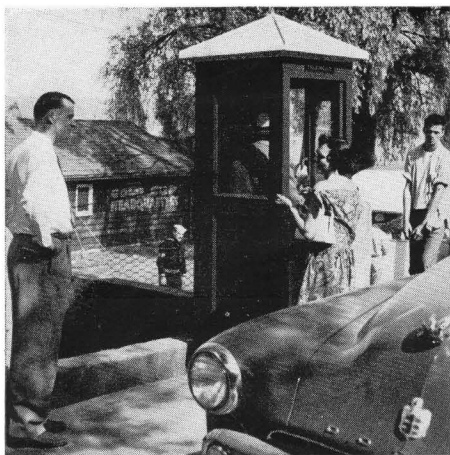


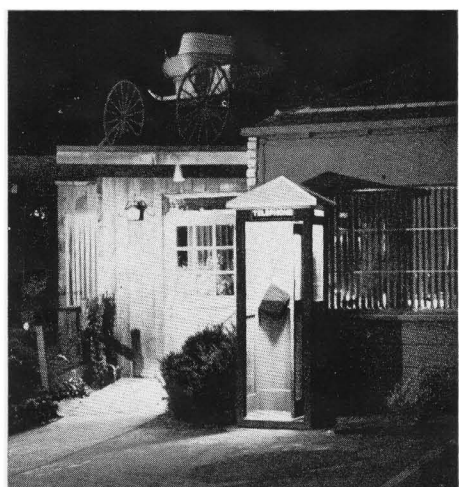
Pacific Telephone **MAGAZINE**

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1953





At Seattle's Gold Cup Races.



Outside a Seattle restaurant.



Beside a drugstore in Portland.

Those Amazingly Popular Outdoor Telephones



Always ready and available wherever you go are Pacific Telephone's outdoor booths. Easily identified, they are found at service stations like this one in Oakland.

A COUPLE of days ago, a public telephone salesman wearing a perplexed yet pleased expression looked around a busy Oakland, California, intersection.

"You know," he said, "I wrote the service order for the first outdoor booth on this corner four years ago. It was a tough job, too, convincing a service station manager anybody would use an outdoor telephone. Now look at them. There are booths on all four corners here."

Up and down the Pacific Coast, outdoor public telephones have sprouted like weeds after a warm rain, these last seven years. Before World War II they were an oddity. Not much more than a token number were in service in 1946. Now, the Pacific Telephone total is close to 20,000, and even the 3,000 new booths added this year won't be sufficient to meet all requirements.

No one would be more surprised at these figures than the unknown person responsible for the first outdoor public telephones. Maybe he helped plan the public telephones for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. That's where several old-time plant men remember first seeing an outdoor telephone. There were about 50 such telephones around the exposition grounds, housed in three-sided metal booths painted to imitate various kinds of wood. Or maybe there was an even earlier installation. At any rate, outdoor telephone booths were first standardized in the 1930's.

History isn't what presently bothers the sales organizations responsible for locating outdoor telephones. It's this puzzling question:

How many outdoor telephones in how many locations will it take to satisfy the demand for service?

No one will even guess at the answer.

There is clear-cut evidence of public preference for the outdoor variety of public telephones. For every three persons who use an indoor public telephone, there are four who step into a green-and-white outdoor booth when they want to call. And those four aren't just ex-indoor public telephone users. They're new customers. Revenue records show that the installation of new outdoor booths in a neighborhood has little effect on the number of calls from indoor public telephones.

Convenience and accessibility at all hours contribute to

outdoor telephone popularity. Or put it this way: Make it easy for people to telephone and they will; make it even easier, and they will use an outdoor telephone oftener. All of which makes outdoor public telephones an important revenue source for Pacific Telephone.

In every city we serve there are a dozen yarns about how "making it easier to call" is reflected in the use of an outdoor telephone. For example, in Portland a booth was first located at the rear of a service station lot. People found it and placed their calls. But when the telephone was moved up near the sidewalk and a bus stop, the number of calls zoomed.

Another case in point is an outdoor booth at a San Francisco street car stop. It was only 20 steps from the street car stop and around the corner to the telephone. Then the booth was moved so that it faced the commuters as they got off the car. Twice as many patrons use the telephone in the new location as before.

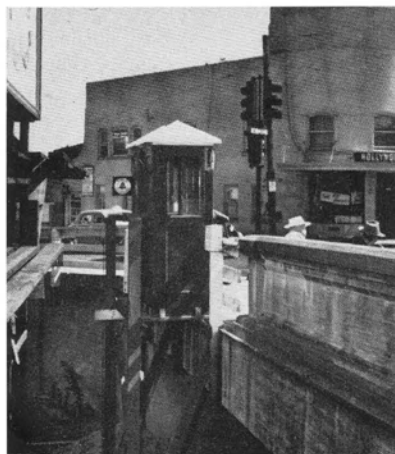
There's something about the sight of a telephone that prompts people to make calls, the sales group decided, after this and other experiences. An outdoor booth tucked behind a cross-roads country store doesn't get half the use accorded a booth out in front in clear view of motorists.

Colors make a difference, too, the Northern California-Nevada area group is convinced. They think distinctive colors remind people to make telephone calls or at least help them locate an outdoor telephone. Tests were made in Northern California using Chinese red, light and dark blue, and white booths. Finally, a forest green booth with a silver roof was chosen as the uniform color scheme. Washington-Idaho uses the same uniform booth colors, too.

