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Florida — Leading the Nation in 511

On July 21, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) assigned the 511 dialing code for the provision of telephone-based transportation information on a national basis. After extensive planning and design work, the FDOT District 5 office launched the Central Florida

Traveler Information 511 Service on June 24, 2002, and the FDOT District 6 office launched the Southeast Florida SunGuideSM 511 Service on July 16, 2002.



The objective of this article is to provide an overview of what has been accomplished with 511 services in Florida to date, to briefly describe what is planned for the future, and to discuss the underlying reasons that have driven usage of this service.

Central Florida 511 Service Attributes

The Central Florida Traveler Information 511 Service currently focuses on delivering traveler information for I-4 between Daytona (Volusia

County) and the Central Florida tourist attractions. The capability also exists to provide urgent information on any roadway facility in the Central Florida region. Callers in Orange, Seminole, Brevard, Volusia, Lake, Osceola, and parts of Polk counties can access this service to receive timely, accurate information.

The service is voice-activated, with callers stating the name of a road, region, or town for which they are seeking I-4 information. The service automatically recognizes the caller's spoken commands and provides one of four segment reports that are kept up-to-date by operators at the District 5 Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) – Volusia County, Seminole County, Downtown Orlando, or the attractions area. The service can also provide a complete report along the entire I-4 corridor from I-95 to US-27, if requested by the caller. The Central Florida Traveler Information 511 Service averages over 100,000 calls per month and saw a peak call day of almost 20,000 calls shortly after the service launched. In mid-2005, as part of the *i*Florida Model Deployment, the 511 service area's geographic coverage will be expanded to include nearly all limited-access facilities and several major arterials.

Southeast Florida 511 Service Attributes

In 2000, FDOT Districts 4 and 6, and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise initiated a program to design, build, operate, and maintain a multi-modal traveler information service for five years. As part of this program, a 10-digit telephone-based traveler information service became available in May 2001 and was converted to the 511 dialing code in July 2002. The service in Southeast Florida currently provides traveler information for Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Broward counties as well as the Florida Keys portion of Monroe County. The service is currently touchtone-activated and provides information in both English and Spanish.

FDOT anticipates making content-related enhancements to the existing Southeast Florida SunGuideSM 511 Service by incorporating traveler-related data collected from new ITS sensor deployments along I-95 (collecting real-time volumes and speeds as well as other incident-related information along a 17.5 mile stretch) and portions of the Palmetto Expressway, I-75, US-1, and on the more important arterial facilities in the region. A regional transit information database is also in development and its data will also be available to 511 callers. In addition, the Florida Turnpike Enterprise and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority are working to deploy new data collection infrastructure on their roadways to support further expansion of the 511 service.

Finally, District 6’s SunGuideSM Transportation Management Center (TMC) will provide additional real-time data for input into the 511 service from a number of agencies, including: the Florida Highway Patrol and the Broward County, Palm Beach County, and Florida Turnpike Enterprise TMCs, the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, and Miami-Dade traffic signals, control centers, and emergency management centers.

Florida 511 Call Volumes Impact National Service Usage

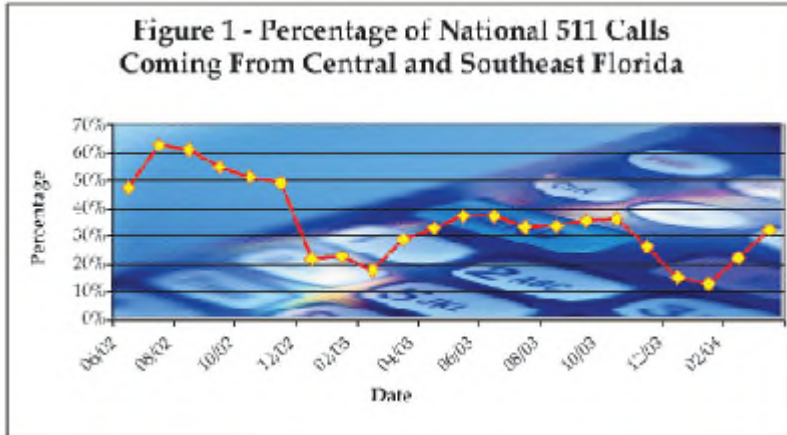
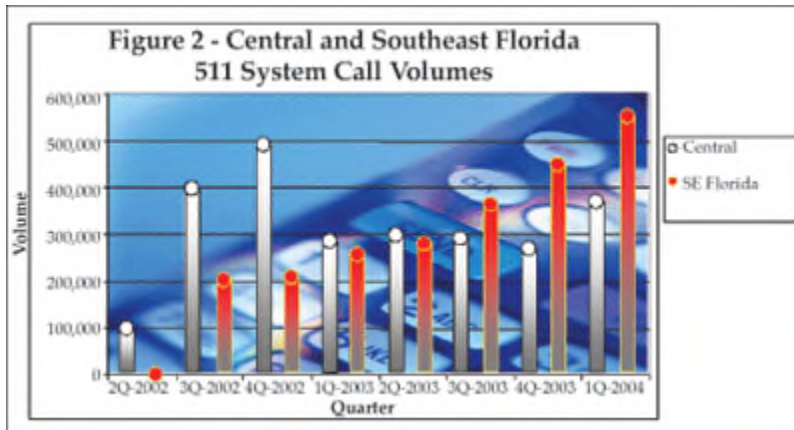


