FDOT's Monthly ITS News

SUNGUIDE®

DISSEMINATOR

New Message Signs at 34 Arterial Locations in Broward

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four recently completed testing of arterial dynamic message signs (ADMS) and is now actively using 34 new signs along the Interstate 75 and 95 corridors in Broward County. These smaller profile signs are connected directly to FDOT's SMART SunGuide® Regional Transportation Management Center in Fort Lauderdale.

Similar to the 29 large dynamic message signs (DMS) on the highways, these new ADMSs will display incident messages letting drivers know when lanes are blocked on the highway. The advantage of the arterial location is that drivers will have time to choose an alternate route if need be. The ADMSs are located on most of the major arterial routes approaching I-95 and on Pines Boulevard and Miramar Parkway approaching I-75.

The ADMSs have been getting a lot of use in the short time that they have been active. Local law enforcement partners are already requesting assistance in posting messages and the signs will be available for special messages during Super Bowl-related events.

As the new ADMSs were installed around the county, FDOT also deployed two sets of roadway weather information systems sensors.

Inside This Issue
February 2010

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These devices add to the means by which data is collected and turned into useful information for motorists.

"We are constantly improving intelligent transportation systems in South Florida, and these signs will give motorists even more access to real-time traffic condition reports," said Daniel Smith, FDOT District Four ITS Operations Manager.

This article was provided by Sarah Stanley, FDOT District Four. For information, please contact Ms. Stanley at (954) 598-4236 or email SStanley@smartsunguide.com.

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District Six Enhances its Road Ranger Program and Implements New Contract

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six Office began operating their Road Ranger Service Patrol Program under a new contract to support the growing demand for incident management services in Miami-Dade County. The contract, which became effective on January 1st, 2010, was designed to promote Florida's *Open Road Policy* and achieve the mobility goals set within our region.

With southeast Florida considered to be one of the most congested areas in the nation and as local population levels continue to grow, the need to operate a sound transportation management system is essential to the livelihood of our community. Congestion caused by traffic incidents affects the efficiency of our regional roadway system. It decreases overall safety levels by increasing the chances of secondary crashes and creates unnecessary back-ups. To help alleviate this problem, the FDOT District Six Office revised the scope of their Road Ranger Service Patrol contract to enhance the range of the incident management services provided.

The contract was advertised in September 2009 and outlined several requirements to be in-line with this new direction. To expedite clearance times and support emergency responders in the field, District Six requested that flat-bed tow trucks be added to the traditional District Six fleet of pick-up and tow trucks. Additionally, the successful vendor proposed a Service Patrol Vehicle Support Unit at no extra cost to FDOT. As a result, District Six now has the support of four vehicle types that are each designed to perform a specific duty. There are a total of 22 vehicles dedicated to this contract—seven flat-bed tow trucks, five regular tow trucks, ten pick-up trucks, and one van. During regular operating hours (Monday thru Friday, 5:00 a.m.

to 9:00 p.m.) eight vehicles provide services along the District Six roadways. During the overnight and weekend hours, seven vehicles provide service. The newly added flat-bed tow trucks will focus solely on incident management by clearing travel lanes and assisting field personnel. The regular tow trucks will continue to offer both incident management and motorist assistance services, while the pick-up trucks will focus on providing motorist assistance services, such as changing flat tires and helping stranded motorists. The Service Patrol Vehicle Support Unit will assist the fleet by replenishing on-the-beat vehicles with on-board consumables, such as flares, speedy dry, and water to avoid delays and expedite clearance times.

In addition to the expanded fleet, Road Ranger service patrol operators are now required to pass a written and practical exam in order to provide their services under the new contract. The written portion of the test was developed by the District Six Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program to ensure that service patrol operators are knowledgeable of the Program's Standard Operating Guidelines, applicable Florida statutes, and general performance procedures. The test is administered on-line through the Road Ranger Driver Information System (RRDIS) and operators are required to pass this portion with a score of 70 percent or higher to move onto the second portion, or practical test.

The second part of the certification process evaluates operators on their ability to perform everyday service patrol activities, such as maintenance of traffic set-up, communications procedures with the transportation management center, and customer service. Operators must obtain a score of 80 percent or higher on the practical test to be certified to work under this contract.

