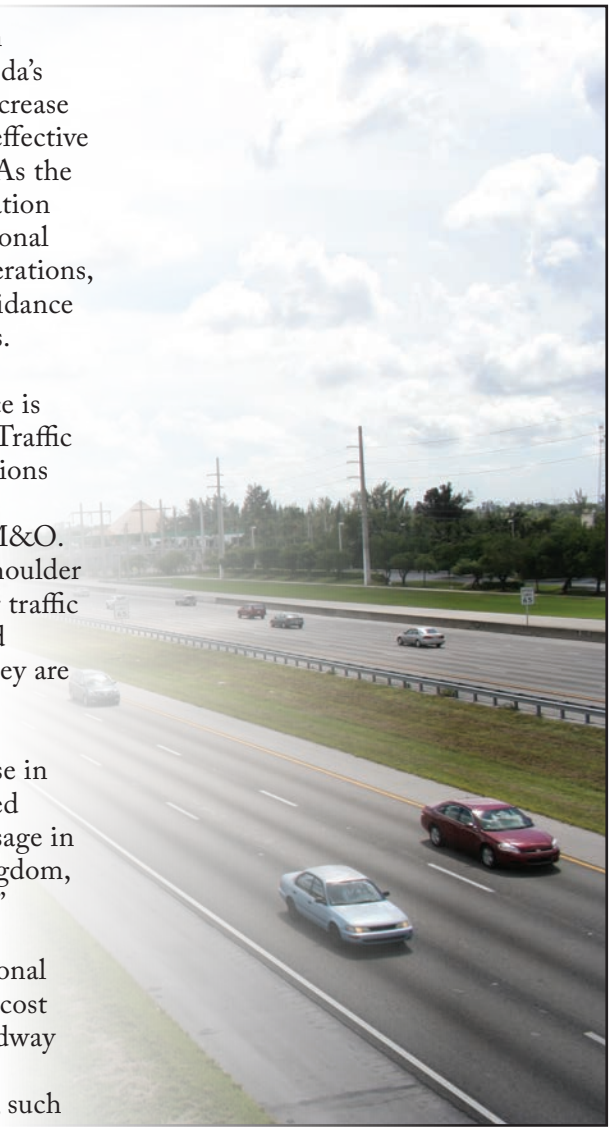
SUNGUIDE®
DISSEMINATOR
Florida Department of Transportation's Traffic Engineering and Operations Newsletter

TSM&O Policy – Providing Guidance

By John Hibbard, Atkins North America

The pressure caused by increasing demand on existing transportation facilities within and between Florida's metropolitan areas continues to increase at a rate that challenges Florida's effective accommodation of that demand. As the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) continues to place additional emphasis on optimizing traffic operations, there is the need for high-level guidance and oversight for traffic operations. Consequently, FDOT's Traffic Engineering and Operations Office is developing a policy statement for Traffic Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O) to guide the multiple initiatives that will fall under TSM&O. The first two initiatives are hard shoulder running and ramp metering; other traffic operations initiatives will be added "under" this policy statement as they are identified.



(Photo courtesy of FDOT District Four)

Hard shoulder running, gaining use in major urban areas across the United States and already in significant usage in Europe, including the United Kingdom, is the conversion of existing "hard" shoulder pavement, when suitably provisioned, to a temporary additional travel lane. This is a relatively low-cost means of providing additional roadway capacity, especially in locations experiencing recurrent congestion, such as in the vicinity of high-volume directional interchanges.

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Shoulders can be opened to travel based on fixed schedules, which can be conveyed to motorists via static signage, or the opening can be dynamically managed through use of dynamic message signs, lane use control signs, or both. Dynamic signage can open the shoulder to travel in accordance with a predetermined schedule; open and close the shoulder when congestion thresholds are met; and/or close the shoulder when a disabled vehicle occupies the shoulder.