Figure 1 shows that during 2002, the two Florida-based 511 systems accounted for between 50 to 60 percent of all 511 calls nationally (at that time there were between 6 and 11 other 511 systems operational across the country). Since launching, the two Florida 511 systems have, on average, accounted for between 30 to 40 percent of all 511 calls nationally from

the 21 systems in operation today. In studying this figure, readers should understand that the drop in percentage of national 511 calls occurring between November and February each year, accounted for by Florida-based usage, is not due to a drop in calls in Florida, but rather significant increases in calls by users from other 511 service areas that experience severe winter weather. This is supported by Figure 2, which indicates that use of the two existing Florida-based 511 systems has grown (with the exception of usage spikes around the time of the service launch) during each quarter since their inception.



For two weeks after FDOT District 5 launched the Central Florida Traveler Information 511 Service, travelers were made aware of the service’s availability via the posting of ‘Call 511’ messages to dynamic message signs (DMSs) along I-4. An extensive number of road signs were deployed at key Central Florida locations as well.



Recently, the service has experienced growth in monthly call volumes from the low 90,000 range to the 130- to 140,000 range. Although no final conclusions have yet been drawn concerning the underlying reasons for this growth, two likely factors contributing to it are: a) the opening of additional lanes along I-4, resulting in increased traffic volumes and consequently 511 service usage; and b) the posting of ‘Call 511’ messages on newly activated arterial



DMSs in Seminole County beginning at the start of February 2004 (coinciding with the initial jump in the number of calls).

According to Anne Brewer (FDOT District 5 Assistant District Traffic Operations Engineer), FDOT District 5 has always advocated the importance of proactively providing timely, high-quality data to 511 service users. According to Ms. Brewer, it is the quality of data provided and simplicity of usage that have driven high call volumes in spite of the fact that little marketing has been conducted. Moreover, FDOT District 5 staff believe that only by keeping users satisfied with the data they are provided will a customer base be created to drive service usage over the long-term. With the growth of the service (both in more roadways covered and higher quality content provided) as part of *iFlorida*, it is expected that a significant number of additional customers will start to make use of, and be satisfied with, the service. As part of *iFlorida*, customer satisfaction will be measured via a survey of 511 users.

According to Jesus Martinez (FDOT District 6 ITS Operations Administrator), FDOT District 6 has undertaken major efforts to promote their 511 service. At the time of service initiation, promotional tools included use of DMS, radio spots (in both English and Spanish), static roadside signs, and the distribution of an assortment of promotional items displaying the 511 logo. This marketing effort is attributed with the continued increase in customer usage of the Southeast Florida SunGuideSM 511 Service to its peak of 210,184 calls in March 2004. Mr. Martinez credits much of the service's initial success to the use of DMS to display messages advertising the 511 service. However, it is the breadth and depth of the marketing effort that supports continued increases in service usage and draws national attention to District 6's program.

Mr. Martinez believes that quality information enables the Southeast Florida SunGuideSM 511 Service to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and usage. Eighty percent of the current 511 users in Southeast Florida recently stated that the 511 service was either their most, or second most, important source of transportation-related information. Over 96 percent of the users are satisfied with District 6's 511 service, which is greater than both the 93 percent 511 satisfaction reported in the Minnesota area and the 90.5 percent in San Francisco Bay's area.

Additional Statewide and Metropolitan Area 511 Services in Florida

In addition to enhancing the Central Florida Traveler Information 511 Service, the *iFlorida* Model Deployment will include deployment of a statewide 511 service that will provide reporting (primarily incident data and construction/work zone information) in all parts of the state not currently covered by a metropolitan area service.

FDOT District 7 currently anticipates having a fully operational, voice activated 511-telephone service by mid-August 2004. This service will provide traveler information for Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Hernando, Manatee, and parts of Polk counties. Existing data resources provided by FDOT's public partners will be supplemented by approximately 100 vehicle detection sensors deployed along I-4, I-75, and I-275 as part of the Federal Highway Administration's Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure Program (ITIP).

