



SUNGUIDE® DISSEMINATOR

Property Damage Stickers Will Save Time and Money

Guardrails, call boxes, fences, highway signs, and light poles are all state road and interstate highway assets that belong to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Because of their proximity to the highway, these assets can be (and are) struck by vehicles or otherwise damaged as a result of a crash. When this happens, it is important to know who caused the damage so FDOT can recover costs and repair the damages quickly.

Admittedly, marking highway damage may not be the first thing on responders' minds when they arrive at the scene of an incident, but it is an important part of getting things back to normal on the roads. The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) and other agencies across the state are now implementing the use of a sticker to help FDOT Office of Maintenance and its contractors easily identify the date of an incident, case number, and individuals responsible for causing the damage.

"People think that the Guardrail Fairy comes out at night and fixes these guardrails for free," said Art Brown with Transfield Services, the asset maintenance contractor for Interstate 95.

The new property damage stickers being implemented were Brown's brainchild. Often times, when there is something to be repaired, searching for who caused the damage has been a time consuming process. The state ends up



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having to pay for the repair of FDOT assets instead of the vehicle's owner or insurance company, and sometimes the state or department does not recover the costs.

"The guardrails and fences and other assets have to be fixed," said Jennifer Heller, FDOT ITS Operations Manager. "There is no choice. These fulfill a critical safety need, and regardless of who caused the damage, they must be quickly repaired or replaced."

This new property damage sticker will be placed at the scene of asset damage when the damage is caused. The sticker is orange and reflective and, therefore, easily identifiable. The sticker will be marked with the date and case number of the incident. The case number distinguishes the person who caused the damage.

This sticker will help FDOT recover costs that often must come from state funds and taxpayer dollars.

The buzz about the successful implementation is already being spread. It began with Brown, a retired FHP Trooper and now FDOT contractor for I-95. The sticker was then implemented by FHP Troops B, C, D, and G with plans to implement it statewide.

"In a time when the economy is down and the state is trying to tighten spending, this effort will help the state save money. It's a great, easy concept and everyone benefits from it," Heller said.

These property damage stickers were produced and paid for by the District 5 Maintenance Office. District 5 Maintenance is very successful in accident recovery funds—thanks to the heads-up work of the administrative staff and field crews.

This article was provided by Jennifer Heller, FDOT District 5. For information, please contact Ms. Heller at (386) 943-5322 or email to Jennifer.Heller@dot.state.fl.us.



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Alabama Visit to FDOT Beneficial for Everyone

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Traffic Engineering and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Programs have often garnered national attention. From July 28 to July 30, the FDOT State Traffic Engineering and Operations Office hosted a visit from our border state—Alabama. The Alabama contingent consisted of representatives from:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Alabama Division
- Alabama DOT Central Office – Traffic Design
- Alabama DOT Sixth Division – Maintenance
- Alabama DOT Ninth Division – Traffic Engineering
- Alabama Department of Public Safety
- City of Birmingham – Traffic Engineering

This “mini” scan tour was made possible by the sponsorship and coordination of FHWA, in particular, Jeff Dogan, the ITS Engineer with the Alabama Division. The Alabama visitors were interested in learning more about FDOT's SunGuide® Software, 511, and traffic control device testing programs. At the beginning of the first afternoon, Mark Wilson, State Traffic Operations Engineer, opened the visit with introductory remarks. Gene Glotzbach and Arun Krishnamurthy provided overviews of FDOT's ITS Program and the SunGuide software, respectively.

The second day began at the FDOT Traffic Engineering Research Lab (TERL) where Trey Tillander provided introductory remarks and Jeff Morgan gave an overview of the FDOT Approved Product List. After a tour of the TERL Traffic Management Center (TMC) and ITS lab, led by Ron Meyer, the contingent headed downtown to the City of Tallahassee TMC. At the City of Tallahassee TMC, Olu Sawyer, City Traffic Engineer, provided some opening statements. Wayne Bryan then presented on the city's traffic signal system and the “live” SunGuide software used to operate the city's dynamic message signs (DMS) and license plate readers (LPR) providing travel time data on I-10. The afternoon consisted of a return to the TERL where Clay Packard gave a detailed, hands-on demonstration of the SunGuide software and Gene Glotzbach went through the 511 phone system and www.fl511.com Web site.

