

SUNGUIDE® DISSEMINATOR

Equipping Our Road Rangers

Statistics have proven that for every minute a travel lane on a roadway is closed, it takes four minutes for traffic flow to return to normal.

In 2002, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Director of the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) signed the "Open Roads Policy." This agreement established a policy for FDOT and FHP personnel to expedite the removal of vehicles, cargo, and debris from roadways on Florida's State Highway System, to restore, in an URGENT MANNER, the safe and orderly flow of traffic following a motor vehicle crash or incident. One of the tools to accomplish this goal was to equip our Road Ranger Service Patrols with an effective communications system.



District 5 initiated a pilot project in 2004 to allow the Road Ranger Service Patrols to use the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS). This is the same radio system that all state law enforcement officers use, including the FHP. The 800 MHz system users in Orlando were surveyed regarding the effectiveness of this pilot project, and 100 percent of those surveyed recommended that the pilot project be expanded statewide.

In 2008, the Incident Management Section of the Traffic Engineering and Operations Office (TEOO) purchased 109 portable and eight desktop 800 MHz radios to be distributed to the Districts for use by the Road Rangers Service Patrols. Ten of these were kept in the TEOO as spares and to be used in case of emergencies. Installation of antennas at transportation management centers (TMC) was included in the cost of the radios. Districts 5 and 7 are currently using the radios while the remaining Districts are in the implementation process. The Incident Management Section has developed a user training program that has been offered to the Districts. This training details signal codes, security, safety items, and operations as well as operating rules and regulations.

Inside This Issue September 2009

- Equipping Our Road Rangers 1
- The SunGuide® TMC—
Five Years of Commitment
to Our Community.....3
- Electronic Signs for Speed
Detection and Motorist
Feedback5
- Inside the TERL.....6
- ITS Florida: Intelligent Vehicles—
Improving Transport for Industry
and the Military.....7
- Editorial Corner—How Do We
Get There From Here?.....9
- Trying Out Wi-Fi®: Rest and
Get Connected.....10
- District Two Incident Command
Training.....11
- Announcements12
- FDOT ITS Contacts14

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As part of the SLERS Joint Task Force, all radio users are required to submit to and pass a background investigation, including electronic fingerprinting. This is required due to the sensitive and confidential information that is broadcast over the radios. Users not only include the Road Rangers, but also TMC personnel with access to the radios. Additionally, the Road Ranger Procedure indicates that when the radios are not being used, they are to be stored in a secure location—locked in a cabinet in a locked room.

A summary of the District 5 pilot project was written together with the advantages realized by having the Road Rangers on this radio system, which include:

1. Increased safety for motorists and response personnel at incident scenes.
2. Quicker response times as units arrive with the appropriate equipment.
3. Faster initiation of a pre-planned response, before or while units are en route.
4. More accurate two-way information flow.
5. Quicker detour and alternate route implementation, when required.
6. Rapid detection of “false calls,” allowing the first arriving unit to cancel others en route when an incident is not present or not as severe as initially suspected.
7. Quicker requests for and allocation of additional resources, as needed.
8. Better interdependent and professional relationships, with all responders knowing each other and having mutual trust and respect.
9. Enhanced unified command system use at major scenes, with all responders working together towards common goals during operational periods.
10. Preferred method of communications during times of heavy cell phone use (such as large events or hurricanes), alleviating difficulties in using commercial systems.



By expanding the use of the 800 MGh radio system the FDOT has shown it's commitment to make Florida's roadways safer for all motorists. This includes not only the residents of Florida, but also our state's visitors—the driving force behind our economy.

This article was provided by Charles Creel, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operation Office. For information, please contact Mr. Creel at (850) 410-5613 or email to Charles.Creel@dot.state.fl.us.