A statewide FDOT 511 Working Group was formed in December 2003 to facilitate coordination between the Districts in deploying and operating 511 services. The Working

Group is currently developing a strategy to provide multi-modal regional information in the Jacksonville and Southwest Florida areas as soon as possible, as well as developing an approach to converge towards a single statewide 511 service by the end of the decade.

Florida 511 – Ahead of the Pack

The two 511 services in Florida currently receive between 30 to 40 percent of the nationwide 511 calls and users are highly satisfied with the services. This high level of success has been achieved despite the fact that FDOT has only recently come to terms with Verizon Wireless, which is presently in the process of enabling the 511 dialing code for their customers. Given the size of Verizon Wireless' customer base, it is anticipated that 511 usage will grow as these new users become familiar with the services. Moreover, the value of 511 to FDOT and the traveling public will continue to increase as the statewide and new regional 511 services come online. As with existing regional 511 services in Florida, these new 511 services will continue to focus on quality and timeliness of data disseminated to provide the backbone for service usage growth. It is this combination of factors that have resulted in Florida's phenomenal success in establishing superior 511 usage and customer satisfaction levels, giving it a national leadership role in this emerging ITS field.

This article was provided by Rick Schuman, PBS&J. For information, please contact Mr. Schuman at (407) 256-9041 or email to RickSchuman@pbsj.com.

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About Our Cartoonist . . .

Like any good cartoonist, the most frequent question Theresa McCracken has to answer is, "Do you draw for the New Yorker?" "Of course," she always replies. "However, they, unlike the *SunGuide*SM *Disseminator*, have never had the good sense to buy any of my work."

What does she know about ITS? "Nothing," McCracken says. "Before working with the folks at the *Disseminator*, I always figured ITS meant knowing which back roads to take when the main roads were washed out." That's because McCracken lives in the woods outside of Waldport, Oregon, a coastal town with a population of 2,000, a yearly rainfall of 90 inches, and one stop light. That's one more light than most towns in her county have.

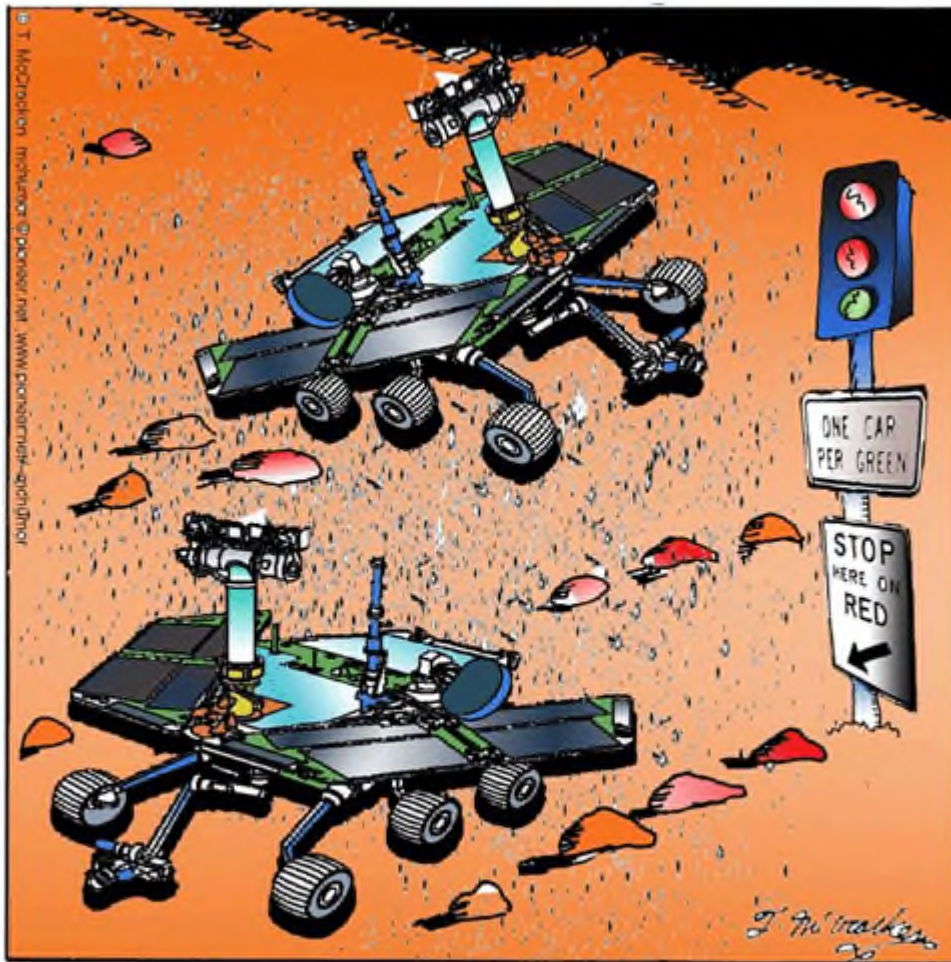
Knowing nothing about the topic she's drawing on is not new for her. McCracken draws cartoons for hundreds of magazines publications that range from the *Saturday Evening Post*, to the *Oregonian*, to small trade journals. "One day I'll be drawing cartoons about anemic astronauts and the next day I'll be poking fun at Zen zoologists," she says. "I find being unencumbered by knowledge about the subject makes the task easier. It's sort of like a vacuum. If I don't know anything about something, I make stuff up. And most of that stuff is absurd, and, if I'm lucky, it's absurd in a funny way."