The overarching goal of hard shoulder running is to provide additional roadway capacity to achieve operational benefits, such as increased travel speeds, reduced travel times, and improved travel time reliability. Key to the successful implementation of hard shoulder running is deliberate and up-front coordination with the emergency responder community to provide relevant information and lessons learned from other deployments. Existing FDOT District traffic incident management teams are excellent vehicles to provide such information to their stakeholders.

Ramp signal in FDOT District Six. (Photo courtesy of FDOT District Six)

Ramp metering is another operational strategy that has been employed in the United States increasingly over the past 40 years. This is an effective, proven means of improving traffic flow on limited-access roadways, especially in locations experiencing recurrent congestion.

Ramp metering was first introduced in 1963 on Chicago, Illinois's Eisenhower Expressway as a method to deal with safety issues caused by the newly constructed interstate highway program's increased freeway, speed, congestion, and associated collisions. Other early adopters in the 1960s were Los Angeles, California, and Detroit, Michigan. These early applications proved successful in achieving smoother merging onto freeways and did not disrupt mainline flows. Ramp metering soon spread to other metropolitan areas and the method of a police officer manually metering the ramp was replaced with various types of traffic signals, gates, and metering strategies.

In addition to Florida's existing ramp signaling deployment in Miami, significant United States ramp metering deployments are in major metropolitan areas from coast to coast. Ramp meters are operational throughout Europe, with notable deployments in the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany, and The Netherlands.

Ramp meters consist of traffic signals located on freeway on-ramps that regulate the rate at which vehicles can access the freeway. The ramp metering rate can be based on historical data or real-time conditions obtained by vehicle detectors. There are various methods and algorithms used in different ramp metering operations based on different system goals.

Ramp meters are a traffic management tool used to manage traffic on limited-access roadways with the goal of improving the average speed of all vehicles traveling on the freeway. Ramp meters help to balance the freeway mainline and entering ramp demand with capacity and prevent large platoons of vehicles from entering the freeway, which contributes to flow breakdown on the freeway. Ramp meters can help to increase the total vehicles accommodated on the freeway. Although vehicles are briefly delayed at on-ramp queues, the goal is for this delay to be negated in the overall reduction in travel time.

For information, please contact Mr. Hibbard at (770) 933-0280 or e-mail to John.Hibbard@atkinsglobal.com.

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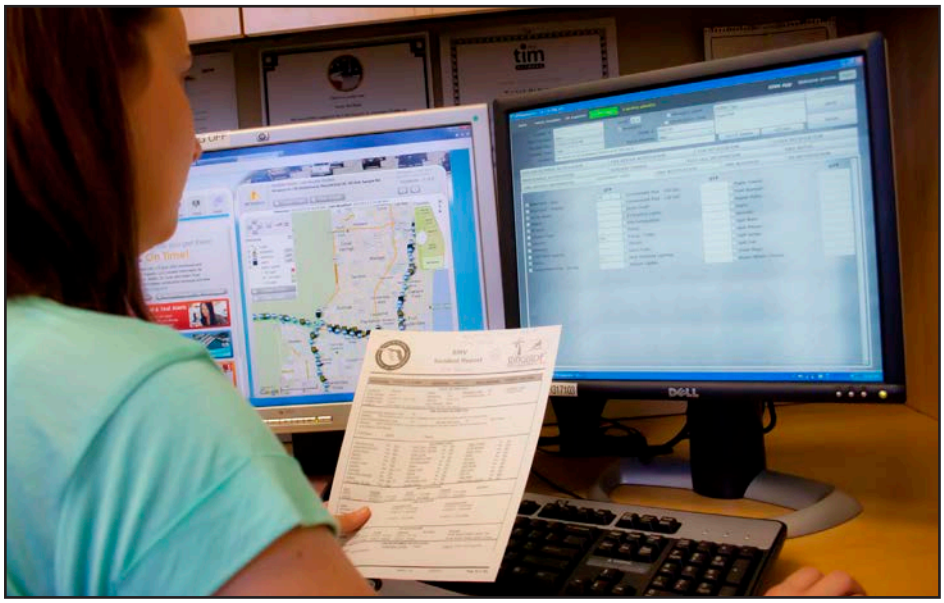
District Four Launches SIRV Mobile Reporting Application