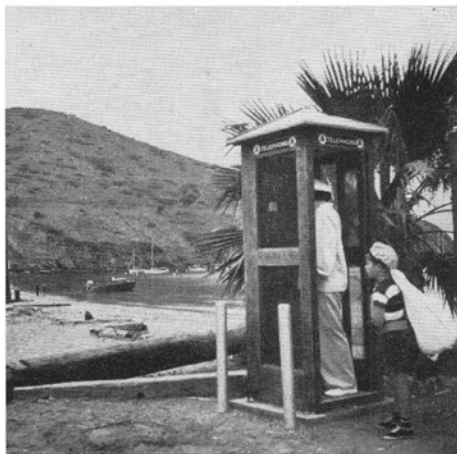
Let the manager of a chain of service stations testify those colors have come to mean "telephone." He repainted his booths to conform to the service station colors.

"People drove us nuts," he says. "They would park smack in front of the outdoor telephone and ask the attendant where the telephone was. And when we told them, they'd say, 'Yeah, but that's the wrong color.' How soon can you paint 'em back green and white again?"

(Continued on page 2)



Alongside a Portland bus stop.



On Santa Catalina Island.



At an Oregon trailer park.

Just about anything that calls attention to an outdoor telephone location means user convenience. Washington-Idaho has 125 booths with a ceiling fluorescent halo light, which is never turned off. Four illuminated plastic panels with the word "Telephone" can be seen easily from a distance. Northern California-Nevada has placed overhead neon signs at 50 locations where there are two or more outdoor telephones. Underneath the "Telephone" signs are neon tubes that cast a glow over the booths. During the test period, use climbed 40 per cent at the booths which were under signs. Even single booths where floodlighting is feasible show similar gains.

How many booths does it take to serve a location? You can't always be sure. There is a small service station on a street where daytime traffic wasn't heavy. One outdoor booth was cautiously installed. The use was startling, and another booth was added. Then another and another until there are now five in a row. Just as many calls are placed from any of the five telephones today as there were from the first one. You'd never know it in the daytime, but that street bulges with truck traffic at night and in the early morning when only outdoor telephones are available.

Usually when it comes to selecting convenient outdoor telephone sites, the sales people can lean on studies of motor and foot traffic, and their own observations. Quite a number of busy outdoor telephones have been placed because a salesman's wife said something like this at the dinner table:

"You know, I wanted to make a call when I was downtown today, and I couldn't find a public telephone anywhere. Why don't you have one . . . ?"

Location tips come also from the architects and builders service, coin collectors, plant men and everybody connected with outdoor telephones.

California, of course, leads the nation in motor vehicle registrations, and Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Nevada are almost as well motorized. It's natural that service stations should rate first on the list of outdoor telephone locations. Other places where cars can park or you'd be likely to stop—



An outdoor telephone at a weighing station provides a call-ahead spot for motorists and truckers on Altamont Pass in Northern California.

such as drive-in restaurants, drive-in theaters, drive-in banks, parking lots, super markets and motels—have a high percentage of the outdoor telephone total. These property owners provide suitable booth space, lighting and janitor service, and, in return, receive 15 per cent of the booth revenue.

Westerners and Pacific Northwesterners spend nearly as much time out of doors as they do on wheels, making locations like beaches, parks, resorts, sports centers and yacht harbors important in the outdoor telephone scheme. There isn't heavy use of these telephones every day or the year around. Frankly, some of them aren't paying their way. But, they'll stay, because civic authorities and the company are sure these booths are essential to public welfare and safety.

Just about anywhere people wait for public transportation or pass on foot rates as a convenient outdoor telephone location. In developed business areas, merchants are understandably reluctant to give up sales or display space. Recessed booths in store fronts are one answer. One San Francisco store has decided outdoor booths attract so many passersby it has placed four in its arcade and repainted the store front to match the booth colors.

Outdoor telephones are planned primarily for people on the move. They're located at airports, bus stops, service stations. These are all places where they serve transient users. Though you wouldn't expect it, each outdoor telephone builds a regular clientele of users just as do indoor public telephones.

"Some guys stop here every day and use the telephone," service station attendants declare. "A few strays, but mostly they're the same ones."

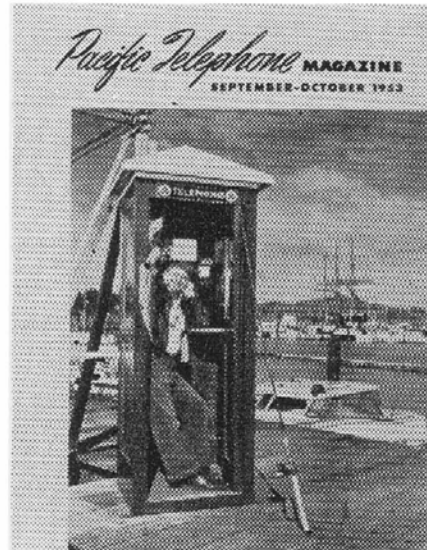
And an Oakland salesman swears this happened when he was checking an outdoor booth location. A woman approached the three booths, and then stopped when she noticed the end booth occupied.

"You can use either of these two empty ones," the salesman suggested.

"No thanks, I'll wait for that one," the woman pointed to the booth in use. "That's my telephone."



This lineup of booths at a drive-in restaurant fronts on a busy intersection in North Hollywood, California.



COVER STORY

Members of the Marin Rod and Gun Club know J. C. (Jerry) Moon, a San Anselmo, California, installer-repairman, as one of their most active members and an always ready fisherman. So this shot of Jerry at an outdoor telephone on a Sausalito dock, telling the folks at home to get the frying pan hot, is right in character. We understand people not so handy as Jerry with rod and reel use the same telephone to call a meat market. It's convenient either way.