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The SunGuide® TMC—Five Years of Commitment to Our Community

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six recently commemorated its fifth year operating the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program from the SunGuide® Transportation Management Center (TMC). This landmark anniversary of the SunGuide TMC denotes a period of premier achievements and significant milestones in all areas of traffic management. From traveler information to incident management, the last five years have prepared the groundwork that is yielding the benefits derived by each of these services today. The District Six ITS Program has evolved into a comprehensive series of interrelated initiatives that together are helping our roadways operate better, safer, and more efficiently. The SunGuide TMC has helped FDOT to achieve this upward progression by serving as the program's control center, housing the operations staff, and integrating the necessary systems to manage our roadways according to real-time traffic demands.

The SunGuide TMC was completed as part of Package "C" of the Interstate 95 Intelligent Corridor System Project. The center was inaugurated on June 25, 2004 by former Governor Jeb Bush, and received audible attention upon commencement of operations. During the initial start, FDOT remained focused on implementing ITS devices, such as closed-circuit television cameras, dynamic message signs (DMS), microwave vehicle detection systems, and fiber-optic cable communications, along the District's limited-access facilities (Interstates 95, 195, 395, and 75, and State Road 826) to integrate the region's transportation system and manage it from within the TMC. A year after the center's inauguration, District Six reported a total of 296 ITS devices deployed, covering 27.7 miles along these limited-access facilities. Today, the District counts include 437 ITS devices deployed and full coverage of its limited-access facilities (53.5 miles). Moreover, coverage expanded to include 160 miles along controlled-access roadways (State Road 5/US-1 and State Road A1A/MacArthur Causeway) as well, totaling 213.5 ITS miles covered along Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.

Operating the ITS Program from within the TMC has afforded the District with opportunities to increase the benefits of the services it provides. The ITS Program provides TMC staff with the necessary tools to dynamically manage traveler demand, disseminate traffic-related information, communicate with partner agencies, and respond to incidents 24-hours per day, 7-days per week. These services are enhanced by the collocation of the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority and Florida Highway Patrol Troop "E" dispatch and operations staff at the TMC. This integration of partner agencies working within one center provides our transportation system with a seamless approach to traffic management. The collocation of partner agencies, along with the increase of ITS-covered roadways, is helping operations staff at the TMC to manage traffic better and more efficiently. For instance, in April 2006 the District posted a



