FDOT 511 Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, February 16, 2011 (1:00 p.m. – 2:42 p.m.)
Teleconference Only: 866-374-3368, Ext. 4976
Local: 850-414-4976 / Central Office: 4976
Rhyne Building, Rm. 330
Tallahassee, Florida

Attendees:

Gene Glotzbach, FDOT CO	Elizabeth Birriel, FDOT CO	Arun Krishnamurthy, FDOT CO
Chris Birosak, FDOT D1	Bill Fuller, FDOT D1	Carlos Bonilla, FDOT D1
Craig Carnes, D2	Pete Vega, FDOT D2	Donna Danson, FDOT D2
Jason Summerfield, FDOT D2	Sean Wilcox, FDOT D2	Ryan Crist, FDOT D2
Penny Kamish, SRS / FDOT D2	Santos Morin, FDOT D3	Dee McTague, HNTB/FDOT D4
Dong Chen, FDOT D4	Nathan Ruckert, FDOT D5	Shannon Jones, HNTB D5
Sharon Watterson, FDOT D5	Mike Smith, FDOT D5	Jose Grullon, FDOT D6
Cathy McKenzie, FDOT D7	Terry Hensley, FDOT D7	James Bitting, FDOT D7
Eric Gordin, FDOT FTE	Erik Gaarder, PBS&J	John Hope, PBS&J
TJ Hapney, PBS&J	David Chang, PBS&J	Clay Packard, PBS&J
Marie Howell, PBS&J	Vicky Mixson, Global-5	Mike Wacht, Global-5
Steve Olsen, LogicTree	James Barbosa, IBI	

I. Welcome and Introductions — Gene Glotzbach

Gene Glotzbach opened the meeting at 1:00 pm.

II. FL-ATIS / VAS II Update

The Video Aggregation System – Phase II (VAS II) is on hold through the end of February due to how the Florida Advanced Traveler Information System (FL-ATIS) architecture may change based on the new FL-ATIS Invitation to Negotiate (ITN).

The Central Office (CO) provided Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) management with the updated FL-ATIS Scope of Work. The plan is to notice the Scope of Work for two weeks to allow industry to respond with questions. After FDOT addresses any questions, the ITN will be advertised. Gene Glotzbach stated that the CO was currently assuming a two month period to work up proposals after advertising.

III. SunGuide Update / Inrix Data Feed – Gene Glotzbach

The SunGuide update is complete and CDs are ready to go out to the Districts. Arun Krishnamurthy stated that CDs would be sent out on February 17, 2011. Districts should receive update CDs by the end of the week or the beginning of next week.

J. Hope sent correspondence to Districts 2, 5, and 7 regarding the update. J. Hope will work with Districts and will send a follow up with links to the Districts to make it as easy as possible.

Per Gene Glotzbach the Inrix contract expires this summer. FDOT will possibly go to a separate solicitation, possibly statewide, after the current contract runs out.

IV. Recent Enhancements – Gene Glotzbach

- **Switching Between Highways** – implemented; primarily benefits power users in larger areas who travel on more than one facility.

- **Improving Error Handling** – Not implemented at this time. Received a lot of feedback with callers having issues using the system (user misuse and recognition). Changes to the system have been proposed to provide a better flow for the caller to make the system more user-friendly. This will be implemented in the March 2011 update.

- **Transfers (Commuter Services, Transit and Airports)** – Added more transfers to the system. In production now. Biggest addition has been commuter services and additional transit systems and airports have been added.

- **New EM locations / grammars** – New EM locations went out early in February.

- **Filtering Feedback** – Traffic reports to be filtered and only send to those Districts the traffic report is about or in. Currently working on this update. Should be able to cut down on the number of reports received by Districts. Targeted for March 2011 update.

V. Soft Messaging Update – Gene Glotzbach

Recently a decision was made to go forward with soft messaging, which is the process of providing unconfirmed reports on the 511 system. CO is trying to move this forward to allow the Districts to get information on to the system faster without having to verify it first, which should speed up the process of getting information out quickly. Incidents will be changed from unconfirmed to confirmed status once the Districts can verify the issue. No amendment for SunGuide software has been produced at this time, but the development process has begun. Sometimes issues are present for an hour or more before being posted. CO would like to provide some kind of report within a 5-10 minute timeframe. Can confirm after posting and get information to the public quicker.

