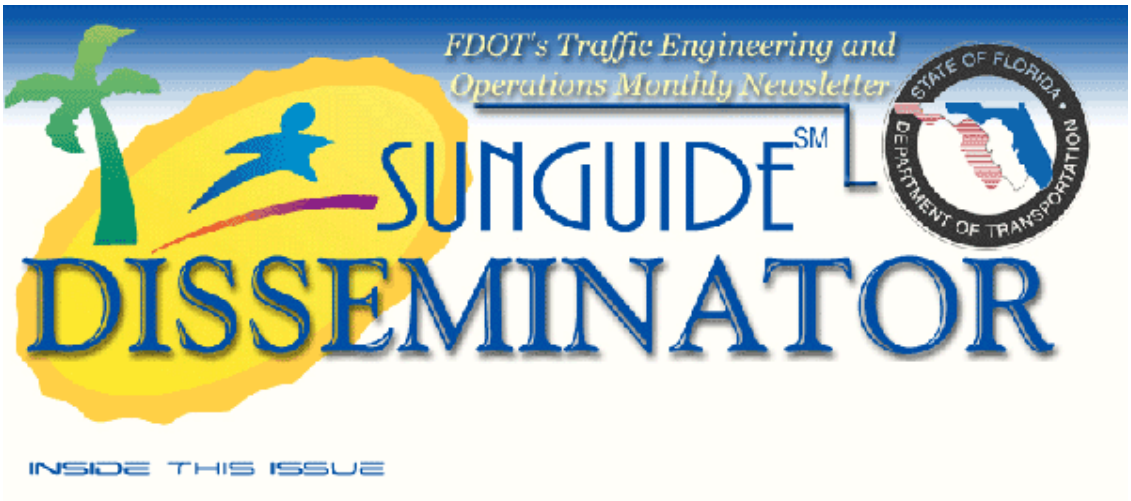

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Link to Florida's Statewide ITS General Consultant

511 — The National Traveler Information Telephone Number

511, a nationwide abbreviated dialing telephone number used to deliver travel-related information to the public, has come a long way since July 2000, when 511 was designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the national traveler information telephone number. This FCC ruling made the 511 national traveler information telephone number available to only public agencies. In 2005, the FCC will review the progress of the national implementation of 511. At that time, if not enough progress has been made implementing 511, the possibility exists that the FCC could reverse its ruling and reassign the 511 national traveler information telephone number to another purpose, or to the private sector.

Now, over three years into the national implementation of 511, the report on 511 looks good. Eighteen states are providing traveler information via the 511 national traveler information telephone number and another seven states will have operational 511 systems by the end of 2003. Eighteen more states are in the planning stage of implementing 511 systems.

Information provided on the various 511 systems generally includes:

- Road conditions;
- Incidents;
- Road closures; and
- Weather condition reports.

Weather condition reports are particularly important for the western and northern states where winter driving conditions can be quite severe.

Some 511 systems also provide public transportation information as well. The San Francisco Bay Area has invested a significant amount of funds to bring transit information to the public. Fare and schedule information from nearly three dozen Bay Area transit operators is provided to the public through the 511 national traveler information telephone number. Additionally, information on 20 paratransit services for the elderly and disabled and information on nine transit agencies outside the Bay Area is available to the public through the 511 national traveler information telephone number.

As of May 15, 2003, 511 systems serve over 45,400,000 people, or a little over 17 percent of the U.S. population, and the total annual 511 calls exceed 7,350,000 nationally. Florida's two deployed 511 systems, in Southeast Florida and the Orlando Area, account for over 1,730,000, or almost 29 percent, of all calls made to the 511 national traveler information telephone number. Florida's percentage of the total calls should increase once the Tampa Bay Area 511 system becomes operational in the spring of 2004.

The vision for the 511 national traveler information telephone number is to achieve more than 40,000,000 511 calls per year by 2010. Based on the number of calls generated by the existing 511 systems and the anticipated calls from the new 511 systems, this vision is realistic. With the progress that has been made to date in implementing the 511 national traveler information telephone number and the anticipated new 511 systems coming on line in the next couple of years, the likelihood that the FCC might reverse its ruling for the 511 national traveler information telephone number seems slim.

In a related note, the 511 legislation proposed by the ITS Office was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. This Legislation provides custodial control over the use of the 511 traveler information phone number, and will help coordinate the use of the 511 phone number and assure that use of the 511 phone number is consistent with National Guidelines.

For more information on the national implementation of 511, visit the following Web sites:

- http://www.deploy511.org
- http://www.its.dot.gov/511/511.htm
- http://www.itsa.org/511.html

This article was provided by Gene Glotzbach, FDOT ITS Office. For more information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or email Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.

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511 Traffic Hot Line Gets One-millionth Call

Suzanne Pagano was on her way to West Palm Beach on Florida's Turnpike last week when she dialed the 511 traffic hot line to find out if she would run into any delays.

Pagano, who lives in Boynton Beach, had no idea she also would set a local milestone.

