

VLBA STATION NAMES, CODES, AND NUMBERS REVISITED

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Professor Parkinson was right -- the more trivial the subject, the more vehement the discussion. In VLBA Memo 626, I proposed a standard list of names, codes, and numbers for the 10 stations. Two recipients let me know what they thought of it. One praises it as the finest thing since the Gettysburg Address, while the other damns its presumptuous ignorance. The outrage centers on the two-letter codes, specifically on the fact that the first letters of the pairs are not totally unique. As this point has some merit, I now suggest that the two-letter codes be assigned as follows:

- (1) Except for New Mexico, which has more than one station, let the code be the standard US postal abbreviation for the state or territory in which the station is located;
- (2) In New Mexico, continue to use PT for Pie Town and LA for Los Alamos;
- (3) When a code for Socorro is needed, use BS (for Base Station, obviously).

Codes assigned in this way retain the merit of being more or less descriptive while also being unique in their first letters.

Here, then, is the revised table:

Name	Code	Number	Coordinates*		
			N Lat	W Long	Elev
Pie Town	PT	1	34.30	108.12	2371 m
Kitt Peak	AZ	2	31.96	111.61	1916 m
Los Alamos	LA	3	35.78	106.25	1967 m
Fort Davis	TX	4	30.63	103.94	1615 m
North Liberty	IA	5	41.77	91.57	241 m
Brewster	WA	6	48.13	119.68	255 m
Owens Valley	CA	7	37.23	118.28	1207 m
Saint Croix	VI	8	17.76	64.58	16 m
Mauna Kea	HI	9	19.81	155.46	3725 m
Peterborough	NH	10	42.93	71.98	330 m

* Latitude and longitude are in decimal degrees. Elevations are referred to mean sea level.

This is the end of the matter, as far as I am concerned. The next memo on the subject will have to come from someone else.