The last day began with Carl Morse giving a tour of the TERL outside campus, including the DMS testing area and the TERL's test traffic signal intersection. The outside campus tour concluded at the TERL's test mast arm that houses detection technology such as video, radar and LPR, and cameras with lowering systems. Carl continued back inside with a tour and presentation of the traffic signal lab and the myriad of traffic control devices that are evaluated by the TERL. The scan tour ended with a question and answer session that focused primarily on non-technical issues and solutions.

FDOT appreciates the outreach by Alabama and is confident that the success of this collaboration will lead to future cooperation beneficial to the great states of Alabama and Florida. FDOT continues to offer to share our lessons-learned with other states while learning from their experiences as well. Come visit us in Florida!

This article was provided by Trey Tillander, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For information, please contact Mr. Tillander at (850) 410-5617 or email to Trey.Tillander@dot.state.fl.us.



Telecommunications Update

ITS WAN

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) wide area network (WAN) connections are now in place for Districts 2, 4, 5, and 6 as well as the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE). Further system configurations are planned for October as we work with District 6 to provide more robust connectivity to the FTE tolls data network in support of the 95 Express project. Other South Florida projects, including the 595 Express, a public-private partnership (P3) to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the I-595 Corridor Improvements project, will keep us busy maintaining the connectivity during major construction disruptions. Beyond that, a contract is now in place to connect Districts 1 and 7 to the ITS WAN using District fiber optic cable. Work on that contract will commence in October.

Generator Project

Telecommunications has a project to equip all of the microwave tower sites with emergency backup power generators. Last year, generators were installed at five sites along I-95 in Districts 4 and 5. Another project has begun which will equip ten more sites with generators. Work is underway and scheduled for completion in early 2010. This will complete our efforts to have backup power at all of our critical infrastructure sites. Following this we will evaluate the oldest generators in the network to determine their fitness and reliability.

47 MHz Repeater Deployments

We have been busy over the past 2 years deploying 47 MHz repeaters at tower sites. Work was completed on a contract last year to install repeaters at 15 sites in Districts 2 and 3. Over 800 mobiles radios were reprogrammed with this effort.

A contract was awarded in summer 2008 to deploy new repeaters at another ten tower sites in Districts 4 and 6. Work is now progressing on this contract. Various technical issues have been uncovered in the equipment and the manufacturer and contractor have addressed them. A novel solution was devised to interconnect the repeaters in District 6 using existing microwave capacity, originally provided for the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS), where supplemental bandwidth was available. In areas where this capacity was unavailable, newly designed and commissioned microwave radios are being provided and installed. Finally, 445 mobile radios are being reprogrammed to support District operations in the new repeater radio system.

In summer 2009, a contract was awarded to deploy new repeaters at six tower sites in Districts 1 and 7, and upgrade repeaters at three tower sites in District 1. Also, 750 mobile radios are being reprogrammed to support District operations in the new repeater radio system. We plan for the contractor to begin work on the system in October.



Finally, we have completed a design for the repeater deployment contract for District 5. This project will deploy ten new repeaters at various tower sites throughout the District. Mobile radio reprogramming is also planned for up to 750 vehicles and office locations. The scope of services is currently being reviewed by District staff. We plan to go through the procurement process for this project later this fall.

Wi-Fi® Project

The FDOT WiFi Pilot Project is now one year old and continuing to receive wide acceptance by travelers. Since it was officially commissioned, Florida travelers have accessed the FDOT's WiFi system more than 27,000 times! Travelers are continuing to use it mainly for brief periods (usually less than 15 minutes) and primarily to check their emails. Truck drivers and tourists remain the largest user groups. Of more than 3700 travelers surveyed, 89 percent indicated that the WiFi service was "extremely useful." The new WiFi mobile hot spot has also been well-received by travelers to the I-75 FDOT Ellisville Rest Area. This mobile trailer is deployed temporarily at the rest area and uses a mobile satellite link to connect WiFi users to the internet. During its first weeks of operation at the rest area, it surpassed WiFi service performance at all of the Welcome Centers setting new records for daily and weekly WiFi usage. The technical aspects of operating a mobile WiFi hot spot continue to provide challenges to FDOT during this pilot project, but a wealth of knowledge has been gained while providing a worthwhile and "safety-encouraging" service to the traveling public.