And, for better or worse, she can't help but find something funny in almost everything. If you'd like to see more of McCracken's cartoons, check out her Web site at www.pioneer.net/~mchumor.

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Moment of Humor



News Bulletin July 2004:
Martian Rovers, *Spirit* and *Opportunity*, find proof
positive of former intelligent life on the Red Planet.

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A Different Light on ITS in Florida

Florida's ITS scenery has evolved from a bland landscape to new ITS devices hung at virtually every corner. And state-of-the-art transportation management centers are popping up all over the state. As you travel from Pensacola to Miami, you can see ITS deployments everywhere along our roadways – from interstate facilities to local arterials. We, in Florida, are leaders in deploying the latest and greatest ITS to support the traveling public.

As I look back at *Florida's Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan (Plan)*, produced August 23, 1999, I can confidently say that Florida has accomplished many of the stated goals from this *Plan*. The fruits of our labor cannot be appreciated while we are in the mist of the daily grind. However, I had the opportunity to leave the ITS Program on a one-year sabbatical with the military. Since returning to Florida, I have started to take stock of the ITS Program, and I realize that Florida has come a long way in the last five years.

Sitting down and looking over Florida's ITS Program accomplishments, from the rural panhandle to the bustling city of Miami, these are some of the projects I came up with from the past five years:

- Smart work zones for traveler information on I-10/I-110 in Pensacola – This is a small-scale, but very effective, way to get information to the traveling public. This project is a very successful management of the work zone.
- The Bay County ITS Integration Project – This is a comprehensive advanced traffic management system (ATMS) to be deployed in Bay County – This will be very innovative with non-traditional partners (Bay District Schools). The FDOT has taken the lead in the project, but the local agencies will receive the greatest benefits.
- Locally deployed ATMS in the City of Tallahassee – This is a very comprehensive and effective system that was all locally funded.
- The expansion of the Jacksonville Freeway Management System.
- *i*Florida Model Deployment in District 5 – This will be a model for others to use in public-private or public-public sector partnerships.
- Development of the Central Florida Regional Transportation Operations Consortium has allowed interoperability among all operating agencies within the Orlando metropolitan area. This could not have happened without the District-level leadership.
- The Tampa ATMS and 511 system will go live in the very near future.
- The Tampa Metro Area Signal System – This project provides innovative deployment of various adaptive traffic control software.
- The Lakeland Signal Computer System Update – This is a great showcase of public sectors working together to improve the commuting experience of the traveling public.



This project will showcase the ability of the public sectors to leverage each others' resources.

- District 1's Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC) – This will be one of Florida's first RTMCs that will have a comprehensive rural freeway management system.
- District 4's Interim Traffic Management System (ITMS) – This project provides active smart work zone management during the reconstruction of I-95. It has shown the benefits of active management of work zones.
- District 4/Broward County RTMC – This will be one of the first cost-sharing and cohabitations of county and District traffic/ITS operations. This will also be one of the first centers to deploy Florida's much-anticipated SunGuideSM Software System.
- The SunGuideSM Transportation Management Center in District 6 – This is one of the flagship RTMCs in South Florida, and will be an example for many scanning tours in the future for other states. The facility is magnificent in that the structure of the workspace allows partnering with other public safety agencies.
- Incident Management / Road Rangers – This program has gone from executive briefing to a full-fledged program with 24/7 operation in all of Florida's major metropolitan areas. This program has been well-received by the traveling public. The hard work has materialized in the performance standard of 90-minute clearance and other standards that have been adopted by the program.



There are many other major deployments that I have not mentioned. As I stated earlier, ITS deployment is at virtually every corner of Florida.

Many of these deployments could not have happened without the leadership and vision from the original group of District Traffic Operations Engineers (DTOEs) back in the early days of Florida's ITS Program. I came to Florida back in 1999, and my first meeting with these visionaries was held at the University of Central Florida. As I looked around the conference room, I said to myself, "How can the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) live up to the expectations that these key players have laid out on the table as part of *Florida's Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan*?" These key players were Lap Hoang, Bob Krzeminski, Chester Chandler, Fred Ferrell, Rory Santana, and many other DTOEs.