Her call was the one-millionth to the South Florida 511 traveler information service since its inception a year ago.

"I travel a lot in my job and think it's great," she said. "I can't imagine why anyone would not use it."

Pagano might not be the exact millionth caller, but she's close enough. The 511 operators knew they were close because a computer keeps tabs on the number of calls per minute. When they were in range of 1 million calls, they randomly tapped one caller and it turned out to be Pagano.

For being the millionth caller, Pagano will get a SunPass transponder and $100 in tolls, a one-year membership to AAA, $100 worth of oil changes and, best of all, a Hawaiian-style shirt worn by toll attendants on the turnpike.

The hot line 511 is now available in all or part of 17 states, including the Orlando area. Statistics show the South Florida service, which is operated by SmartRoute Systems of Cambridge, Mass., is one of the most successful.

In May, about 29 percent of 511 calls nationwide were made by motorists in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

The reason for its popularity is simple, said Fred Levinson, who manages the SmartRoute traffic center in Miami.

The tri-county area, with 5.2 million residents, is the sixth-largest metropolitan region in the country and continued growth is making roads even more congested. 511 is easy to use and provides reliable information that commuters can use to make good choices about their travel routes, Levinson said.

"As more people become aware of the system, the more people will use it," he said. "There's definitely a need for it."

The Federal Communications Commission approved the use of 511 as a nationwide traveler information network in 2000. In South Florida, the easy-to-remember phone line replaced a 10-digit number that few people used.

When dialing 511, motorists enter a code corresponding to the highway and county. For example, Interstate 95 in Palm Beach County is 951*. The turnpike is tpk* or 875*.

SmartRoute, which has a $4 million contract with the state, also has a Web site, www.smartraveler.com, with the same real-time traffic information. The company also operates similar traveler information systems in Boston, Philadelphia and Camden, N.J.

Operators gather information from police scanners, highway cameras and road sensors, traffic helicopters and the state's Road Rangers, the tow truck drivers who help disabled motorists. The information is shared with Palm Beach County's new interim traffic management system, the network of cameras and message signs that alert drivers to slowdowns on I-95.

Pagano, who is an account executive for Ohio Savings Bank, said her call to 511 last week was her first. She had just heard about the service and decided to give it a try.

And she's glad she did. The hot line alerted her to a crash a few miles ahead, so she got off the turnpike and took Jog Road.

"I've used it every day since," she said.

This article was reprinted with the permission of the Palm Beach Post. The article was written by Chuck McGinness, Staff Writer.

* * * *

Since this article's printing date, 18 states are providing traveler information via the 511 national traveler information telephone number and another seven states will have operational 511 systems by the end of 2003. Additionally, Florida's two deployed 511 systems, in Southeast Florida and the Orlando Area, account for over 1,730,000, or almost 29 percent, of all calls made to the 511 national traveler information telephone number.

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FDOT's Mid-Year ITS Working Group Meeting

The FDOT ITS Office held another successful working group meeting on August 13-14, 2003. The FDOT Mid-Year ITS Working Group Meeting was held at the Westin Innisbrook Resort in Palm Harbor, Florida, in conjunction with the 2003 National Rural ITS Conference. The campus-like setting of the Westin Innisbrook Resort, together with the resort amenities, provided a great environment for the working group meeting. The working group meeting was well-attended by both the private and public sectors and continues to gain in popularity as attendance continues to increase from meeting to meeting.

The working group meeting provides a forum to learn about ITS from the perspective of the private and public sectors. This working group meeting was true to form. The private sector made presentations ranging from a discussion on closed-circuit television lowering devices (Martin Maners, $[MG]^2$) to new trenching technologies for ITS fiber infrastructure (Harry Rydstrom, Creamer-Daniel Technologies). Other presentations by the private sector included:

- Cellular technology used to determine speed and travel time (Cy Smith, AirSage);
- Westwood One's National 511 Solution (David Fierro, SmartRoute Systems/Westwood One); and
- Surge Suppression (Tom Darr, DITEK).

On the public sector side, presentations were made by both the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (Ivan del Campo) and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (L.A. Griffin) regarding their on-going ITS projects. Additionally, an overview of the Resource for Advanced Public Transportation Systems (Ike Ubaka, FDOT Transit Systems Planning) was presented. Representing ITS Florida, Terry Griffith (3M) gave an update of activites.

As is tradition, representatives of the seven FDOT Districts, the Florida Turnpike Enterprise, and the ITS Office provided overviews of ITS projects they have in the works.

Attendees of the working group meeting also heard presentations on:

• iFlorida (Anne Brewer, FDOT District 5);
• FDOT's Strategic Intermodal System (John Kaliski, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.);
• Technology at the North Texas Tollway Authority (Matt Milligan, North Texas Tollway Authority);
• How to Start a Rural ITS Program (Steve Albert, Montana State University);
• Overview of District 4's ITS Training Program (Dr. Robert Edelstein, DMJM+Harris);
• I-95 Corridor Coalition (John Baniak, I-95 Corridor Coalition); and
• ITS Performance Measures Task Force (Anita Vandervalk, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.)