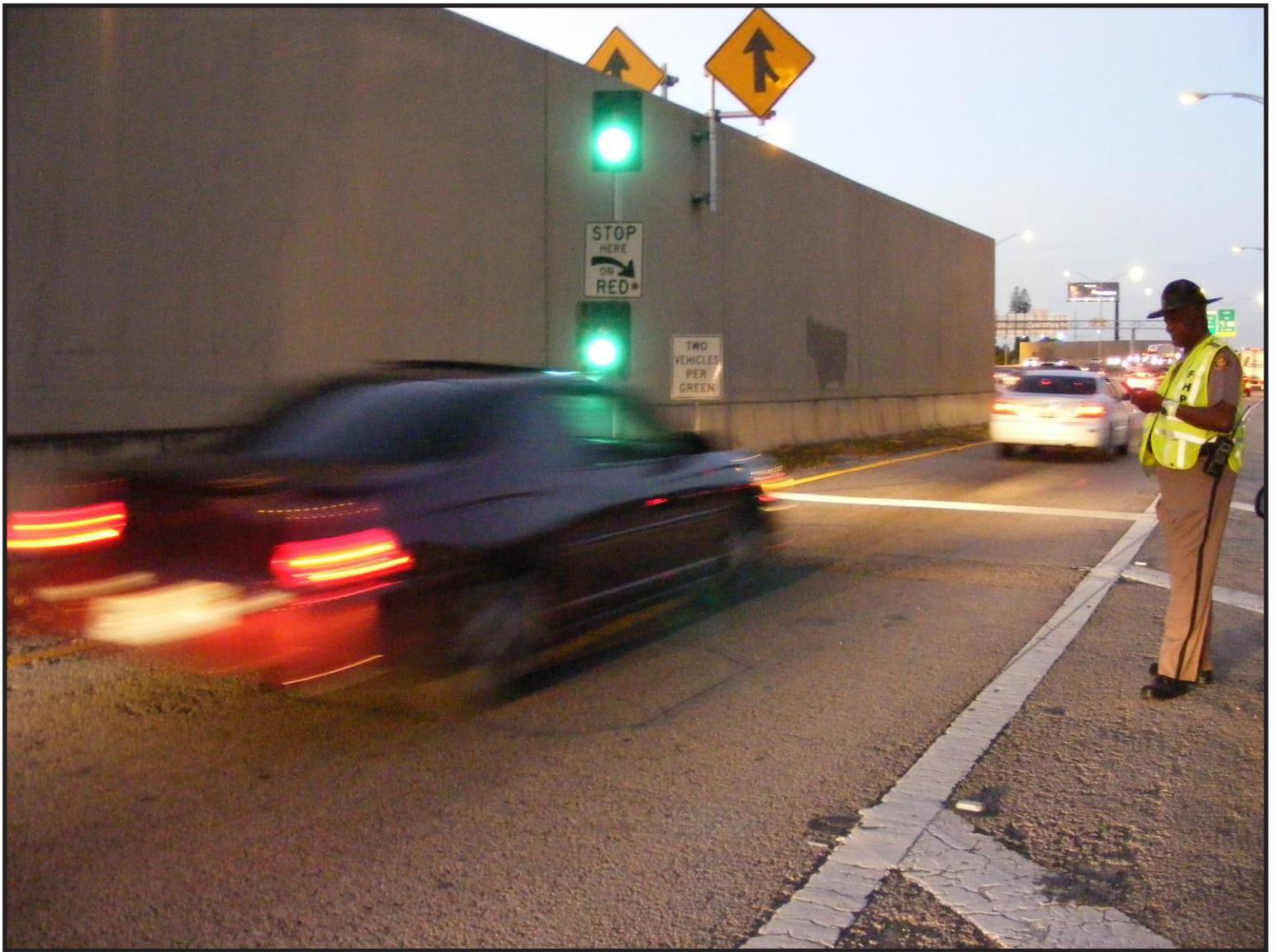
Interim TMC



SunGuide TMC dedication with former Gov. Bush



Express Lanes



total of 38 travel-related messages on the 22 DMSs that were installed at that time. However, in April 2009, that number rose to 3,739 messages posted on 76 DMSs which are installed today. This significant increase in posted messages is enabling motorists to make informed travel choices along more roadways, thus, helping to reduce the levels of overall congestion.

The ITS Program has also shown significant progress in terms of incident management. In 2005, FDOT established a baseline average of events that blocked travel lanes of a 50-minute duration period. Through better inter-agency communication procedures and overall system enhancements, that number was reduced to 32 minutes by the end of Fiscal Year 2008/2009. In addition to these expedited clearance times, the ITS Program is also supporting the daily management of Phase 1A of the 95 Express and ramp signaling systems.

From supporting the centralization of the 511 Advanced Traveler Information System to introducing the State of Florida to its first variable congestion pricing and ramp signaling system, District Six has accomplished a significant series of achievements that are helping our motorists drive better every day. The five-year anniversary of the SunGuide TMC demonstrates the District's commitment to operating an ITS Program that improves mobility by providing it with the resources needed to effectively manage and administer the program.

This article was provided by Alicia Torrez, FDOT District Six. For information, please contact Ms. Torrez at (305) 470-5757 or email to Alicia.Torrez@dot.state.fl.us.

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Electronic Signs for Speed Detection and Motorist Feedback

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Traffic Engineering and Operations Office is currently updating the *Speed Zoning for Highways, Roads and Streets in Florida* manual and plans to release it this fall. As part of this update, the use of new integrated display technologies is being incorporated into state regulatory speed signs, including variable speed limit (VSL) and electronic feedback speed signs. These signs combine light emitting diode (LED) panels with traditional static regulatory speed limit signs to add emphasis, speed detection, and feedback to motorists.