I am amazed at the progress of some of Florida's statewide efforts. These efforts will enable us to fully realize the benefits of a total statewide integration. Florida will have one of the most comprehensive state-of-the-art transportation management center software systems, the SunGuideSM Software System, which many other states will want to emulate. Version 1.0 of this software is scheduled for deployment this year in the District 4 RTMC. This single-platform software will enable statewide interoperability which will enhance our ability to serve the traveling public.

Florida will soon have the very first statewide 511 system in operation. This is due to the leadership provided by District 5 and their partners in Southeast Florida (Districts 4 and 6, and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise). The call volumes in Central and Southeast Florida continue to

increase and the traveling public has realized the benefits of 511. Just dial 511 in these areas and you will realize its benefit.

As we move along and continue to deploy FDOT's *Ten-Year ITS Cost Feasible Plan (CFP)*, the work that has been done developing the *Systems Engineering Management Plan* and the *Statewide ITS Architecture* will enable and ensure us that all projects deployed from the *CFP* are fully interoperable with our legacy and future systems.

At the end of the day, we need to realize that this ITS Program would not have progressed as far as it did without the vision provided in the early days, and those who provided us with a comprehensive road map to follow. Thus, we who reap the benefits of the seeds planted long ago, must thank those who sowed those seeds. They are: Lap Hoang, FDOT State Traffic Operations Engineer; Bob Krzeminski, FDOT Systems Management Manager; Grant Zammit, FHWA - Florida Division, ITS Engineer; the DTOEs; and the participants at FDOT's ITS Working Group Meetings.

This article was provided by Chung Tran, FHWA. For information, please contact Mr. Tran at (850) 942-9650 or email to Chung.Tran@fhwa.dot.gov.

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SunGuideSM Road Watcher Program in District 4

The success or failure of a transportation management center (TMC) is largely dependant on the quality and timeliness of information being disseminated to the traveling public. The quality and timeliness of information received by the TMC is dependant on the detection and verification resources that are available to the TMC.

Detection is the gathering of information with respect to the transportation network, i.e. incidents, travel times, debris, etc., and includes means such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, vehicle detection systems, video systems, radar systems, and probe vehicles.

The *Freeway Incident Management Handbook (Handbook)*, published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 1999, identifies the use of fleet operators and patrol vehicles as one detection/verification technique to report and verify incidents during their routine travel on area highways. The Handbook indicates that this technique requires little or no cost to the agency and can potentially provide a large number of observers. Furthermore, the technique provides both the **detection** and **verification** functions for incidents.

Using drivers who traverse area roadways to identify incidents comes under the category of detection via traffic stream **probes**. The latter term usually applies to vehicles equipped with transponders that can be electronically observed, but is also applicable to manual reporting by drivers in the traffic stream using cellular phones or other wireless communication. Interest in the probe vehicle concept has heightened recently, mainly due to the proliferation of

transponders and cellular phones. Agencies now realize that regular roadway users can perform an important incident detection function during their normal travel.

Using the concept of probe vehicles, FDOT District 4 has instituted a program that enlists employees to observe and report incidents during their daily commute to and from the District 4 Interim TMC in Broward County. This program provides significant benefits, with little cost to the FDOT, by providing a valuable resource for incident information as District 4 moves forward with ITS deployment.

The SunGuideSM Road Watcher Program began as a six-month pilot project on February 3, 2003. A limited number of FDOT volunteers traveling to and from work were used as “probe vehicles” for the purpose of traffic detection during the morning (6:30-9:30 a.m.) and evening (3:30-6:30 p.m.) peak periods.

SunGuideSM Road Watcher volunteers were selected according to their commuting route and time of commute to ensure coverage of major routes in Broward County. All FDOT employees in District 4 were informed of the program and asked to fill out a SunGuideSM Road Watcher Application. From these applications, volunteers were selected and trained on what was expected from the pilot project during a two-hour session.

The SunGuideSM Road Watchers were asked to report incidents severely effecting traffic and safety hazards, such as vehicle accidents, disabled vehicles blocking travel lanes, disabled vehicles on shoulder, and debris in the roadway, via a Nextel phone-radio or cellular phone. The Nextel phone-radio provides cellular phone communications as well as private radio communication. The SunGuideSM Road Watchers were encouraged to use the Nextel radio mode giving them direct connection to the TMC.



Standardized reporting guidelines for an incident or safety hazard were developed to ensure that the amount of questions and time it takes to disseminate information were minimized. Standardization also creates more accurate record keeping of the data taken from the SunGuideSM Road Watchers.