Presentations for the FDOT Mid-Year ITS Working Group Meeting may be found at www.dot.state.fl.us/IntelligentTransportationSystems/.

Mark your calendars! The FDOT End-of-the-Year ITS Working Group Meeting will be held on December 3-4, 2003, at the Deerfield Beach Resort in Deerfield Beach, Florida.

This article was provided by Gene Glotzbach, FDOT ITS Office. For more information, please contact Ms. Pamela Haynes at (850) 410-5632 or email Pamela.Haynes@dot.state.fl.us.

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Ethernet & ITS

Ethernet is an international standard for communications network technologies based on the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) 802 set of standards. First developed in 1976, this technology consists of network hubs and/or switches in an all-digital, packet-based system able to utilize all forms of communications media including copper, fiber, and wireless. The standards for Ethernet have continued to evolve in a highly competitive and dynamically changing technology marketplace. There are new standards, draft and published, for Ethernet that include fault tolerance for fiber rings (IEEE 802.17), 10 gigabits per second operation (IEEE 802.3ae and 802.3ak), wireless Ethernet (IEEE 802.11), and power over Ethernet cables (IEEE 802.3af). Standards are now being developed for Ethernet operating up to 40 gigabits per second with integrated circuit chips working in developmental laboratories.

Ethernet works for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). Since, Ethernet is the most prevalent networking standard in the world today due to flexibility, reliability, and cost-effectiveness, these same features have made Ethernet a solid choice for many ITS communications networks being implemented in the new millennium. DKS is currently under contract with the City of San Francisco to create a state-of-the-art transportation system. The Integrated Transportation Management System (ITMS) is being deployed to integrate traffic signal interconnect, closed-circuit video, and changeable message signs. The ITMS will integrate the city's transit system to prioritize the efficient flow of traffic. Other cities incorporating ITS networks include Orlando, Florida and Arlington, Texas.

While there are numerous reasons for agencies selecting Ethernet as the primary form of communications for their ITS networks, the more prevalent benefits include the flexibility for modifications and expansions of the network, the simplicity of designing and implementing Ethernet networks compared with other network technologies, the use of the existing knowledge base of agency staff with Ethernet, and the much lower costs and availability of Ethernet gear compared with other network gear. Since Ethernet can be deployed economically and scaled upward in the future, it is a logical choice for ITS.

ITS networks must be able to accommodate numerous applications, each involving the exchange of video and data. With the emphasis on Homeland Defense in the United States and the role ITS will play in preventing U.S. corridors, borders, and transportation facilities from being exploited by terrorists, ITS networks will increase both in bandwidth and flexibility.

This is a summary of an article from Traffic Technology International which appeared in the *2003 International Review of Advanced Traffic Management* edition. The article was written by Bruce Abernethy, DKS Associates and reprinted with the permission of Traffic Technology International.

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MyFloridaMarketPlace

The State of Florida has implemented a new web-based procurement (eProcurement) system called MyFloridaMarketPlace. This eProcurement system was introduced to provide a more efficient and effective government that fully utilizes the power of technology by creating an electronic method for conducting procurement with the state of Florida.

MyFloridaMarketPlace combines the use of Internet technology and procurement best practices to streamline the purchasing process and reduce cost to both the state and the contracting community. The State of Florida created MyFloridaMarketPlace to provide a user-friendly portal where government buyers (state agencies and eligible users) and vendors have the opportunity to conduct business over the Internet, resulting in increased opportunities and operational efficiencies. Additionally, MyFloridaMarketPlace provides better visibility as to what is being purchased and, as a result, will enable better purchasing decisions and price negotiations with vendors.

Currently,the Florida Department of Management Services and FDOT are the only agencies participating in this eProcurement system pilot program. After the initial pilot program, MyFloridaMarketPlace will be rolled out to other agencies.

All vendors to the state must register with MyFloridaMarketPlace to be eligble to contract with FDOT. To do so, please access the MyFloridaMarketPlace Web site at http://MarketPlace.MyFlorida.com.

This article was provided by Mike Akridge, FDOT ITS Office. For more information, please contact Mr. Akridge at (850) 410-5607 or email Mike.Akridge@dot.state.fl.us.

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Florida CVISN Update

The Florida Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Network (CVISN) initiative continues to move forward. The most recent activities include the kickoff of three commercial vehicle-related projects:

- The Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) HelpDesk;
- The CVISN Information Systems Inventory; and
- The Motor Carrier Compliance Office (MCCO) Oversize/Overweight (OS/OW) Permit Viewing Application.

To view or download the *Florida CVISN Program Plan (Program Plan)*, please visit the FDOT ITS Office Web site at: www.dot.state.fl.us/IntelligentTransportationSystems/CVO/FLCVISN Program Plan.pdf.

CVO HelpDesk

The CVO HelpDesk project is part of the *Program Plan*. The CVO HelpDesk is designed for the commercial trucking industry. This project is not a Federal requirement; however, Florida recognizes the importance of providing a single point of contact from state agencies to commercial vehicle operators. Because the commercial trucking industry is highly regulated by both the state and federal governments, sometimes those involved in the industry have a difficult time identifying which agency should be contacted for various regulatory activities.