The combination of these initiatives is set to benefit the service patrol program in Miami-Dade County. The contract upholds the District's commitment to providing the public with reliable incident management services to increase the safety and reliability of south Florida's roadways.

In FDOT District Six, the Road Ranger Service Patrol Program covers Interstates 75, 95, 195, 395 and State Road 826 in Miami-Dade County.

This article was provided by Javier Rodriguez, FDOT District Six. For information, please contact Mr. Rodriguez at (305) 470-5341 or email to Javier.Rodriguez2@dot.state.fl.us.

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Road Ranger evaluation being conducted in a parking lot.

Florida's Turnpike Implements Specialty Tow Contract for Light, Medium Duty Clearance Efforts

When Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) Trooper P.J. Rotunde responded on Aug. 29, 2009, to clear the Florida's Turnpike of a single-vehicle crash near the Interstate 595 interchange in South Florida, he made a request for a "10-70" wrecker with the knowledge that the responding wrecker would be there quickly and with the ability to clear the travel lanes.

Citing the tow driver's response time, professionalism, safety, and quick clearance practices, Trooper Rotunde commented, "Very good job. … Cleaned area of debris from highway."

A goal of safe, quick clearance is to expedite response to an incident and assure that responders have the needed equipment and know-how to address the needs on scene. The Florida's Turnpike Enterprise's new Towing and Roadside Repair Services program assists in meeting this goal by providing regionally-contracted towing companies to respond to FHP calls for all Class A (light duty) tow needs within 30 minutes in urban areas and 40 minutes in rural zones. The program also provides service to Turnpike customers who have encountered vehicle difficulties and are in need of a tow or minor repair.

The Towing and Roadside Repair Services program capitalizes on the private sector's tow investments and their response capabilities, and also includes performance measures to better meet the Turnpike's quick clearance and customer service goals. The program does not replace the Turnpike's State Farm Safety Patrol/Road Ranger or Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) programs, but enhances overall incident management efforts by applying quick-response and incentive-based requirements to Class A, B, and C towing needs.

"The Towing and Roadside Repair Services program has been an improvement for our troopers on the Turnpike," FHP Troop K Major Joseph Saucedo said. "We now know the wreckers will be there quickly and that they have the same goals to clear crashes and incidents from the roadway, improving safety for all emergency responders on scene."

The contract was initiated Turnpike-wide on June 15, 2009, and following the first six months of operations, the contracted tow vendors have responded to more than 4,000 FHP-dispatched calls. The tow contractors have met the required quick-response timeframes more than 81 percent of the time, with an average response time of approximately 20 minutes. Several vendors in the urban area of South Florida committed to a 20 to 25 minute response time. To meet their response time commitments, the vendors stage wreckers at Turnpike interchanges or at turnpike service plazas. The

dedicated contractors are also required to respond with Turnpike-inspected and approved vehicles, carrying specific equipment used for quick clearance and motorist assistance efforts.

"This program is a direct effort to enhance service for Florida's Turnpike customers," Director of Highway Operations Paul Wai said. ""Our towing partners are working closely with us to upgrade our incident management capabilities and make the program a success."

Like the RISC program for large vehicle/tractor trailer crashes that was started by the Turnpike in 2004 and is now moving statewide, the Towing and Roadside Repair Services program is the first of its kind in the state and provides a "tool" for FHP Troop K to rely on when needing to clear crashes of all sizes from the Turnpike. FHP Troop K Troopers no longer have to rely on a "rotation" of wrecker companies, guessing which tow vendor will show up in what timeframe, and wondering if the driver, vehicle, and equipment are sufficient to do the needed recovery or assist.

The program was designed based on the best practices of successful traffic incident management programs of other highway agencies, and uses the InstaTow quick notification process for quicker response and clearance where the wrecker can be dispatched even before a trooper arrives on scene.