An example of incident information communicated to the TMC operations staff would be similar to the following dialogue:

“This is Joe Roadwatcher. My Nextel number is 57 and I would like to report a two car accident on I-95 northbound, south of Commercial Blvd. blocking the two left lanes with emergency vehicles on the scene. Related congestion was first noticed at Sunrise Blvd.”

After receiving incident information, the TMC operations staff dispatch a Road Rangers service patrol to the incident scene and updated information is supplied back to the TMC. Dynamic message

signs can then be used based on the information supplied by the SunGuideSM Road Watcher





and Road Rangers service patrol on the scene.

Due to the success of the pilot project, the program has been expanded. The initial pilot project consisted of 15 SunGuideSM Road Watchers. There are now 30 SunGuideSM Road Watchers in the program. SunGuideSM Road Watchers have called in over 800 incidents to the TMC in the past 12 months. Plans are now in the works to explore the availability of FHWA

funding to further expand and improve this successful program.

This article was provided by Guy Francese, FDOT District 4. For information, please contact Mr. Francese at (954) 777-4366 or email to Gaetano.Francese@dot.state.fl.us.

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We invite you to have some fun and complete the *SunGuideSM Disseminator* Word Challenge!

Unscramble the letters to complete the word for the clue found under the boxes.

Use the letters in the red circles to complete the final puzzle.

An answer guide follows the FDOT Equipment Certification.

Enjoy and Good Luck!



D I A L F R T O

District 5's model deployment.

G U I N U E D S

Florida's TMC software system.

B I B L A C S A T A

A period of leave from work.

W H A F

Florida Highway Administration.

Z I R L S R A T E L A B

Route marker sign assemblies with a changeable display.

S T I L H G

Lee County incident management systems program.

Who you gonna call?

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Lights For Lee County

Lee County, located on the west coast of Florida approximately 125 miles south of Tampa, is divided by the Caloosahatchee River, with just two bridge crossings for the north/south roadways and two for the east/west roadways. The Edison, Caloosahatchee, Midpoint Memorial and Cape Coral Bridges provide the only connections between the two major municipalities of Lee County, the cities of Fort Myers and Cape Coral, and carry a total of about 144,000 vehicles per day.

Significantly increased roadway congestion over the past decade has repeatedly been identified as one of the region's most pressing problems. Rapid traffic growth in the region is impacting the bridge system as well as the roadway system. Due to the increasing traffic and the constraints of the geographical barriers, Lee County has sought unique solutions to address the movement of traffic throughout the county.

The nonrecurring delays to travelers caused by incidents, such as vehicle breakdowns, traffic crashes, severe weather, or obstacles in the roadway, are also becoming more pronounced as traffic volumes on the roadway system increase. Even during nonpeak periods, incidents cause queues of traffic that do not dissipate until long after actual roadway restrictions are removed. The increasing impact of incidents, coupled with increasing traffic volumes, amplifies the need for more effective response mechanisms for these incidents.

The resulting congestion levels emphasize the need to provide current, real-time traffic information to motorists to allow an informed decision as to their planned route, as well as to increase the effective capacity of the roadway system by managing traffic flow on and off the roadways. To provide more effective information to the motoring public and to assist in alleviating capacity issues on this roadway system, the FDOT completed a *Feasibility Study* for the deployment of an incident management system (IMS). The recommendations from the Feasibility Study were supported by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council.

The FDOT has since initiated a contract to prepare the Request for Proposal (RFP) documents for a design/build project for this IMS, named Lee ITS Guiding Highway Travelers (LIGHTS) by the stakeholders. The RFP documents are being prepared for LIGHTS to be deployed in two phases based on available funding levels. The first phase will address the infrastructure and devices for the Caloosahatchee and Edison Bridges. The second phase will focus on the Cape Coral and the Midpoint Memorial Bridges.



An analysis of the IMS requirements, including the available technology to implement the system, has been completed. The recommended deployment will include closed-circuit televisions (CCTV), road weather information system (RWIS) detector stations, dynamic message signs (DMSs), dynamic trailblazers (DTBs) and highway advisory radio (HAR) in the areas surrounding the bridges.

To minimize the construction cost of the deployment, the communications system for this installation has been designed to take advantage of all available resources. Lee County would prefer to have fiber optic cable connection to each of the devices in the IMS, and eventually this may be



achievable. However, devices like DTBs and DMSs, which do not have a frequent need to change the message, can easily use wireless media for communications. This is especially true for remotely located devices, where the cost of a fiber optic cable network would currently be prohibitive. Providing communications to the CCTV cameras, data collection sites, and DMS sites adjacent to the bridges will require approximately 25 miles of fiber optic cable.