Per Arun, SwRI said it's a lot easier to allow soft messaging than it is to restrict it. Currently, if there's an unconfirmed event it can be sent DMS, HAR and email users. The only issue is with regards to getting reports to FL-ATIS. A new unconfirmed value for events will need to be added, which will allow events to go through. He continued by saying that is was a simple implementation, but that minor C2C subscriber changes will need to be made. It is possible that these changes will be in the March or April 2011 update.

VI. Feedback Message Services (Discussion) – Gene Glotzbach

CO concurs with what District 2 is doing regarding feedback messaging and views it as a help in getting incidents posted on the system. Districts 2 is getting the traffic reports called in by users and filtering for the Districts and then making courtesy calls to other Districts regarding problems on their roadways. District 2 does provide some follow up.

District 2 offered to do this because they are checking the messages constantly and the goal is to pass information along. They may also make a follow up call if multiple feedback messages are received for the same incident. This is basically a tool to help other Districts get incidents on

the system if they don't have time to check feedback messages. For vague feedback messages, the District 2 operators are calling users back to get additional information.

Terry Hensley asked if the policy had changed regarding District 2 providing a follow up call after 30 minutes. Pete Vega responded that if District 2 called regarding an incident, that their operators would check 511 to see if the report is on the system before calling other Districts back to confirm.

Mr. Hensley voiced his concerns about the new service and brought up that District 2 operators were following up on traffic lights out in Tampa. He added that he would prefer District 2 operators not notify District 7's operators more than once regarding need to post information due to his concern about the amount of time operators would need to spend on the phone. Mr. Vega replied that repetitive, non-necessary calls will slow down as new operators get trained. Mr. Hensley stated that he did not see the necessity of the follow up call.

Gene Glotzbach added that calls will go down to the calls that are really due to issues on the roadway and will be able to filter out the extraneous information reported and only get with Districts to monitor real situations. He continued by saying that if events were posted that there would be no need for a follow up call. He suggested that the Districts allow some time for the new operators to be trained and that the topic could be discussed again in a couple of months, if necessary.

Terry Hensley stated that the service was statewide and should come from the CO. Gene Glotzbach stated that the CO endorses District 2's feedback messaging service. Mike Smith stated that he agreed with Terry that there was no need for a follow up call once his District had told District 2 operators that incidents were being monitored and that they did not want to receive calls back on the same incident. Mr. Smith went on to point out that District 5 had seen numerous times when District 5 was receiving calls after posting incidents to the web site as well as call for non-covered roadways. Gene Glotzbach pointed out that if there was a bad enough situation on a non-covered roadway that floodgates could be posted.

Pete Vega responded that one call is enough for each incident and has now directed District 2's operators to only call once per incident, not once for each feedback message like they were doing in the beginning and that he would instruct the operators not to make follow up calls. Gene stated that he thought feedback messaging was a good service and added that tweaks will occur to minimize the impact on the Districts. He also asked the Districts to be patient and give it a try as the services are being worked out.

VII. Construction / Traffic Incident Reports – Gene Glotzbach

With regard to user complaints about not wanting to hear construction events, Jose Grullon suggested possibly moving construction events to the end of the reports. Steve Olsen replied that reports could be prioritized, which would be less effort than making the construction events optional. LogicTree will analyze the issue and give the FDOT an idea of how much effort would be involved.

Gene stated that the issue would be investigated to see if there was a way to make it easier for the user to get traffic information more quickly. Terry Hensley replied that he believed care should be taken about making changes to the system over one or two calls. Gene Glotzbach

added that only construction that impacts traffic should be reported and that the CO would investigate prioritizing events and making construction a lower priority.

VIII. General Marketing Update – Vicky Mixson

Vicky Mixson gave a marketing update to the 511 WGM attendees.

IX. Review Timestamp 30-Minute Updates – District Discussion

District discussion took place regarding the decision to update timestamps every 30 minutes as was decided at the last 511 Working Group Meeting. He pointed out that callers are unsure about whether reports are current or not if they are not updated regularly. In the last meeting the decision was made to update timestamps every 30 minutes, but added that the CO was still receiving feedback regarding old information being posted on 511 system.

Terry Hensley inquired as to whether there was a way to simplify updating the timestamp as was being discussed with construction. Sean Wilcox mentioned that they could provide best practices information from operators which gives options for updating new timestamps without affecting DMS signs. Mr. Hensley requested an email update with screenshots. Pete Vega stated that he would provide the information to the CO for distribution.