In support of Florida's *Open Roads Policy*, the program calls for light/medium/heavy duty towing that:

- Relocates and tows wrecked vehicles from crash scenes as directed by FHP
- Responds to Motor Club / AAA assists
- Responds to call box or FHP calls for roadside assistance, repair, or towing
- Assists FHP by towing and storing abandoned vehicles
- Recovers and tows vehicles off the road or in a canal
- Tows and impounds vehicles after arrest

The contracts are regionally based. The Turnpike Mainline, Homestead Extension, and Sawgrass Expressway are divided into ten sectors ranging from 23 to 56 miles in length for the program. Each sector is awarded to a single tow vendor through a competitive selection process. The program is incentive-based as the agreements are only for one year, with up to three annual extensions. FHP dispatch records are monitored and recorded, providing details regarding dispatch, arrival, and scene clearance times. If a sector shows a poor performance for response times and overall performance is not up to standard, that zone may be re-advertised.

Currently, seven vendors are servicing the ten Turnpike zones. The Turnpike's dedicated tow contractors respond to those calls as requested by FHP or by AAA customers directly. Turnpike customers still have the ability to make their own arrangements for tow or service from any towing contractor off the Turnpike.

Customer service is a main component of the program as monthly scheduled performance evaluations by Turnpike and FHP are completed, and a formal complaint resolution process is followed. The Turnpike has a required set of maximum rates and fees that can be charged to the customer, and invoices are reviewed by Turnpike personnel. The program is revenue-neutral to the Turnpike. The motorists pay for services received at rates not to exceed those established by the Turnpike. The Turnpike only pays for FHP dispatched calls when the motorist is gone on arrival (GOA) or has made their own arrangements (MOA). Annual permit fees paid by each vendor cover those Turnpike GOA and MOA costs.

Another major benefit of this program is that the tow contractors are part of the Turnpike's Hurricane Preparedness and Evacuation plan. If needed during a storm emergency, the contractors become a valuable resource for staging wreckers for effective emergency response, evacuation and/or reverse lane evacuation.

This article was provided by John Easterling, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. For information, please contact Mr. Easterling at (954) 934-1292 or email to John.Easterling@dot.state.fl.us.

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ITS Florida President's Letter

I want to start by thanking the membership of Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITS Florida) for giving me the opportunity to serve as the president for 2010. I have been involved with ITS Florida for the past five years and it has benefited me on both a personal and professional level. The ability to meet, interact, and learn from many of the most knowledgeable intelligent transportation systems (ITS) professionals in the state has provided truly unique and valuable experience that I would recommend to anyone in the industry.

2010 ITS Florida Board of Directors
Left to Right: Erika Birosak, Tahira Faquir, Gregg Letts, Mary Hamill, Jesus Martinez, Ken Jacobs, John Easterling, Elizabeth Birriel, Dale Cody, L.A. Griffin (Not Pictured: Howard Glassman and Dr. Amr Oloufa)

In Florida, ITS is in the midst of some major changes and ITS Florida needs to provide timely information and assistance to those affected by these changes. We will continue with our primary mission by advocating ITS deployments, offering training and guidance, and encouraging interest in ITS throughout the state. Last year we started the new Technical Solutions Sub-Committee with the intent of keeping track of new ITS technologies being developed to provide the most up-to-date information to our membership.

As the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) SunGuide® freeway management systems implementation continues toward completion, there will be a shift from deployment to operation and new ITS projects will start moving ITS on to the arterial roadway systems. With these changes, it is important to involve local agencies that have not previously been engaged in ITS activities. As an organization, ITS Florida possesses a vast amount of knowledge and talent that can assist anyone who is entering the world of ITS; I would encourage anyone involved in these type projects to consider joining ITS Florida.

Undoubtedly, the strength and success of an organization such as ITS Florida is derived from the efforts and dedication of its members and volunteers. We are always looking for volunteers and appreciate those who already give us some of their time. ITS Florida has several committees, including:

- Outreach
- Events
- Member Services
- Professional Capacity Building
- Technical Solutions Sub-Committee

Feel free to contact me (Ken Jacobs) or any other ITS Florida Board Member to let us know where your interests lie and how you would like to participate.

Economic conditions in 2009 were difficult for everyone and 2010 may bring more difficult times. ITS Florida continues to modify how we provide information, training, and services to our members. Last year we refocused our Professional Capacity Building training to provide low cost webinars to compensate for the lack of travel funding. We offered a Technical Forum that provided speakers from several different areas of expertise as well as ITS equipment vendors in an effort to provide as much relevant information in a short time span as possible. We will continue with these types of training efforts, so please take advantage of them when they are announced.