Maximum speed limits posted on traditional static speed limit signs are based on ideal roadway and weather conditions. Such signs fail to assist drivers with the challenge of determining a proper maximum safe driving speed under non-ideal conditions. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies are required to make a subjective determination when citing a motorist driving unsafely or too fast under perilous roadway conditions. VSL systems are utilized to alleviate these situations and provide safe driving speed information based on prevailing downstream roadway conditions.

VSL systems are a type of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) that utilize real-time traffic speed, volume detection, weather information, accident and congestion information, and road surface condition technology to determine the optimal and appropriate speeds at which drivers should be traveling. FDOT requires that any automated system capable of adjusting or displaying posted speed limits on electronic signs requires a human operator to review and accept system-generated speed limits prior to posting them on roadside signs.

Deployed with success in other states and Europe, VSL systems are intended to regulate traffic flow and reduce traffic shockwave propagation; thereby improving efficiency and safety. VSL systems operate under the same premise as rice grains passing through a funnel—depositing a bag of rice grains all at once will clog the funnel; whereas gradually pouring the grains enables them to pass quickly. VSL system goals are to:

- Increase traffic flow by gradually integrating vehicles
- Reduce abrupt traffic stoppages, resulting in fewer rear-end and side-swipe crashes
- Make work zones safer for construction workers and motorists
- Empower motorists with actionable information about real-time traffic conditions, enabling them to modify travel times, routes, or modes.

The electronic feedback speed sign (also called a driver feedback sign, changeable message sign, or variable message sign) is an interactive sign, constructed of a series of LEDs that displays speeds of approaching vehicles. The purpose of these new regulatory signs is to reduce vehicle speed by making drivers aware of their speed relative to the posted speed limit. These signs provide a proven, effective, and affordable solution to calming traffic and reducing speeders in neighborhoods, on city streets and highways, school zones, parking lots, and more.

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Inside the TERL

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has a goal to assure that only a safe and uniform traffic control system and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) are implemented in the state of Florida. The Traffic Engineering Research Lab (TERL) plays a part in obtaining this goal by satisfying Florida Statute 316.0745 - Uniform Signals & Devices. Below is a look Inside the TERL at activities that help accomplish our goal.



The primary mission of the TERL is to maintain an Approved Product List (APL) of devices that have been tested and verified to meet FDOT requirements. Establishing and maintaining the APL encompasses a broad variety of activities. These activities include the review of manufacturer quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) programs, comprehensive product evaluation and testing, development and continuous improvement of specifications, maintenance and technical operations of the systems used for testing (including the design, installation, and operation of a small-scale transportation management center [TMC]) as well as the installation and integration of field devices around the TERL facility and various remote testing locations. The primary goal of these efforts is to ensure that products sold and deployed on transportation projects in Florida are safe and reliable, perform as required, are of good quality, and are manufactured by companies who have demonstrated good QA/QC practices and customer service.

Notable activities during the past month included:

- The statewide procurement contract ITB-DOT-05/06-9032-RR for ITS equipment was extended until September 2010. This contract allows the direct purchase of a number of currently approved ITS devices at competitive prices.
- Coordination with Central Office and District stakeholders on merging ITS and signalization specifications. This is expected to be a multi-year effort to consolidate and streamline FDOT specifications, pay items, standards, and other requirements dealing with traffic control devices. Presentations were provided to the District Senior Designers and District Specification Offices to share the goals and expected benefits of the Specification Consolidation project.
- The TERL Annex facility renovations are being completed. From the 1970s to the 90s, this building housed the Statewide Traffic Engineering Signal Shop. Following that time, it was used for storage and other miscellaneous purposes. FDOT recently renovated the building, and soon it will once again serve as an operational facility for the testing and evaluation of traffic control devices.
- Construction has begun on a mast-arm intersection within the TERL that will serve as a controlled testing environment for signalized intersection traffic control devices. This intersection will also allow human-factors and other research into various aspects of intersection design, signing, and signalization.

The TERL welcomes and encourages any comments and feedback you may have regarding product listed on the APL. We want to hear from you.

