



Editorial: Celebrate 211 line

Sunday, February 10, 2008

This month marks the third anniversary of an important three-digit phone number in Ventura County: 211.

If you need a service, but don't know whom to contact or where to go, call 211.

One of Ventura County's gems, the 211 call center in Camarillo fields about 1,500 calls a month. Basically, it's a one-stop place to get confidential information and referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week from trained specialists. And it's free.

Launched Feb. 11, 2005, the 211 service is a collaboration of United Way of Ventura County, Interface Children Family Services and First 5 Ventura County. Ventura County was the first county in the state to get the service up and running. Today, 13 of the state's 58 counties now offer 211 services to its citizens.

It was in July 2000 that the Federal Communications Commission designated the three-digit dialing code for health and human service information. But, like most government programs, the money to maintain the system was not included.

So, along with Proposition 10 cigarette tax money and the generosity of the local community, the 211 service became a reality in the county. But if the 211 service is to continue, so must the funds.

Although in operation just a short time, the 211 service has proved its value. The Star would like to join with the Board of Supervisors, which has declared this week "211 Week in Ventura County," in publicly recognizing this important anniversary.



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