2010 looks to be another outstanding year for ITS Florida. We will host Transpo2010 on December 12-15, 2010, in Ponte Verde Beach, Florida, at the Marriott Sawgrass Golf Resort and Spa. This will be a joint meeting with ITS Georgia and special efforts are being made to expand attendance to include much of the southeast United States.

Although not a 2010 event, it is worth mentioning the 18th World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems that will be held in Orlando, October 16-20, 2011. Many of our members are involved with various subcommittees, including local arrangements and demonstrations. This is an important event for ITS in Florida and provides a unique opportunity for everyone involved in ITS to show the strides that we have made in our state. Over the upcoming months volunteer opportunities will present themselves, so please participate if you can.

I look forward to meeting with as many of you as possible during the upcoming year and if you have any ideas, thoughts, or comments on how we can better serve you, please feel free to contact me directly. If you are not currently a member of ITS Florida, please consider joining our organization.

This article was provided by Ken Jacobs, ITS Florida President. For information, please contact Mr. Jacobs at (727) 464-8922 or email to KJacobs@pinellascounty.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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Editorial Corner—ITS Moves Traffic on I-75 in Southwest Florida

ITS live!!! The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) in District One is bringing real-time information about interstate traffic conditions to travelers using I-75 through Collier and Lee Counties. The system went "live" to the public on January 19, 2010. ITS will help the public make efficient, timesaving transportation decisions. **Dynamic message signs along I-75 now display "heads up" information about travel times, congestion, lane closures, incidents, and even fog or smoke down the road.**

The SouthWest Interagency Facility for Transportation (SWIFT) SunGuide® Center is the hub of real-time traffic operations for I-75 in Southwest Florida. The two-story 49,800 square foot building houses FDOT's ITS operations staff—the team handling regional traffic and incident management—and the FDOT's regional Office of Motor Carrier Compliance. Later this year, Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) Troop F and FHP dispatch will also occupy the building. This will further enhance incident management coordination and communications. This new facility is designated the Joseph P. Bertrand Building, named for the FHP trooper who died in the line of duty in Fort Myers in December 1967.

ITS Operation

Today, the SWIFT SunGuide Center coverage area includes Alligator Alley—the "east/west" segment of I-75 at the southern tip of Florida—and the I-75's north/south segment through the remainder of Collier County and all of Lee County. Alligator Alley runs through the Everglades and has few interchanges. The north/south segment along Florida's southwest coast mixes urban, interurban, and rural interstate segments. Approximately 98 miles of I-75 in District One are now instrumented with ITS.

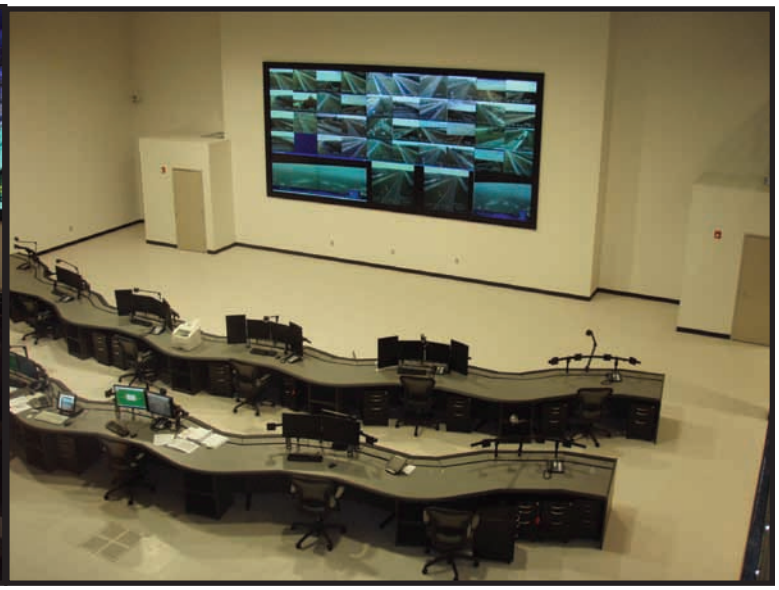
Most visibly along I-75 in Collier and Lee Counties, 26 dynamic message signs display information to drivers about travel conditions ahead.