Is there a product you would like to have placed on the APL?

Are you a maintaining agency in Florida that would like to sponsor a project to evaluate a new product or would you like to share your experiences with a product (good or bad) with us?

If so, please contact us; we want to hear from you.

This article was provided by Ron Meyer and Jeff Morgan, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For more information, please contact Mr. Morgan at (850) 921-7354 or email Jeffrey.Morgan@dot.state.fl.us.

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ITS Florida: Intelligent Vehicles—Improving Transport for Industry and the Military

For a long time, the automotive industry has wrestled with the technical, political, and regulatory issues surrounding technology development for vehicles that operate in multiple regions throughout the world. Experience has shown that clear and open communication between industry players about issues that affect design requirements and defined international standards leads to more flexible, deployable, and ultimately superior systems. The same concept can be applied to traditionally separate industries both pursuing the same technology. Currently, efforts are being led by both the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop intelligent vehicle technology. Sometimes the goals are the same, but the end applications and subsequently the technology developed are vastly different. For example, in the area of safety, the DoD is developing technology to protect the warfighter from improvised explosive devices (IED) while the DOT focuses on preventing traffic fatalities. Sometimes though, the goals, applications, and technology are closely aligned between the two. This is the case with increasing the situational awareness of the vehicle and allowing the vehicle operator (be it human or computer) to make more informed control decisions.

One example of intelligent vehicle technology with dual-use application is a platooning/convoy system. Vehicle platooning as it is referred to in commercial automotive circles, organizes and interconnects traffic into platoons of closely spaced vehicles through information sharing. Platooning has benefits beyond providing enhanced safety in private vehicles, including maximizing fuel economy, reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, and minimizing platoon transit time across a section of roadway.



Such a system was demonstrated at the ITS America Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, DC in June 2009. The system used a carry-in, low-cost global positioning system (GPS) coupled with low latency dedicated short range communications (DSRC) to facilitate vehicle platoon operations between three demonstration vehicles. DSRC is a technology being pursued by the DOT for vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-roadway applications to increase the safety and mobility of the nation's surface transportation system. In the demonstration, the three vehicles traveled at varying speeds and positions, entering and exiting the platoon during the demonstration. The vehicles communicated and provided the drivers with information to facilitate smooth traffic flow and efficient platoon operations. This demonstration relied solely on GPS and DSRC; however sensor systems typically utilized in active vehicle safety systems could augment this system to decrease following distances between vehicles in the platoon. The demonstrated system has been tested using several vehicles with varying degrees of computer control, including a fully autonomous vehicle that was demonstrated at the ITS World Congress in New York City in November 2008.

This same commercial technology has been applied to a military convoy operation to allow an unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) to support military convoy operations. The system allows a convoy to instruct a full-size UGV to lead upon command through potentially hostile urban areas and follow where appropriate in various convoy formations. The cooperative convoy system utilizes the same GPS and DSRC technologies utilized for the commercial platooning system and couples this with

active safety sensing technology and a user interface to allow convoy commanders to easily coordinate maneuvers with other convoy vehicles as well as unmanned systems.

The systems described in this article highlight how intelligent vehicles can be developed to solve commercial problems and how technology can be rapidly transferred from the private sector to solve military challenges. Continued information sharing across industries, where practical, will foster more rapid initial technology development and allow for the integration of cross discipline teams to save more lives on America's highways.

This article was provided by Ryan D. Lamm, Southwest Research Institute. For further information, please contact Mr. Lamm at (210) 522-5350 or email to Ryan.Lamm@swri.org.

For more information on ITS Florida, please check the ITS Florida Web site at www.itsflorida.org or contact Sandy Beck, Chapter Administrator, at itsflorida@itsflorida.org. If you wish to contribute an article to the *SunGuide Disseminator* on behalf of ITS Florida, please email Mary Hamill at MaryKHamill@global-5.com.

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This system was developed from commercial technologies for commercial applications and this technology has application to commercial convoy applications.”

Editorial Corner—How Do We Get There From Here?