By Dong Chen, FDOT District Four

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Unit is always striving to improve existing practices and create new tools that will improve different aspects of its ITS program. Most recently, District Four created a web-based application to streamline the reporting process and subsequent analysis for the Severe Incident Response Vehicle (SIRV) team. This SIRV mobile reporting application is more than a means of electronically collecting data. What sets it apart from other reporting tools is the business logic that has been built into the application, which allows the SIRV team to, with one click, automatically generate performance measure reports that build on data gathered by the SIRV team to calculate contractual and performance metrics.



The SIRV mobile reporting application allows the SIRV team to automatically generate performance measure reports with one click.

The SIRV team was spending a significant amount of time filling out forms and manually calculating metrics to meet contractual requirements and track performance. District Four's software consultant, along with FDOT and the SIRV team, designed an application to address these issues. The SIRV mobile reporting application includes forms with data extracted from District Four's advanced traffic management system and, wherever possible, auto-fill features and configurable dropdown menus. The data gathered from mobile applications is saved in a central database and used to generate reports of varying complexity based on the contractual and performance metrics of interest. The deployed application began saving the SIRV team significant time immediately, both in the completion of the forms and in the generation of metrics and reports.

The SIRV mobile reporting application includes the following reports:

- SIRV Incident Report (includes incident-specific data gathered by SIRV staff – incident duration reductions times, lane closure reduction times, agency time savings, equipment used, etc.);
- Road Ranger Vehicle Inspections (includes data gathered by SIRV staff inspecting Road Ranger vehicles);
- SIRV Vehicle Inspections (includes a vehicle checklist used by SIRV staff prior to the start of a shift); and
- SIRV Monthly Performance Report Measures Report (includes data gathered through incidents reports and other calculated metrics).

Prior to the deployment of this application, administrative staff manually collected and processed event detail forms from SIRV operators and calculated metrics on a monthly basis. The SIRV team is now able to spend more time on activities related to incident management. This includes, but is not limited to, preparing the SIRV fleet, meeting with other response agencies, learning new incident management techniques, and patrolling roadways. All of these activities contribute to safer and faster incident clearance, which make District Four's roadways safer and more efficient for motorists.

District Four anticipates that over five years, $125,000 in staff time will be saved. Furthermore, the District expects continual improvement in SIRV incident management metrics, including incident duration time and lane closure time, due to having this application in place.

For information, please contact Mr. Chen at (954) 847-2785 or email to Dong.Chen@dot.state.fl.us.