The CVO HelpDesk will have two components when the project is complete:

- The telephone component and
- The Internet component.

The telephone component provides commercial vehicle operators with a single telephone number to access all state agencies – (850) 414-4700. Commercial vehicle operators are greeted by an automated attendant and provided with a list of issue topics. They may then select the state agency to which they would like to be transferred. The telephone component has been completed and tested.

The Internet component is scheduled to be completed by Fall 2003. It will provide commercial vehicle operators with access to all state agency Web pages. It will also provide agency information, forms, and answers to frequently asked questions for each of the involved state agencies.

The CVO HelpDesk project began with a feasibility study to determine if the CVO HelpDesk would be useful to the commercial trucking industry and what type of formats would be most beneficial to the commercial vehicle operators as well as to the state agencies. During the feasibility study, both the commercial trucking industry and representatives from state agencies were interviewed. The results revealed that although a majority of the future users would have access to the Internet, a dual interface (telephone/Internet) would prove more beneficial.

CVISN Information Systems Inventory

The CVISN Information Systems Inventory is *Program Plan* project currently underway. This project will be led by the the State of Florida's State Technology Office and will provide a detailed inventory of the existing hardware and software of CVISN-related systems. This project will include requirements for linking the systems to promote critical data sharing and ensure timely interagency communication. This project will also help to streamline or eliminate outdated or inefficient business and enforcement processes by documenting hardware and software configurations, communications platforms, CVO-related systems/

applications, and data structure architectures. All agencies' systems that support CVO-related activities will be included in this project to ensure that information is complete and accurate.

The results of this project will:

- Document the current status of the CVISN information systems; and
- Utilize the results in the development of the Florida Commercial Vehicle Information Exchange Window (CVIEW).

Florida's CVIEW will provide Florida's commercial vehicle regulatory agencies with a single database that contains all information used in the regulation of commercial vehicles operating in Florida. In other words, the CVIEW will provide enforcement officers with a single access point for all information related to a specific commercial vehicle under investigation. This will greatly enhance the efforts of finding and dealing with unsafe or illegal operators.

The MCCO OS/OW Permit Viewing Application

The last *Program Plan* project to kick-off is the development of a web-based application for viewing OS/OW commercial vehicle permits. This project will provide Florida MCCO officers with the ability to verify the accuracy and authenticity of any permit presented to them. Officers will access the Internet and log into a secure site where they will be able to retrieve information about any permit as originally issued. Currently, it is not always possible for an officer to determine if a permit has been altered. With the ability to see information from the original permit, officers will be better able to enforce OS/OW regulations. Because many officers have access to the Internet via laptops in their patrol cars, the MCCO OS/OW Permit Viewing Application will allow them to verify a permit at the roadside. This system is scheduled for completion in Fall 2003.

As each of these projects are completed, Florida moves closer to a more efficient system in which all CVO-related agencies are working together to make state processes more effective. This increased efficiency will not only lead to increased customer satisfaction, but will also lower overall CVO costs. These projects also benefit the commercial trucking industry by allowing them to interact more efficiently with state regulatory agencies, leaving them with more time to transfer goods and improve Florida's economy.

This article was provided by Mike Akridge, FDOT ITS Office. For more information, please contact Mr. Akridge at (850) 410-5607 or email Mike.Akridge@dot.state.fl.us.

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Measuring the Impacts of Florida's ITS Program

The FDOT ITS Office proposes to spend aproximately $700 million on its ITS Program over the next 10 years (See FDOT's *Ten-Year ITS Cost Feasible Plan*). We know that ITS is a very cost-effective and beneficial method of addressing the state's safety and capacity needs. However, how do we demonstrate this? How do we monitor the effects of the expenditures on

the safety and mobility of our transportation system? Currently, there is no mechanism in place at the state level to ensure that program funds are being spent effectively or that the anticipated benefits of ITS implementation are being realized.

The Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) is statutorily charged with evaluating the performance, operational productivity, and fiscal management of FDOT. The FTC produces an annual report called the *Performance and Production Review* which includes reporting on several performance measures for major programs within FDOT. This annual report does not contain performance measures for ITS at this time.

The FTC has, therefore, requested that ITS Florida assist them with a study of the development of performance measures to assess how effectively the implementation of ITS technologies is addressing the safety and capacity needs of our transportation system on a statewide and/or regional basis. The study will consist of a review of national and statewide literature on the topic, interviews with experts, and a specialty workshop. All of this will lead to a report recommending performance measures in three main categories: safety, operations, and mobility. This process will not only serve the FTC needs for performance measures, but also lay the groundwork for the assessment of the planning, programming, design, deployment, management, and operations and maintenance of Florida's ITS implementation.

A task team comprised of state experts on the topics of ITS and performance measures has been formed to carry out this study. A workshop is scheduled for October 14-15, 2003, in Orlando, Florida. Experts from FHWA and other states have been invited to participate and assist Florida with this endeavor.