It is amazing how things change, but remain the same; it's just a matter of fact. Like my son Alex...I can remember when he was born. My wife and I had to feed, dress, and provide for him; and now he's 11 and can raid the refrigerator, dress himself (though he still has issues with matching), and thinks that he can already provide for himself. Although he is the same person, he has changed—becoming more mature and self-sufficient. It reminds me of Florida's Traffic Incident Management Program... although I have been away for the last several years, I have come back and the program is basically the same—just more mature. What I am looking at now is: where do we go from here; what will the program look like in the future?

There are four areas that I am currently focusing on for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Central Office Traffic Incident Management Program; that I believe will help shape the future of the program. These areas are as follows:

- Customer Service
- Clear Vision for the Program
- Review and/or Develop Programmatic Goals
- Enhanced Training

Customer Service

The first thing that I am stressing to the program staff is that we are going to be more customer service-oriented. My goal is to listen to need of the Districts and partnering agencies and assist where we can. This process is going to have to go both ways because there are certain things we are going to need from these partnering agencies as well. We also have to educate our partners on what we can provide. For example, you wouldn't go to Super Lube® for a loaf of bread! So our partners need to understand that we can provide policy, direction, procedures, training, and other support, but we can't provide a Road Ranger driver for a route. We have to be realistic in what we can provide to our partners as well as what our partners can provide to us.

Clear Vision for the Program

Next—think about when you're driving down the road with a dirty windshield and your vision is hindered by the grime. Sometimes you have to pull over and clean the dirt and grime away and all of a sudden your path is clearer and it is easier to see where you are going. We are in the process of ensuring we have a clear vision for the Central Office Traffic Incident Management

Program. At the present time, we are performing visioning exercises. I have asked the program staff to provide what their vision for the program is to me; and right now I don't see a clear and focused vision. My goal is to continue to work through the process so we can develop a common vision that we all are working on as a team; and we can see our goal clearly. I believe this will help us to achieve common goals and be more efficient in our day-to-day work.

Review and/or Develop Programmatic Goals

Our next objective is to look at our Traffic Incident Management Strategic Plan that was developed in 2006. This document spells out programmatic goals and we are looking to see what has been achieved since its adoption. In our initial reviews, it looks like we fared better in completion of certain goals than we did with others. We are determining the areas that we need to focus our efforts on in the future and prioritizing them into short, medium, and long-term goals. Some of the goals that were developed at the time of the plan's adoption might not be applicable today; so we are evaluating these goals as well. We want to ensure that our goals are specific, measurable, and time-targeted so we can ensure that there is a clear awareness of what must be done to achieve our overall program direction.

Enhanced Training

Traffic incident management training is another focus area that I am looking at—not only for FDOT, but for our partnering agencies as well. The key to ensuring that we are effective in traffic incident management is to develop multi-discipline training for responders. This will allow for a more coordinated response to incidents and, hopefully, allow for these incidents to be cleared quicker, mitigating congestion and also helping to prevent secondary incidents. My goal is to streamline training so that it is in usable pieces for all our partners. This could be as simple as converting some of the training to Web-based courses, dissecting our training into smaller snippets for pre-shift briefings, or creating new training for responders.

I am blessed to have the opportunity to come back to FDOT and to work with so many dedicated professionals. I believe that our Traffic Incident Management Program is going to continue to grow in leaps and bounds and mature to be the national standard in the future. The Districts are resourceful and have developed individual initiatives that can be applied statewide—where everyone can reap the benefits; there is no need to reinvent the wheel. My goal is to have a Traffic Incident Management Program that is customer service-oriented with a clear vision and achievable goals. By applying these philosophies to our program and learning from our partners, statewide and nationally, we can strive to make Florida's roadways a safer place for our first responders and traveling public.

This editorial was provided by Paul Clark, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For more information, please contact Mr. Clark at (850) 410-5607 or email Paul.Clark@dot.state.fl.us.