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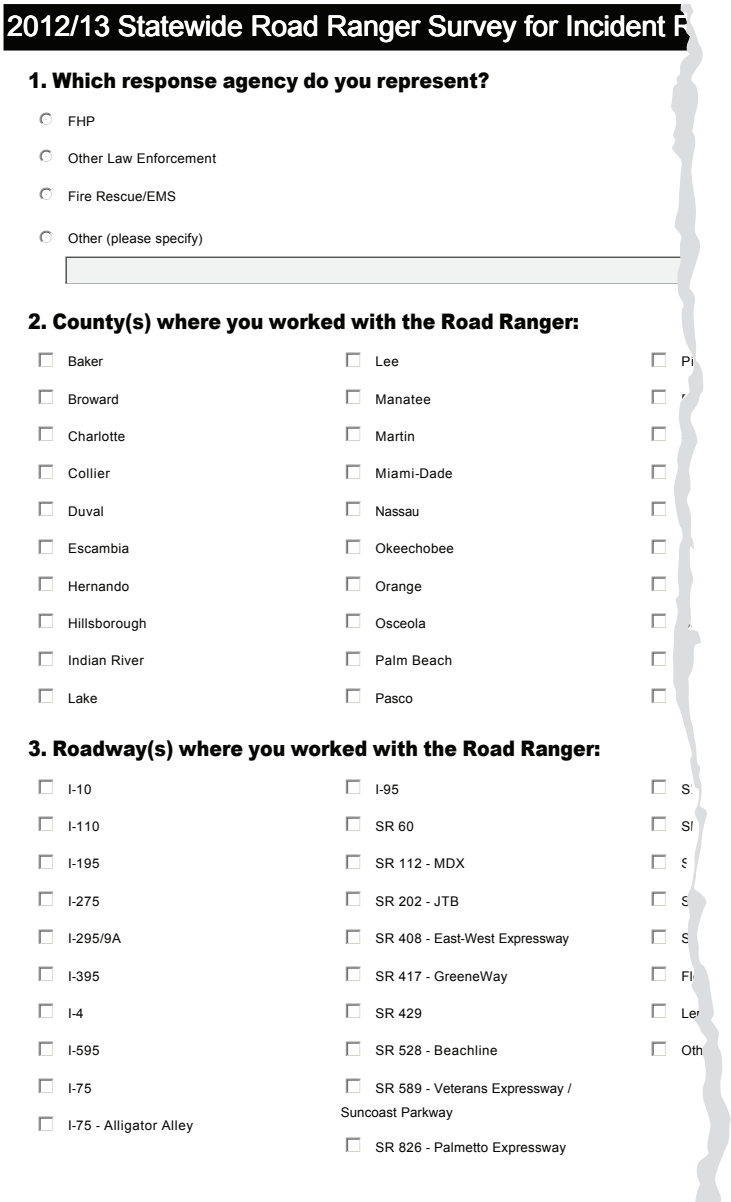
And the Survey Says

By Patrick Odom, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is fortunate to have a program like the Road Ranger service patrol, which frequently receives feedback from travelers. That feedback comes in many forms: comment cards, emails, handwritten notes, and the occasional phone call. In fact, one of the most recently received comment cards contained a note thanking a Road Ranger for assisting in contacting emergency medical services. Since 2010, FDOT has provided incident responders, who often work alongside Road Rangers, with the opportunity to evaluate and offer feedback on Road Rangers through a survey. The Road Ranger Survey for Incident Responders has become an annual component of the Road Ranger program.

The Road Ranger Survey for Incident Responders, now in its fourth year, received 2,166 responses this year. The responses came from a variety of state and local agencies as well as companies that provide towing and recovery services, asset maintenance operations, and hazardous material response services. In 2010, FDOT distributed the survey at local Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team meetings. After completion, the surveys were returned to FDOT for review and analysis. In 2011, FDOT developed an electronic version of the survey, which was distributed via email through the local TIM Teams. Electronic distribution of the survey enables FDOT to reach more responders and allows the responders to complete the survey as time permits during the survey period.



2012/13 Statewide Road Ranger Survey for Incident R

1. Which response agency do you represent?

- FHP
- Other Law Enforcement
- Fire Rescue/EMS
- Other (please specify)

2. County(s) where you worked with the Road Ranger:

- Baker
- Broward
- Charlotte
- Collier
- Duval
- Escambia
- Hernando
- Hillsborough
- Indian River
- Lake
- Lee
- Manatee
- Martin
- Miami-Dade
- Nassau
- Okeechobee
- Orange
- Osceola
- Palm Beach
- Pasco

3. Roadway(s) where you worked with the Road Ranger:

- I-10
- I-110
- I-195
- I-275
- I-295/9A
- I-395
- I-4
- I-595
- I-75
- I-75 - Alligator Alley
- I-95
- SR 60
- SR 112 - MDX
- SR 202 - JTB
- SR 408 - East-West Expressway
- SR 417 - GreeneWay
- SR 429
- SR 528 - Beachline
- SR 589 - Veterans Expressway / Suncoast Parkway
- SR 826 - Palmetto Expressway

The Road Ranger Incident Responder Survey has questions that focus on two primary areas: programmatic and personnel. The programmatic area focuses on the overall scope of the program, such as equipment and program benefits, while the personnel area focuses on how the Road Rangers are performing in the field. Each of the response areas has shown an improvement in the average scores since the first year of the survey. The survey also has areas to provide additional comments and open-ended questions for the responders to provide additional feedback. These areas have provided a wealth of observations and suggestions for program improvement.