If you are interested in learning more about ITS performance measures, please contact:

- Mark Reichert, FTC Project Manager (Mark.Reichert@dot.state.fl.us);
- Charles Wallace, ITS Florida Project Director (Charlie.Wallace@cox.net); or
- Anita Vandervalk, Task Team Leader (Anita.Vandervalk@camsys.com)

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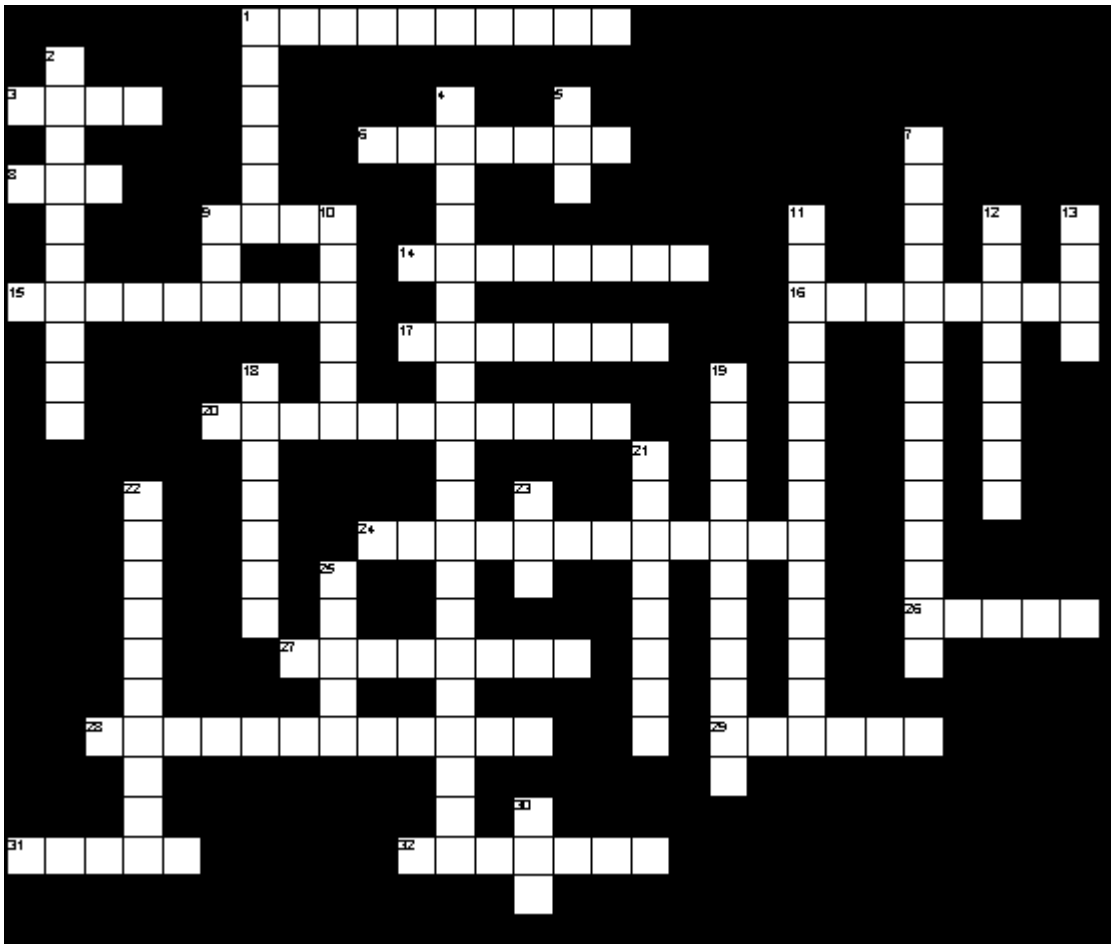
We invite you to have some fun and complete the *SunGuide*^{SM} *Disseminator* Word Challenge!
An answer guide follows the Editorial Corner.

Enjoy and Good Luck!



Across:

1. Somebody whose job is to control a fleet of vehicles
3. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
6. The principal theme in a speech or literary work
8. Florida Highway Patrol
9. Federal Highway Administration
14. The quality of moving freely
15. Corridor of I-75 - _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Alley
16. Orange County Fire Chief
17. A unit of capacity of a computer local area network, equal to one megabyte of computer information
20. A method of transportation in which people who are traveling the same route share a vehicle
24. Electronic method of procurement
26. National Rural ITS Conference
27. Number of states providing traveler information via the 511 national traveler information telephone number
28. Florida's First Coast
29. Another country represented at NRITS
31. FDOT Secretary
32. An important condition in reporting driving conditions

Down:

1. Site of the 2004 NRITS Conference
2. A method or methodology that applies technical knowledge or tools
4. Florida's new web-based procurement system
5. Intelligent Transportation Systems
7. The technology and systems used for sending and receiving messages
9. Federal Transit Administration
10. Another country represented at NRITS
11. The act of executing an order
12. International standard for communications network technologies based on the IEEE 802 set of standards
13. FTA Administrator
18. Road _ _ _ _ _ _ _
19. The world of commercial activity where goods and services are bought and sold
21. 2003 NRITS Conference Program Chair
22. A meeting of peers for discussion and exchange of views
23. Federal Communications Commission
25. Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Network

30. Institute of Transportation Engineers

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ITS Florida

NRITS Conference a Success in Palm Harbor

This year's National Rural ITS (NRITS) Conference was held on August 10-13 at the Westin Innisbrook Resort in Palm Harbor, Florida. ITS Florida served as the local host for this national conference, with other conference sponsors including the Federal Highway Administration, ITS America, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the FDOT, and the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

The NRITS Conference kicked off with a sunset dinner cruise on the 180-foot StarShip dining yacht. This was a unique "ice-breaker" event with the StarShip departing from the famous Tarpon Springs sponge docks, and providing a relaxing atmosphere for conference attendees to network as well as enjoy the Florida environment and prepare for a full conference schedule.

FTA Administrator Jennifer Dorn delivered the opening keynote address (the first FTA Administrator to be a keynote speaker for a national ITS conference). Her address focused on the special needs of rural transit and how ITS can serve those needs. She also congratulated the outstanding work of the ITS community in building recent partnerships with FTA with the goal of improving transit vehicle safety and overall system security.

The NRITS Conference attracted representatives from 35 states, together with representatives from Africa and Canada. Twenty-five exhibitors were also on hand to display the latest technology applications for rural mobility and safety, provide door prize give-a-ways, and participate in vendor "info-mercials." NRITS Conference exhibitors included:

ADDCO, Inc.
AirSage
American Signal Company
Control Technologies, Inc.
Core Tec Communications
Cornet Technology, Inc.
Econolite Control Products, Inc.
EIS, Inc.
Fiberoptic Display Systems, Inc.
Florida Department of Transportation
I-95 Corridor Coalition
ITS America/ITS Florida
MasTec
McQ Associates
NextBus Information Systems, Inc.
RouteMatch Software, Inc.
Skyline Products, Inc.
SmartRoute Systems/Westwood One
South Atlantic Traffic Group
SRA
Temple Inc.
3M Company
U.S. Department of Transportation
VERSYSS
Western Transportation Institute

Over a two-day period, the technical program consisted of three concurrent program tracks:

- Public Mobility;
- Traveler Information/Communication Systems; and
- Safety & Operations.

“Mini-seminars” were also presented on:

- Emergency Response Needs in Rural Areas;
- Improving the State of the Practice for Rural ITS Maintenance; and
- How to Start a Rural ITS Program.

A roundtable discussion, lead by 2003 NRITS Conference Program Chair Mike Pietrzyk, Transportation Solutions, Inc., included local, state, and federal insights from three panelists on the future of rural ITS deployment. The background for this discussion was based on a recent “USA TODAY” article that illustrated how rural areas are fast becoming “test cases for smart growth” in America.

Orange County (FL) Fire Chief Carl Plaugher entertained and enlightened conference attendees as the guest speaker at Tuesday’s dinner and reception. Chief Plaugher’s well-organized and thought-provoking discussion identified problem areas his department faces in rural incident management, and he challenged NRITS Conference attendees to develop the appropriate technological solutions to save lives and time, namely, quicker incident detection and verification, and accurate locations to enable his responders to react more effectively.

The NRITS Conference closing session included some candid observations on rural transportation from recently-appointed FDOT Secretary, José Abreu. Secretary Abreu highlighted recent FDOT ITS accomplishments that continue to keep Florida recognized as a national leader in ITS. He also thanked the conference

sponsors and indicated how very proud Florida was to host this premier rural ITS event.

Next year's NRITS Conference will be held in Duluth, Minnesota, on August 22-24, 2004, at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. More information can be obtained at www.itsmn.org and www.visitduluth.com.

This article was provided by the 2003 NRITS Conference Program Chair Mike Pietrzyk.

For more information, please check the ITS Florida Web site at www.itsflorida.org or contact Dr. Charles E. Wallace at (352) 374-6635, or email execdirector@itsflorida.org.

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Editorial Corner

First of all, I would like to extend my thanks to Mr. Chester Chandler in the FDOT ITS Office for asking me to prepare an editorial for the *SunGuide℠ Disseminator*.

FDOT began the Service Patrol Highway Assistance Program in October 1995 — October 13, a Friday night, to be precise. The program came as an answered prayer to the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) in Broward and Collier counties. FHP troopers were reporting that more than half their time on duty was spent waiting with stranded motorists along the desolate corridor of I-75 known as "Alligator Alley." On more occasions than not, FHP troopers provided rides to a pay-phone and then a return trip to the vehicle for a wallet or luggage, or just to wait for help to arrive.