X. Congestion Discussion – Gene Glotzbach

Dee McTague brought up for discussion that there were complaints from users regarding not wanting to know where the incidents were, but rather that they wanted to know where the congestion starts and ends and how long they would be sitting in traffic. She added that travel times were intended for this purposed, but that people did not seem to want to use the travel times in her opinion. Ms. McTague suggested that the group needed to explore some way to report congestion in a manner similar to travel time updates. She added that staff cannot be expected to stay up to the second on congestion since most congestion took place at peak times.

Pete Vega replied that what Dee was suggesting could probably be done with SunGuide. He added that Dee's question was about the time to make autonomous creation of events and messages. Previously Steve Corbin did not want to lose control of what was happening internally. However, Dee responded that it was a moving target and that Steve was no longer there so there was a change in District 4's feeling about creating this information. It was suggested that SunGuide could create an alert that the operator could approve or decline and that it should be configurable so that Districts can opt out if they choose not to use it.

Terry Hensley stated that he agreed with the concept. Pete Vega added that District 2's Urban Planning Director had made a comment about wanting to know where congestion is so that users can get make decisions regarding alternate roadways. Eric Gordin mentioned that Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) had struggled with having District operators measure congestion over the years and was unsure if he would want to trust the system to send messages automatically.

Mr. Gordin went on to say that the issue raised some different questions. Ms. McTague replied that it raised the same questions as travel times and that the information should not be relied on 100 percent, but that the process could be automated to some degree for the operators. Eric

Gordin agreed with the partial automation, adding that operators have a lot going on when there are a lot of incidents and congestion.

Arun stated that from the SunGuide perspective, at this time there is the functionality there for just one detector. Currently the system looks for high occupancy and low speed, which causes SunGuide to automatically produce an alert. He added that what was being asked was for SunGuide to be cognizant of detectors and determine the length of congestion. However, SunGuide does not currently have that capability and continued by saying that it would be a significant task. He stated that upstream / downstream detection functionality was not part of SunGuide at this time, but that he would inquire about the level of effort involved from Southwest Research Institute (SwRI).

Gene pointed out that based on what detectors read that they could send update to the Districts. Arun replied that SunGuide had added more criteria to cut down on the number of alerts. SunGuide can configure speed and/or occupancy, which is now only one alert per length. Previously it was one alert per lane. Arun inquired if Districts were using this functionality at this time. Dee replied that District 4 needs to configure it for use. Penny Kamish added that sometimes it depends on how incidents are published and that users may or may not get information on various events. Footprint #1538 in July 2010 is related to this issue.

Gene Glotzbach pointed out that this issue was probably something to incorporate into the new system and that it should be able to be to rolled it into the new solicitation through the design process.

XI. Road Ranger Smartphone Application – Pete Vega

Pete Vega gave an update on the Smartphone Road Ranger application developed for District 2. He stated that District 2 had been looking for a similar application for how to get information from Road Rangers to put information into SunGuide. District 2 tried the application on February 15, 2011, at the independent verification and validation (IV&V) test and would begin utilizing the system on March 1, 2011. Road Rangers will be able to be dispatched via Smartphone, in addition to indicating that they have arrived on the scene, what type of assistance they are providing, and they will be able to close the event from the Smartphone.

Arun agreed that the Smartphone application flowed well and added that the look and feel of it was very nice. Jason added that there were some configuration issues for the Smartphone application and that Road Rangers could enter arrival and departure, but pointed out that operators still had to officially close out the event.

XII. Upcoming Meeting / Other Topics – Gene Glotzbach

Pete Vega inquired as to whether FDOT would be doing anything for the World Congress. Gene replied that the FDOT would have a 10 x 10 foot booth and that 511 would be covered in that booth. He added that the number of FDOT personnel that would be able to attend was unknown and that the CO was waiting for new secretary before making any decisions.

Jose Grullon asked if the training presentation provided by John Hope and Mike Wacht could be uploaded to Teamsite to provide some additional training. Gene replied that he was not sure if the presentation could be loaded to Teamsite. Mike Wacht added that Style Guide and

presentation were on Teamsite and that DVDs of a training session that took place at District 5 would be distributed to the Districts.

Gene Glotzbach finished up by going over upcoming meeting. He stated that there would be a 511 Working Group Meeting set up in a couple of months; April 18, 2011 is the next major Change Management Board Meeting; and that the ITS Working Group Meeting would be held on March 1, 2011. He then closed the meeting at 2:42 pm.

Action Items

1. District 2 will send operator timestamp best practices to the Central Office for distribution to the Districts – *Complete.*