One of the priorities of the Road Ranger program is to improve on-scene safety for emergency responders and the survey has a question that focuses on that area. The survey states: "The Road Rangers improved on-scene safety for responders," and responders are given five response areas ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Ninety-seven percent of the responses this year were positive with a vast majority of 73 percent strongly agreeing with the statement, indicating that the presence of the Road Rangers improves the safety for responders.

This survey is a valuable learning tool because it is an objective evaluation of the program from the perspective of our incident response partners. FDOT constantly strives to improve the Road Ranger program and the results of this survey continue to guide us in the right direction.

For information, please contact Mr. Odom at (850) 410-5631 or email to Patrick.Odom@dot.state.fl.us.

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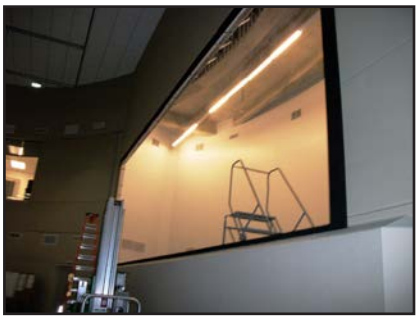
FDOT District Six TMC Unveils New and Improved Video Wall

By Javier Rodriguez, FDOT District Six

The video wall at the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six SunGuide® Transportation Management Center (TMC) was replaced this month after nine years in operation.



Above and below: Video wall during replacement.

The pre-existing wall was 10.5 feet high and 32 feet wide and consisted of 21 front-end video display cubes that used incandescent bulb technology. After nine years of operating for 24 hours a day, it reached its life expectancy and outages were happening more and more frequently. Troubleshooting for these outages began affecting operations and repairs were becoming too untimely and costly to properly support the program.

To prepare for the impending replacement, District Six issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to procure a contract and install a new video wall with upgraded features. District Six listed several requirements and included contractor performance measures to maximize the installation process as well as the final product. They also required the contractor to use products from FDOT's Approved Product List, submit a design plan that was consistent with TMC's control room layout, and formulate a transition and implementation plan to minimize the amount of installation downtime. Additionally, they called for detailed maintenance and support services after the project's final acceptance that included a three-year extended warranty on all manufacturer parts.

As a result of the listed specifications and RFP, the District now boasts a state-of-the art video wall that uses light-emitting diode technology with an illumination source of approximately 80,000 hours. It also features power-redundant display cubes that have automated brightness and color calibration capabilities to ensure uniform picture quality. These improvements have not only enhanced the TMC's operations, but will also translate into long-term cost savings for FDOT since it requires lower energy usage and maintenance.

The RFP was issued in a phased approach. Phase 1 only replaced the video display units since upgrades were made to its controller in 2009. The controller is scheduled for replacement in phase two and will be advertised at a later time.

For information, please contact Mr. Rodriguez at (305) 407-5341 or e-mail to Javier.Rodriguez2@dot.state.fl.us.

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New video wall in District Six's SunGuide TMC.

National 511 Coalition Working Group Meeting Report

By Gene Glotzbach, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations

Coalition Background Information

The National 511 Coalition (Coalition) was established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in conjunction with many other organizations, with support of the Federal Highway Administration. It was formed to provide guidance to public agencies for the deployment of traveler information systems, in particular the use of the 511 phone number.

