaf people will have a real 10-digit number and 911 services. We will be truly functionally equivalent by the end of this year.

Sheri A. Farinha: I am very emotional. I have a number I can use and I am using it to talk to you!

Ed Routhier: That is wonderful.

Sheri A. Farinha: I can't believe it's happening actually - it's so exciting! A real phone number. I finally feel equal - equal to you. It is important to me to feel completely equal to you and my peers. And what

you have done... I don't feel like a second class citizen. I have a phone number and now you can call me, and I can call anyone I want!!!

If I need to make a call to 911, I can, and I won't worry that no one will be there, or that I won't be able to get through...Those minutes are so important in a 911 call. And they will know where I am and who I am.....it is monumental!

Ed Routhier: It *is* monumental.

Sheri A. Farinha: Yes! Yes! It is because, you know what, you have modeled to the FCC, the dedication that you have, that you have been working with us, and have shown them that we need this and that it is so important to us!

Ed Routhier: I understand that you are receiving this call on our new MVP. What do you think?

Sheri A. Farinha: And I am making this call on my "borrowed" MVP! Wow it is so cool! You know what I'm going to ask next, right?

Ed Routhier: (Laughing). Tell me...

Sheri A. Farinha: I want mine yesterday! When can I get mine?

Ed Routhier: (Laughing.) Well, you are first on the list. Now that we have 10-digit numbering, that will allow us to take next step. Finish building the system and start distributing the MVPs. As I told you before, it would be difficult to implement without 10-digit numbers. We can now take that step and finish the process and begin to distribute these. You are first on the list.

Sheri A. Farinha: Oh good, thank you!

Ed Routhier: You are welcome.

Sheri A. Farinha: And also congratulations and thank to you, Hands On VRS, GoAmerica, AT&T, Dash, and all others for making this a reality and getting this done. A phone number that we can use and a mobile device. And a 10-digit number we can take with us wherever we go. The safety of being able to call 911, certainly is the most important part. Congratulations for your dedication and your integrity for moving forward and for doing this.

Ed Routhier: Well, thank you. It was a pleasure to be able to work with you and other deaf leadership to make this a reality and to deliver functional equivalency to the deaf community. We couldn't be happier, and we are pleased that the FCC adopted the proposal that we jointly submitted with AT&T. We feel this demonstration is the most technically viable solution to solving the problem, and hope this encourages other providers to provide this service. I hope the other providers move with urgency to get this done.

Sheri A. Farinha: It's important for other providers to get on board and to not delay, and it is their responsibility to do that as soon as possible. I will hold them to that responsibility!

Ed Routhier: Well, there's no one who carries a bigger stick, so I'm glad to hear that!

Sheri A. Farinha: (Laughs) I carry a whip!

Ed Routhier: I understand that you are going to use a 10-digit number to call Nancy Bloch at the NAD.

Sheri A. Farinha: Yes, that will be my first 10-digit video-to-video call and that will be a test.

Ed Routhier: Wonderful. I understand that she is waiting, and I don't want to take too much more of your time.

Once again, you are at the forefront of deaf history. I know the deaf community thanks you. Our entire staff toasted this great accomplishment last night and we appreciate all the people who helped make this possible.

Sheri A. Farinha: Wonderful.

Ed Routhier: Thanks again, and enjoy your next call!

Sheri A. Farinha: Yes, it's definitely time to celebrate. Thank you. Bye.