Today, Florida's service patrol is known as Road Rangers. Needless to say, the FHP dispatchers have the lion's share of contact with Road Rangers by dispatching them to South Florida's I-75 call-box activations. However, the FHP troopers are said to appreciate the Road Rangers the most. "Our guys are highway patrolmen — law enforcement officers. That's what they are trained to do and it's what they were hired to do. The Road Rangers have returned South Florida troopers to the highways, where they belong," says Lt. Paul France of the FHP.

FDOT's partnership with the various contractors who provide the Road Rangers service throughout the state has proven to be extremely favorable to the motoring public. Motorists traveling Florida's major highways enjoy free services that include:

- Changing flat tires;
- Free fuel — both gasoline and diesel for motorists who run out;
- Battery jump-starts; and

- Free water for over-heated vehicles and — even bottled water for the overheated motorist.

Coastland Auto, Inc. was the first contractor to implement the Road Rangers. Records indicate that their two pickup truck patrol has grown to 16 pickup trucks and two tow-trucks. Their employees have removed an estimated 58,000 pounds of tire rubber from I-75 since 1995. Additionally, they have assisted more than 49,000 stranded motorists and assisted at more than 1,200 vehicle crashes.

Road Rangers patrol on I-75 covers all of Alligator Alley and Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, and Manatee counties. Road Rangers on Alligator Alley are assigned an area consisting of about 35 miles. Each county has its own assigned Road Rangers patrol vehicle. With the Road Rangers on the roll 24/7, it's no surprise that they often reach accidents before the FHP and rescue crews. The Road Rangers' responsibilities are to:

- Alert authorities;
- Block off the area; and
- Check on the injured and report to emergency control.

If a vehicle needs to be towed from I-75 for repairs, the motorist may use cellular telephone provided by the Road Rangers to call their motor club or a private tow company. On I-4, free towing from the Interstate is provided by the Road Rangers tow-truck which is always on standby to assist the two Road Rangers patrolling I-4 through Polk County near Lakeland.

Similar programs exist in only a handful of states. For example, in Chicago they're called the Minutemen. And, in Indiana they're called the Hoosier Helpers. Los Angeles and Georgia also have their own versions of service patrols.

In just a short two years, our lives have changed. Many of us have changed the way we think, the way we live, and even the way we travel — to the point that many people drive when, before September 11, 2001, they would have "flown the friendly skies." Thanks to FDOT's Road Rangers, referred to by many as "Angels," it is now possible to "drive Florida's friendly Interstates," — I-75, I-595, I-4, and others.

When the going gets tough and you're stuck on the road, who you gonna call? FDOT's Road Rangers — that's who.

This editorial was provided by Mr. BJ Kirby, Coastland Auto Road Rangers, Inc. Mr. Kirby can be reached at (239) 643-4357 or email BJKirby@softhome.net.

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Wherein a compendium of various random facts and snippets of humor is presented on an irregular basis for purposes of cerebral edification and mental diversion!

Just 100 years ago, while airplanes were being invented:

The average life expectancy in the US was forty-seven!

Only 14% of the homes in the US had a bathtub!

Only 8% of the homes had a telephone!
(Those that did paid $11.00 to talk for 3 minutes to Denver from New York City.)

There were 8,000 cars in the US, and only 144 miles of paved road!

If you would like to contribute some interesting trivia, email Nick Adams@dot.state.fl.us
All submittals welcome!

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Web Site(s) of the Month

WWW.Sensorland.com

Sensors can be used to detect and measure almost anything. This site lists 54 different types of sensors — from vehicle wheel measurement equipment to magnetostrictive linear position sensors. Click on the type of sensor you're interested in and an explanation of how it works pops up. Many of the sensors have transportation applications. This page is part of the larger Sensorland site. It includes technical tips, sensor news, and a calendar of upcoming sensor events. Visit the site at www.sensorland.com.

WWW-CTA.ornl.gov

The Center for Transportation Analysis (CTA) in the Oak Ridge National Laboratory "develops integrated inter-modal transportation solutions through innovative and cost-effective research and development." Its research areas include a variety of transportation-related subjects. These include aviation and highway safety, ITS, logistics, and defense transportation. Additional information on each of the research areas is available on the site. Many CTA reports are also available online. The site includes links to online tools which CTA has been involved with, such as the ITS Deployment Tracking site and a site used to compare fuel economy of various vehicles. Visit the site at www-cta.ornl.gov.

If you would like to suggest an interesting Web site, email Mike Akridge@dot.state.fl.us
All submittals welcome!