Less noticeable to people using I-75, but still essential field components of ITS, are:

- 79 Closed-circuit television cameras transmitting interstate images to the video wall and monitors at operators' stations in the SWIFT SunGuide Center's control room;
- 111 Vehicle detectors or sensors that relay data about vehicles' movement;
- Two roadway weather information systems; and
- The safety cable barrier system next to the wildlife fence along Alligator Alley, now equipped with sensors that alert operators in the center if it is hit by a vehicle.

All are controlled through the SunGuide centralized computer system.

ITS is a 24/7 operation every day of the year. Its value is clear—enhancing safety, reducing congestion, and serving as the backbone of southwest Florida's transportation management system. Communicating real-time information about congestion, incidents, lane closures,



construction, and foggy or smoky conditions, for example, gives people opportunities to make informed choices about times they travel and routes they choose. Real-time traffic information also makes drivers better prepared to react quickly and responsibly to situations on the highway. ITS enhances safety and reduces congestion.

ITS Future

District One will continue to expand the number of miles instrumented with ITS in the future. Following are the planned dates for ITS to be operational on I-75:

- Through Charlotte County in late spring 2011
- Through Sarasota and Manatee Counties in late 2013

District One is proud to usher in a new era in transportation for Southwest Florida. We look forward to working with our local stakeholders and first responders to improve incident management in the area and provide motorists with the valuable real-time traffic information that they are accustomed to seeing in other parts of the state.

This article was provided by Chris Birosak, FDOT District One. For information, please contact Mr. Birosak at (863) 519-2507 or email to Chris.Birosak@dot.state.fl.us. Debbie Tower, Director of Public Information for District One and John Scarpellino, Contract Operations Manager for Telvent for District One also contributed to this article.

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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 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;
- The initial development and continuous improvement of all traffic control system product specifications; and
- 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 the efforts mentioned above is to ensure that products sold and deployed on transportation projects within Florida are safe, reliable, of good quality, and perform as required.

Notable activities during the past month included the following:

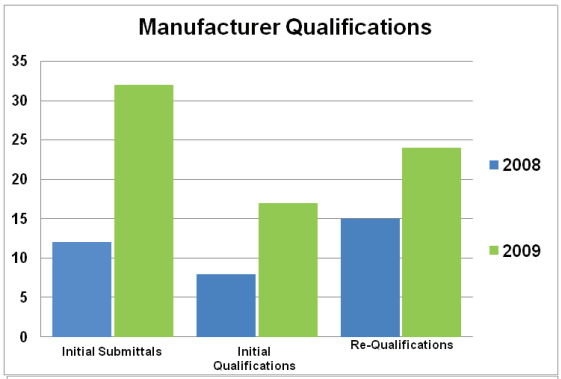
- Evaluation of the 12-inch character arterial dynamic message sign (DMS) manufactured by "Daktronics" was completed. The Daktronics sign is the first 12-inch DMS to be certified and listed on the FDOT's APL.
- Construction of the TERL's new test intersection, which began September 25th, is ongoing. Construction is estimated to be complete during the first quarter 2010.
- TERL staff collected global positioning system (GPS) data that will be used to evaluate a traffic data feed from Airsage. The GPS data was collected over multiple days during drive tests along various interstate and arterial corridors around Tallahassee. This data will be compared to the traffic data provided by the Airsage system (which is collected using cellular phone system technology) as part of a study being conducted by the Central Office ITS Program.
- Initial equipment installation, setup, and integration of systems at the recently renovated Certification Lab at the TERL. The Certification Lab includes testing areas for intersection controllers, controller cabinets, ITS equipment and cabinets, uninterruptible power supply systems, signals, and a number of other APL devices.

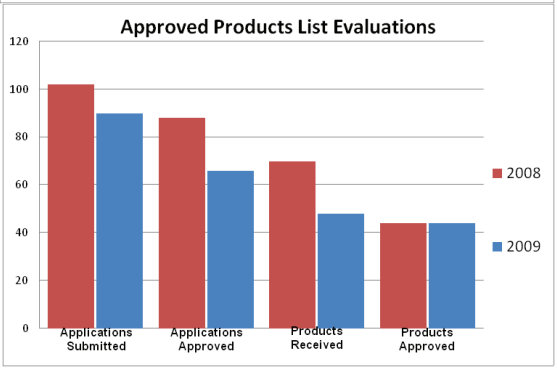
2009—A Productive Year for the TERL

In 2009, the TERL's manufacturer qualification program continued to be productive. Initial manufacturer qualifications and re-qualifications showed significant increases from 2008 to 2009, reflecting the continuing maturity of the program. Initial qualifications increased from 8 to 17, a 113 percent increase, while re-qualifications increased from 15 to 24, a 60 percent increase.