This article was provided by Randy Pierce, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For information, please contact Mr. Pierce at (850) 410-5608 or email to Randy.Pierce@dot.state.fl.us.

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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:

- Certification of VBrick's MPEG2 encoder and decoder was concluded.
- All FDOT approved signal hardware manufacturers (Cost Cast, Engineered Castings, and Pelco Products) have agreed to provide permanently etched markings on all approved hardware. This marking will include, as a minimum:
 - Manufacturer name,
 - Part number, and
 - Date of manufacture.
- Certification of Global Traffic Technology's pre-emption and wireless magnetometer products (stop bar detection only) was concluded.
- Control device servers are currently being reviewed.
- Conducting paper review and anticipate receipt soon of Ledstar full-size, walk-in, 18-inch character dynamic message sign for APL review.
- Ground breaking for the long-awaited TERL mast arm test intersection began on September 25.
- Five new vendor qualification submittals were received.
- Eleven vendor re-qualification submittals were received.

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.

Thank You!

Thanks go out to Martin County for notifying us of a passive Bluetooth vehicle probe that they have been successfully using. We currently do not have specifications for this type of device, but the field data gathered from this usage will help us to development specifications for this type of device in the future. It is always good to hear from actual users that a product works well. It is also nice to hear that the company has been responsive and has provided excellent customer service. That is one attribute we desire of all our APL vendors.

This article was provided by 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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District 5 Honored by ITS Florida

Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITSFL) honored the staff at the Orlando Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) on August 17 for long-standing cooperation and excellence in monitoring and managing Interstate 4 and other Central Florida roadways. An Outstanding Achievement Award plaque was presented to both the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), which jointly run the center.



The Orlando RTMC opened in 1991, making it the oldest such facility in Florida. The center moved to its current location at 133 S. Semoran Blvd. in 1999. RTMC operators monitor roadway conditions for incident responders, law enforcement, media, and the public. The operators relay America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) and Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Alerts together with other vital traffic information through dynamic message signs; they also control variable speed limit sign adjustments on I-4.

The RTMC staff were honored for their years of successfully honing and facilitating communications and cooperation among FDOT, FHP, and other emergency response agencies to quickly and efficiently deal with crashes, congestion, and other incidents on Central Florida roadways.

FDOT District Five Secretary Noranne Downs and FHP Major Cynthia Williams accepted the award. Both acknowledged the dedicated and professional RTMC staff who are responsible for this award-winning work.

This article was provided by Michael Tyler, Global-5 Communications. For further information, please contact Mr. Tyler at (407) 571-6768 or email to MichaelTyler@global-5.com.

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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Editorial Corner—511 Potpourri

The Florida Department of Transportation launched the Next Generation Florida 511 system on June 17, 2009. This system encompasses data collection as well as a suite of dissemination methods, including the 511 phone service, FL511.com Web site, and the mobile Web site, mobile.FL511.com. The 511 system also has a personalization component—My Florida 511—that pushes out traffic information to registered users via cell phone (text and voice alerts) and computer (email alerts).

My Florida 511 allows motorists to get the information they need without having to call the system. Users can register an unlimited number of routes on which they can receive traffic alerts. They can choose the time of day, day(s) of the week, incident severity level, and the method by which to receive the information. Free personalized profiles can be set up by going to FL511.com and selecting the My Florida 511 tab at the top of the home page.

The Next Generation Florida 511 system streamlines traffic and travel information that was provided through five regional systems into one statewide system where all system users hear the same call menu and view the same Web site. The Next Generation Florida 511 system is now bilingual—English and Spanish—on both the phone system and the FL511.com Web site. This system provides information on traffic, construction, transit, airports, and seaports as well as links to other transportation-related sites.