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Trying Out Wi-Fi®: Rest and Get Connected

Wireless Internet access, or Wi-Fi as it is commonly known, is now being tried out at rest areas throughout Florida and District Two is the first to receive the mobile Wi-Fi trailer. The northbound Interstate 75 rest area at Ellisville in Columbia County was the first site chosen. The trailer was set up July 15 as a team effort of Central Office, District Maintenance Radio Shop, Gainesville Maintenance and a private contractor (Zoom Information Systems).

The mobile unit is a surplus trailer donated by the Turnpike and refitted to house the Wi-Fi equipment plus a generator to back up the electric power and a solar panel to generate its own 'natural' power. The State Sign Shop provided the signs for the trailer and the Statewide Aluminum Shop provided some of the supports.

Wi-Fi was permanently installed at the welcome centers as early as July 2008 and all four welcome centers and the Turkey Lake Turnpike Service Plaza have generated more than 21,000 'hits' in the past year. The I-75 Welcome Center has received more than 6,000 alone with the I-95 Welcome Center getting just over 5,000 'hits' from Wi-Fi users.

The mobile trailer will be set up at the I-75 rest area for 30 days to "test the waters" according to FDOT's Telecommunications Administrator Randy Pierce. It can be moved to other rest areas in the state to determine if there is a market for providing the Wi-Fi access. If it is found to be successful, then a more permanent setup could be established.

The Wi-Fi trailer, whose range provides service to the southbound rest area as well, also has cameras atop a portable aluminum tower to keep an eye on I-75 traffic and in the rest area. "In that this was our first deployment of the trailer (with all the systems onboard), I felt it imperative to have nearby support should we encounter a system failure," said Randy of its close proximity to the District Two Radio Shop. "George (Feagle) and his staff have been invaluable in this 'make-over' of the donated trailer. While we have had no difficulties noted to date, it speaks volumes to know a crew is standing by should it become necessary."

This article was reprinted from the District Two July 2009 issue of *Highlights*. For more information, please contact Gina Busscher, FDOT District Two, at (800) 749-2967 or email Gina.Busscher@dot.state.fl.us.

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It was a team effort in setting up the mobile Wi-Fi trailer at the I-75 northbound Ellisville rest area. George Feagle (white shirt), Jeremy Chase (at back) and Alan Skinner, all in the Radio Shop, and Jerry Stewart, Gainesville Maintenance, are shown getting it ready for its 30-day trial period.

District Two Incident Command Training

On July 21, 2009, the FDOT District Two Traffic Incident Management Teams sponsored the I-95 Corridor Coalition training on Coordinated Incident Management with over 70 team members present. Mr. John O’Laughlin with Delcan, and Tom Martin (HATS video) with I-95 Corridor Coalition, led the training with great support from our team members. Both John and Tom have several years experience in law enforcement and shared their experiences while working with the highway patrol and handling roadway incidents in other parts of the country. The objective of the I-95 Corridor Coalition was to provide this training so that there is some consistency across state borders as motorists travel along I-95.

The training incorporated the responsibilities of different responders and how each could help partnering agencies with safely managing traffic at an incident scene. The instructors showed that most of the maintenance of traffic (MOT) information can be found in the Federal Highway Administration’s *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, which is readily available on-line (<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>) for the participants review. The instructors asked the participants to discuss how incidents are handled locally and what issues/concerns the responders had when setting up MOT. They also discussed how similar incidents are handled in other states, giving the participants comparisons.

The instructors then showed a multitude of videos on accidents that occurred at incident sites after maintenance of traffic had been set-up. These videos reflected what the responders could encounter at any incident scene, even if they thought they were well protected at the time. John O’Laughlin also discussed the District Two First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team project and how it would be incorporated into future training to be shared with other incident responders around the country.

Overall, this six hour training class was very valuable. We are proud to say that the instructors felt Florida was one of the leaders in incident management and Florida is often used as an example on how to do things correctly. The local Traffic Incident Management Team will review this training over the next couple meetings so that it can be shared with those that were not able to attend.