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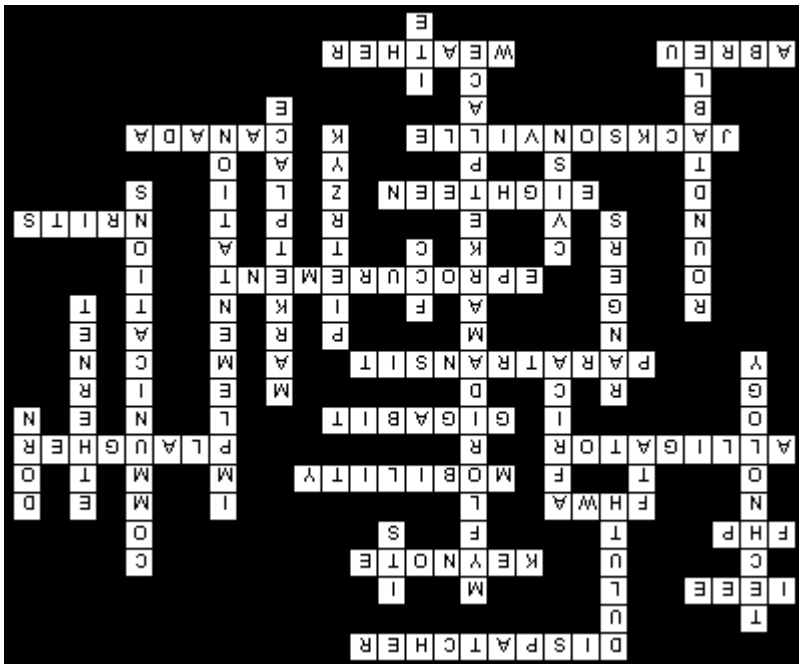
SunGuide℠ Disseminator Word Challenge Answers



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Announcements

FDOT End-of-the-Year ITS Working Group Meeting

The FDOT ITS Office has set the FDOT End-of-the-Year ITS Working Group Meeting and associated ITS meeting for December 1-5, 2003 at the Deerfield Beach Resort in Deerfield Beach, Florida.

The following meetings/events have been scheduled:

- Change Management Board;
- FDOT Closed-Door Session;
- ITS Florida Board of Directors Meeting;
- ITS Florida Advisory Committee Meeting;
- ITS Florida Annual Meeting;
- ITS Florida Annual Social Event;
- FDOT End-of-the-Year Working Group Meeting;
- Tour of District 4's Regional Transportation Management Center;
- ITS Project Specific Meeting (tentative); and
- FHWA Training (tentative).

We hope you will make plans to attend!

For more information, please contact Ms. Pamela Haynes at (850) 410-5632 or email Pamela.Haynes@dot.state.fl.us.

Mark Your Calendar NOW For *Transpo 2004*!

The Third in a Series of Outstanding Transportation Conferences and Expositions in the Southeast US

Sponsored by ITS Florida and Florida Section ITE
Tentative Co-sponsorship by ITS Georgia and Georgia Section ITE
December 6–8, 2004
Jacksonville, Florida

Following in the tradition of Transpo 2000 and 2002, ITS Florida and the Florida Section ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) – along with their counterparts from Georgia – are bringing together the best and the brightest professionals in ITS, traffic operations, and transportation planning for technical presentations, exciting discussion, professional training, and a dynamite technical exhibition. ***We are proud to announce Transpo 2004!***

Join us for technical program tracks of interest to all in the region, plus the most advanced technology exhibition in the southeast. Get professional development hours, and just have a great time in Jacksonville, Florida's First Coast, only two months before SuperBowl XXXIX (that's 39 for those who can't count in Latin).

Attendees will experience "best practices" exhibits and demonstrations to learn more about the latest ITS and traffic management products and services that will help them do their job better.

Special events will include technical tours, a special social event in the new Jacksonville promenade, and a super golf tournament at a world-class golf course. Other exciting events will be added to "ITS Week in Jacksonville."

Watch the organizational Web sites listed below for future details:

- ITS Florida – http://itsflorida.org
- FSITE – http://www.floridasectionite.org

More information coming soon!

Show Your Support for SunGuide℠

Cold weather's 'round the corner. Need a new jacket to fight off old Jack Frost? Want to buy yourself an early Christmas present? Consider a SunGuide℠ logo-embroidered Port Authority™ Classic Poplin Jacket.

The cost per jacket is $32.85. If you are interested in ordering a jacket, please email your order, including color and size, to Ms. Kristen Blanton at Kristen.Blanton@dot.state.fl.us.

For additional information on the jacket, you may visit Port Authority's Web site at www.wearables4u.com/outerwear/jackets/J753.asp.

Changing Faces!

We are happy to introduce Samhita Rajashekar, PBS&J, as a new addition to FDOT's ITS Office as a Senior Information Solutions Developer for the FDOT ITS General Consultant. Ms. Rajashekar attended the University of Wisconsin where she received a Master of Business Administration degree. Additionally, Ms. Rajashekar has a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Computer Engineering from the University of Bangalore, India.

We would also like to welcome Arun Krishnamurthy, PBS&J, to FDOT's ITS Office. Mr. Krishnamurthy will work as an ITS Analyst for the FDOT ITS General Consultant. Mr. Krishnamurthy recently completed his Master of Science Degree in Transportation/Civil Engineering from Vanderbilt University. Mr. Krishnamurthy's undergraduate studies in civil engineering were completed at the Regional Engineering College in Andra Pradesh, India.

The FDOT ITS Office would like to wish the best to our outgoing personnel — Leslie Boatman, Traci Matthews, and Purvi Shah.

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