The Web site also provides emergency information. By clicking on the Emergency Information tab, a user can get more detailed information to help make travel decisions in an emergency situation that may require an evacuation. The phone system also gives emergency information, but only a piece at a time. The caller would have to check individual roadways to get the full picture; whereas the Web site provides all the information needed at a glance and in more detail.

The Next Generation Florida 511 system includes a help function. When using the 511 phone system, callers can ask for “Help” and the system will teach them how to get the desired information. Callers can also say “Tutorial” to hear even more detailed information about navigating through the phone system. FL511.com has a Help tab on each page that provides additional information on how to retrieve traffic reports.

The 511 Newsroom tab allows Web site users to view current and archived news releases, downloadable images, and video clips. The newsroom is a resource for news media as well as the general public.

From the FL511.com Web site the public can access cameras that FDOT has deployed around the state. Camera images are refreshed every few minutes, so that the public can visually see what travel conditions are like. The Web site also has a check box where the public can see what messages are being shown on the many dynamic message signs around the state.

This system primarily provides information on limited-access facilities in the state with information reported on some of the state’s major arterials. A complete list of covered roadways can be found at www.fl511.com/pdf/511_covered_roads_flyer_final.pdf. (Note: spaces are actually underscores.)

The system also has a feedback function which has been very useful in monitoring issues callers have with the system. By listening to and analyzing user feedback, we are able to make important modifications to make the system more user-friendly. As with any new technology, there is an adjustment period as the public learns to use it most effectively. Some frustration has been caused as users familiarize themselves with the new menu structure. We have heard their concerns and are making changes to the 511 system that will more closely mimic the previous systems.

The Next Generation Florida 511 is a living system which will continue to improve with time. Our goal is to deliver the best possible traveler information to Florida residents and visitors.

This editorial was provided by Gene Glotzbach, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For further information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or email to Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.

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Announcements

Congratulations Chester!

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Chester Chandler on his appointment as the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Seven Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program Manager. Chester is working alongside Bill Wilshire to facilitate a smooth transition of the District Seven ITS Program until Bill's retirement at the end of this year.

Chester earned his Bachelors' Degree in Civil Engineering in 1980 from Texas A&M University and is a registered professional engineer in Florida. He has over 25 years of transportation engineering and ITS experience with FDOT and other firms. Chester was instrumental in developing the Turnpike District and FDOT *Ten-Year ITS Cost Feasible Plan*. He also helped develop Florida's ITS Program. Mr. Chandler has extensive management and supervisory experience.

Please join us in welcoming Chester back to the FDOT family!

Congratulations to Javier Rodriguez, Role Model of the Year in District Six!

During the District Six awards ceremony on June 25, 2009, Javier Rodriguez was named Florida Department of Transportation District Six Role Model of the Year. Javier, ITS Operations Engineer for the SunGuide® Transportation Management Center (TMC), has served at the TMC for four and a half years and is the Project Manager for the ITS Operational contract. He has also led many successful projects for District Six, including Phase IA of the Ramp Signaling System and the operations of the 95 Express facility, amongst others.

Please join us in congratulating Javier on this special recognition.

District Six ITS Releases Fiscal Year 2008/2009 Annual Report

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program is proud to announce the release of its *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008/2009*. The report details the milestones achieved in the last fiscal year as well as the goals identified to continue to build on the progress made. From operating the 95 Express facility, to successfully launching the State of Florida's first ramp signaling system, District Six provided the public with solutions that are relieving traffic congestion. In addition to these achievements, the District Six ITS Program also expanded to provide ITS coverage along more roadways which, along with enhancements made to its incident management services, is helping to make our roadways safer and more reliable.

The annual report will be available on the new and improved SunGuide (www.sunguide.org) Web site, which was launched on October 1, 2009.

FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Mission and Vision Statements



Mission:

Provide leadership
and serve as a catalyst in
becoming the national leader
in mobility.

Vision:

Provide support and expertise in
the application of Traffic
Engineering principles and
practices to improve safety
and mobility.

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