In addition, in 2009 the TERL placed more emphasis on the pre-evaluation of APL applications. This resulted in greater efficiencies during the product evaluation stage for both the TERL and the manufacturers. This result is shown by the significant increase in the percentage of products approved after being submitted. While 44 products were approved in both 2008 and 2009, many more products were submitted in 2008 than 2009 – 70 versus 48. In 2009, the TERL focused more effort on the paperwork evaluations, rather than the more costly equipment evaluations. Incomplete documentation and quality issues were more thoroughly "weeded out" during the application phase leading to more productive use of FDOT and manufacturer time and resources.

In 2009, the TERL made significant contributions to the FDOT mission to provide a safe transportation system, while implementing continuous improvement processes to become more efficient.





The TERL welcomes and encourages any comments and feedback regarding products listed on the APL. 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; would you like to share your experiences with a product (good or bad) with us? If so, we want to hear from you.

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

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Announcements

95 Express News

On Friday, January 15th 2010, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six Office began collecting tolls along the southbound portion of the 95 Express.

Phase 1B of the project is set to alleviate traffic congestion for motorists traveling southbound on Interstate 95. This commencement will compliment the benefits already experienced along the project's northbound portion (Phase 1A) to improve trip reliability along the heavily-trafficked section of the highway, between the Golden Glades Interchange and Downtown Miami.

In-line with the success of Phase 1A, Phase 1B also counts with the support of dedicated incident management professionals to expedite incident clearance throughout the project's limits in both the express and general purpose lanes. Additionally, operators monitor the facility from the District Six Transportation Management Center (TMC) to support the system's overall operability.

Southbound 95 Express is approximately 7.25 miles in length. Tolls charged will range from $0.25 to approximately $3.50 under regular operating conditions, but may increase up to $7.25 in cases of extreme circumstances. Phase 2 will extend the 95 Express project into Broward County (District Four) and will cover approximately 22 miles from Broward Boulevard to Downtown Miami, in both directions.

For more information about 95 Express, you may log onto **www.95Express.com**, or if you would like to know how the project is operating, log onto **www.sunguide.org** and click on the "TMC Reports" tab.

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Annoucing the TIM/CVO General Consultant

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Traffic Incident Management (TIM) and Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) Program is pleased to announce that PBS&J, along with E-Squared Engineering, has been selected as the program's general consultant. PBS&J has been the Central Office TIM consultant for the last three years and has a wealth of experience in TIM. E-Squared Engineering has been on the ITS General Consultant contract for the last eight years providing support to the CVO Program. We look forward to moving forward with these programs.

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SunGuide® Support, Maintenance, and Development Invitation to Negotiate

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has issued an Invitation to Negotiate which will provide the Central Office with a contractor to support, maintain, and enhance the SunGuide® Software. SunGuide Software is an advanced regional transportation management center (RTMC) software that allows the TMC to control and monitor roadside equipment and vehicle resources, and facilitates traffic and incident management on Florida's transportation system. The software is deployed at FDOT's RTMCs and the Traffic Engineering Research Laboratory along with transportation management centers at local cities and counties. This new contract is expected to be executed by the end of May 2010, with a start work date in July 2010. The contract term is five years.

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Get Ready

The ITS America's 20th Annual Meeting & Exposition – Connecting Communities through Smart Transportation Solutions will be held on May 3-5, 2010, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas. The 20th Annual Meeting & Exposition will focus on core issues that relate to connecting communities through smart transportation solutions.

Mark the date on your calendar. More information is available at http://www.itsa.org/annualmeeting/c80/News_and_Events/Calendar/Annual_Meeting_and_Exposition.html.

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Save These Dates for Transpo 2010

Transpo 2010 will be held on December 12-15, 2010 at the Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach. More information on participating in this event can be found at http://itstranspo.org/.

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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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