Lee County and the City of Cape Coral have taken a very progressive approach to solving their communications needs as a group. The project will have shared resources with emergency operations centers in two jurisdictions, and the Lee County IT Department and Transportation Department in two jurisdictions. The data from the IMS will also be available at the FDOT regional transportation management center (RTMC) when it is completed. The IMS will combine communications from several different wireless systems in addition to the fiber optic cable network.

One of the unique characteristics of this IMS will be the DTBs. DTBs are route marker sign assemblies with a changeable display to direct travelers along various preplanned alternate routes, when necessary. These signs will be used in conjunction with DMS and HAR. The DTBs will be multi-message prism signs that will be used to display different messages. The selection of this type of sign resulted after many discussions regarding the purpose of the signage, the length of the messages that will be required, the sensitivity to the esthetics in the area, and the cost of the devices. There will be 77 DTBs throughout Lee County to guide motorists to an alternate route. DMSs will be located at critical entry points into the alternate route. Each of the DTBs and DMSs that are associated with the IMS will also include a static sign with a logo for the IMS so that it can be readily identified as part of this network.

Radar/presence microwave technology will be used for incident detection on the bridges in Lee County. These detectors have the ability to detect stopped vehicles, to measure true speed, and to detect multiple roadway lanes, along with working well in rain and fog.

The RWIS will provide visibility and wind speed/direction information on each of the four bridges. The wind speed and direction sensor will provide wind data, including wind direction and average velocity.

HAR will be used by Lee County to disseminate vital real-time travel information to motorists via their AM radios.

Another key component of the IMS is the SunGuideSM Software System that will be used at the RTMC. This software system will be used to communicate with the field devices, operate the IMS network, and provide information to other operation centers.

With the regional transportation providers sharing the emphasis of providing service to the citizens and visitors of the region, making information readily available is a key element in an ITS such as LIGHTS.

This article was provided by Sara Olney, Gray-Calhoun & Associates, Inc. For more information, please contact Ms. Olney at (813) 831-8870 or email SOlney@graycalhoun.com.

For more information on ITS Florida™, please check the ITS Florida™ Web site at www.itsflorida.org or contact Diana Carsey, Executive Director, at (727) 409-5415, or email CarseyD@verizon.net.

If you wish to contribute an article to the *SunGuide*™ *Disseminator* on behalf of ITS Florida™, please contact Erika Ridlehoover at (813) 376-0036, or email Erika.Ridlehoover@transcore.com.

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District 6's Hi-Tech Eye on Traffic

Dedication of the SunGuide™ Transportation Management Center

The District 6 SunGuide™ Transportation Management Center (TMC) was dedicated Friday, June 25, 2004, with Governor Jeb Bush giving the keynote speech. District 6 Secretary John Martinez hosted the upbeat gathering and kept the enthusiastic crowd entertained as he recounted the initial beginnings of the SunGuide™ TMC. FDOT Secretary José Abreu and Fred Dickinson, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, also praised the progress and advantages the SunGuide™ TMC's operation would provide towards improving roadway management.

After the speeches and recognition of instrumental employees, tours were conducted to showcase the building. The SunGuide™ TMC features a multi-screen wall and eight console workstations where staff monitor and control closed-circuit television cameras, dynamic message signs, and vehicle detectors, and dispatch Road Rangers to clear accidents, remove debris, and assist stranded motorists. The Florida Highway Patrol will operate 18 workstations on the second floor and the 511 traffic service will also work out of the SunGuide™ TMC.

District 6 Secretary Martinez sees the ITS Program as the solution to “not being able to pave our way out of traffic congestion.”



This article was provided by Nick Adams, FDOT ITS Program. For more information, please contact Mr. Adams at (850) 410-5608 or email Nick.Adams@dot.state.fl.us.

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Editorial Corner — No Telling What We Can Accomplish

As I sit and write this editorial, I cannot help but feel excitement for what the future will bring. In all my 11 years with the FDOT, this is by far the most ambitious project I have undertaken so far. The task of leading the future endeavors of a successful and nationally recognized ITS Program will be a challenging one. My predecessor has laid the foundation of this very successful and nationally recognized program. The list of accomplishments the ITS Program has already obtained is impressive.

Where do we go from here? Hopefully to ventures bigger and better than we have ever seen; accomplishments exceeding anything we have ever done. I am fortunate to have the support and help of the ITS staff, both in-house and general consultants. Their vision, hard work, and dedication have made the ITS Program the success it is today.

The ITS Program will continue to showcase its accomplishments at major conferences and expositions. We look forward to TRANSPO 2004 taking place in Jacksonville this coming December, and the next ITS America Meeting and Exposition being held in Phoenix in May 2005. We will continue to convene ITS Working Group Meetings to share and learn valuable information from our colleagues and industry partners.