In July 1999, the United States Department of Transportation petitioned the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to designate a nationwide three-digit telephone number for traveler information. On July 21, 2000, the FCC designated 511 as the national traveler information phone number. The FCC stated that it would review the progress of implementing the 511 phone number in five years, with the implication that after five years it could reverse its decision if not enough agencies deployed the 511 phone number.

In early 2001, the Coalition was established with the goal of making 511 a customer driven multi-modal traveler information service available across the United States, accessed via telephone and other personal communications devices, realized through locally deployed interoperable systems, enabling a safer, more reliable and efficient transportation system. Underlying this goal was the objective of encouraging agencies to utilize the 511 phone number in order to gain enough momentum in deploying 511 that the FCC would stand by their decision to keep the number in the hands of the public agencies. An executive level Policy Committee and a supporting Working Group were established to conduct the work of the Coalition.

The Working Group initially met on a regular basis and conducted conferences to promote the deployment of 511 and to share experiences and lessons learned to assist other agencies in their 511 deployments. As more and more agencies deployed 511 and the FCC came to the decision to leave the 511 phone number in the hands of public agencies, the meetings got less frequent, but none the less important.

April 2013 Working Group Meeting

The last Working Group meeting was held April 11, 2013, in Phoenix, Arizona. After introductions and welcomes were completed, the meeting began with the first presentation by ENTERPRISE, a pooled fund effort organized to address intelligent transportation systems, and to begin working with member agencies to assist them in addressing issues of mutual interest. Traveler information has always been a key theme of the group since the beginning in 1994 and their presentation addressed how things have changed regarding traveler information.

As technology improves and becomes more sophisticated, so do the capabilities of traveler information systems. The ENTERPRISE pooled fund effort provided information from focused peer exchanges they conducted and four Webinars that were held to determine what's new today and to identify peer efforts that could be shared with a broader group. Key findings from the peer review and the Webinar include:

- Social media is becoming a significant tool (e.g. Twitter) to share traveler information;
- Traveler information is slowly expanding to include information on local roads and transit services; and
- Use of third party data is growing and will likely continue to grow.

An interesting finding is that despite an increasing number of commercially available information sources, many transportation agencies still foresee themselves as the primary source of traveler information.

The rest of the morning of the Working Group meeting was taken up with the traditional exchange of information by states that deploy 511 systems. Known as peer exchanges, states provided information regarding the following areas:

- Implementation experiences, insights, and suggestions;
- What is happening in your agency;
- What challenges you are facing or observing;
- Hot topics in travel information; and
- Outcomes – public and private sector information exchanges.

Some of the common themes coming out of the state's information exchange were that states are expanding their capabilities to disseminate information through social media and smart phone applications as well as expanding their ability to collect data. States recognize that there are gaps in their data collection capabilities and are looking at other sources of information, such as crowd sourcing, links to highway patrol computer-aided dispatch systems, and third party probe data. The states also indicated that user access to video is popular and that the public looks to the states as trusted sources of information during emergencies. A number of states have or are looking to implement sponsorship agreements to defray some of the costs to operate their systems.

In the afternoon, discussion moved to performance measures. The performance measures discussed revolved primarily around how well the system operates, how popular the system was, and how aware the public was of the availability of the systems.

One theme that came out of the performance measure was that you can't look at one individual dissemination method, such as the 511 phone number; you need to look at the complete dissemination package a state offers. There are many ways to get information out to the public. Taken individually, the usage may seem low, but taken collectively, the total can be quite high, providing a better measure of your traveler information system.

The last presentation dealt with the Real-Time Systems Management Information Program. The focus of the presentation was the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users 1201 legislation, which was codified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations 511. The essence of this section of the presentation was a discussion of the requirement to provide information to the public covering four categories: road construction, road/lane closures, conditions (incidents), and travel times. The implementation schedule, as provided in the presentation, was broken down into two stages. Stage one is the interstate routes and stage two is routes of significance in metropolitan areas. The requirement is for 24/7 coverage. Stage one, covering the interstate system, needs to be implemented by 2014, while stage two, covering roadways of significance, needs to be implemented by 2016. The noteworthy take away from this presentation is that states do not have to push out this information; all they need to do is simply make the information available. Florida seems to be in a good position as this information is readily available now or will be available in the near future. The Florida Department of Transportation's traveler information system is presently providing the required information for the interstate system and, with the exception of travel times, the required information for the roadways of significance is available through several web sites. Travel times on the roadways of significance, depending on the roadway, are either available now or will soon be through the purchase of third party data. The missing link is the selection of the roadways of significance.