The following agencies attending this training class, showing an impressive turn-out for our team:

- Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office
- Alachua County Sheriff’s Office
- High Springs Police Department
- Gainesville Police Department
- St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office
- Florida Highway Patrol
- High Springs Fire Department
- City of Jacksonville Environmental Department
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Southern Wrecker Service
- Walt’s Wrecker Service
- University Towing Company
- City of Jacksonville
- City of Gainesville
- FDOT Maintenance
- FDOT Construction
- FDOT Traffic Operations
- FDOT Central Office
- St. Johns County
- Jacksonville Transportation
- FDOT Motor Carrier Compliance Department
- Jorgensen Contract Services
- SmartRoute Systems
- Metric Engineering
- HTNB Engineering
- PBSJ Company
- Delcan Company
- I-95 Coalition



The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting was conducted during the training. Incidents were debriefed by the team and agency reports were given. Chief Grady Carrick introduced the First Coast Responder Training Video and team members watched two modules during lunch. One key element of this meeting was the amount of participation from individuals who rarely get the opportunity to attend the bi-monthly Traffic Incident Management Team meetings. The information they provided was very informative and will be helpful when the teams respond to future incidents.

This article was provided by Ms. Donna Danson, FDOT District Two. For further information, please contact Ms. Danson at (904) 360-5635 or email to Donna.Danson@dot.state.fl.us.

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Announcements

FDOT District Six Activates the RISC Program

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six continues to expand its already successful Incident Management Program by implementing the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) Contract to clear large-scale events that affect our highways—quicker, safer, and more efficiently.

District Six responded to its first RISC event on July 27, 2009, when a large tractor trailer driving along State Road 826/Palmetto Expressway lost control causing three travel lanes to be blocked right before the evening rush hour. The incident forced emergency responders on the scene to divert all three lanes of traffic onto the shoulder, causing the facility to operate in a limited capacity. The transportation management center operations staff, in coordination with Florida Highway Patrol, immediately activated the RISC contractor to help manage the event, since an extended clearance time would cause severe backups and decrease overall safety conditions for motorists driving along the highway. Despite traffic queues, the RISC contractor responded to the incident with all of the necessary equipment in 40 minutes, cleaned the spilled fuel, extracted the crashed trailer from the travel lanes, and cleared the entire roadway in less than 60 minutes after arriving on scene.



This event marked the first time the RISC Program was activated by FDOT District Six in Miami-Dade County. RISC contractors have been mobilized two more times since then; helping to clear the scene of an overturned tractor trailer as well as a dump truck spill along State Road 826/Palmetto Expressway during the month of August. RISC is an innovative program with an incentive-driven contracting mechanism that, in support of Florida's Open Road Policy, is helping District Six to expedite clearance of large-scale events.

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FDOT Launches 511 Call Center

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is pleased to announce that on August 3 it launched a call center to support the Next Generation Advanced Traveler Information System. The call center is located in Miami at the District Six regional transportation management center. The call center is operational for 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and is capable of assisting callers in English as well as Spanish. The call center will assist callers who access the Next Generation System through the 511 phone number with navigating through the system's menu and providing tips on using the system. The call center will not provide traffic information to the callers. Callers having difficulty navigating through the system to access information will be automatically transferred to the call center after four errors. After hours, callers will be transferred to a feedback menu where the caller can leave a recorded message, which will be retrieved for follow-up with the caller at a later date.

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Congratulations Derek!

Derek Vollmer, has recently been selected as a voting member for the National Transportation Communications for ITS Protocol (NTCIP) Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) working group. This working group is responsible for developing and maintaining a data dictionary of objects used for communication between central control software and DMS field devices. Derek holds a B.S.E.E from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and a M.S.E.E from Florida State University and specializes in NTCIP device evaluation and software development. He currently works for PBS&J at the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Traffic Engineering Research Lab (TERL) as an ITS Analyst II His responsibilities include test software development for FDOT and the evaluation of various products proposed for use within transportation systems in Florida.

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FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Mission and Vision Statements



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