I am fully committed to furthering the cause of the ITS Program. I look forward to visiting each District to see how the Central Office ITS Section can help the Districts achieve their program goals. Building excellent working relationships will be a top priority, because with the strength of your commitment and the strength of our commitment, there is no telling what we can accomplish.

And so, I reach out to all of our colleagues and friends in the ITS arena to create win/win partnerships. Your participation will help continue the success of this program.

This editorial was provided by Elizabeth Birriel, ITS Program Manager. For more information, please contact Ms. Birriel at (850) 410-5600 or email to Elizabeth.Birriel@dot.state.fl.us.

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FDOT Equipment Certification

The FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office, through the Traffic Engineering Research Laboratory (TERL), is responsible for approving all traffic control signal devices. Approved devices are kept on the FDOT Approved Products List (APL), a listing of devices that may be relied upon as meeting FDOT specifications, standards, or other criteria.

The APL is a means for the FDOT to meet *Florida Statute 316.0745, Uniform Signals and Devices*, which states, “All official traffic control signals or official traffic control devices purchased and installed in this state by any public body or official shall conform with the manual and specifications published by the Department of Transportation pursuant to subsection (2).”

More information on the FDOT APL may be viewed at www.dot.state.fl.us/TrafficOperations/TERL/APL.htm. Specific approved products in the FDOT APL may be searched at rite.eng.fsu.edu/iapl/page1.php. One product was approved between April 22 and May 31, 2004, as listed below:

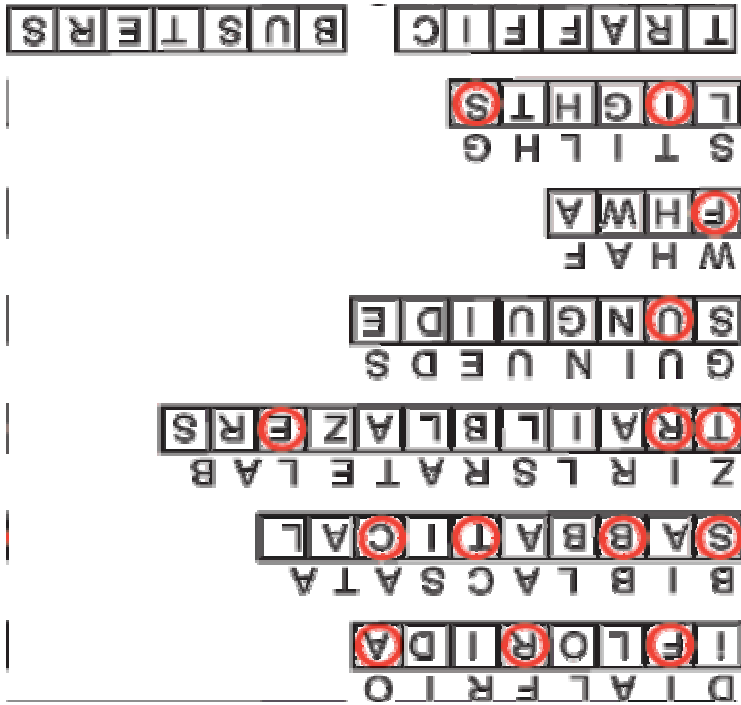
Cert. #	Manufacturer	Type of Device	Device Description
66513952018031	Polara Engineering, Inc.	Audible/Tactile Pedestrian Detector	Model Navigator APS

For more information, please contact Carl Morse, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office, at (850) 414-4863 or email Carl.Morse@dot.state.fl.us.

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Word Challenge Answers



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Announcements

It's Signed, It's Signed, It's Signed!

Finally, FDOT has an executed agreement with Verizon Wireless to provide 511 services in the state of Florida. The agreement was executed by Verizon Wireless on May 25, 2004. The agreement provides for initial programming of the 511 dialing code at the switch level for free. Verizon Wireless will have up to six months to program switches. However, it is anticipated that the programming will take less time. This agreement will make a big difference in the number of people utilizing the 511 dialing code. Verizon Wireless has a significant percentage of the wireless market in Florida.



Don't Miss NRITS in Duluth



The National Rural ITS (NRITS) Conference will be held in Duluth, Minnesota, on the beautiful shores of Lake Superior. Mark your calendars to attend this event on August 22-25. Conference information and registration can be found at www.itsmn.org/ruralits2004/.



* * * *

Transpo 2004 — Border Wars: Overcoming Transportation Barriers

Transpo 2004™

Mark December 6-8, 2004, on your calendars for this exciting multi-state (Florida and Georgia), multi-association (Florida/Georgia Sections ITE and ITS Florida/Georgia, the Florida DOT, Georgia DOT, and FHWA), and multi-about-anything-you-can-think-of transportation event. Conference information can be found on the Transpo 2004 Web site at www.ITSTranspo.org.

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