After the final presentation and follow-on discussion the meeting was adjourned and the participants returned back to their respective states.

For information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or e-mail to Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.

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ITS Florida Awards

By Erika Birosak on behalf of ITS Florida

It's time to place nominations for the ITS Florida Awards, which will be presented at the Annual Meeting/Banquet on October 10, 2013. The banquet will be held in Orlando at the Rosen Shingle Creek hotel (not to be confused with the other Rosen hotels).

The awards may be bestowed to both individuals and/or organizations. The award categories include the following:

ITS Florida Member of the Year - recognizes outstanding achievement as an organization. The primary criteria for nomination and selection are that the work is:

(1) Operational or about to be operational;

(2) Of major significance to improve transportation in Florida

(3) A major innovation in any aspect of ITS; or

(4) Of state or national significance.

ITS Professional of the Year - recognizes an ITS Florida organizational member's representative for outstanding achievement. This award is to recognize that person who has contributed significantly to the ITS community during the past year.

ITS Florida President's Award - recognizes an ITS Florida organizational member who has sustained superior service to ITS Florida.

ITS Champion - recognizes any proponent of ITS for outstanding service in promoting ITS in Florida. Please note that this award is not awarded unless a worthy nomination is submitted to ITS Florida.

Certificate of Outstanding Achievement - may be awarded to an organization or individual for outstanding accomplishments worthy of recognition by ITS Florida.

Recommendations for annual awards should be emailed to Sandy Beck at ITSFlorida@ITSFlorida.org with the subject line: ITS FL Awards. You may nominate an individual, including yourself, an organization, or both.

The deadline for submission is August 16, 2013.

For any questions regarding the ITS Florida Awards, please contact Ms. Sandy Beck at itsflorida@itsflorida.com.

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Editorial Corner: Customer Satisfaction Tracking Survey

By Gene Glotzbach, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations

The SunGuide® Disseminator's May 2013 editorial provided information on how well the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has done regarding the deployment of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) in the state of Florida. That editorial was a self assessment of FDOT's successes in the deployment of ITS around the state. The self assessment was from FDOT's perspective and noted that in ten years, FDOT has deployed ITS in every major metropolitan area of the state and in a number of moderate sized metropolitan areas as well. Every District, including Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, has deployed ITS. Over 1,200 miles of limited-access facilities have ITS deployed and are being actively monitored and managed. From FDOT's perspective, the deployment of ITS has been a notable success, but the true measurement of the success of ITS in Florida does not come from FDOT; it comes from our customers, those people out there on our roadways every day.

To get a feel for what the public thinks about how well we are doing with the deployment of ITS, we added customer satisfaction to our list of performance measures. To get a measurement of customer satisfaction, FDOT implemented a survey to gage how well we are doing from the customer side. That survey program was initiated in 2006 and is conducted ever two years with the last one conducted in 2012. The collection of survey information is not finished until 300 completed surveys have been obtained for each District. Conclusions are drawn from 2,100 completed surveys from around the state. Because the questions are largely identical over the years, results can be tracked to provide a measure of how well FDOT is improving over time.

A significant investment made by FDOT regarding ITS is the deployment of overhead dynamic message signs (DMS). These signs are the primary interface between the public and FDOT's ITS. The survey shows that drivers use a variety of sources for traffic information, but by far the most popular alternative source is DMSs. Three-quarters (75 percent) of the people surveyed indicated that they use the DMSs to get traffic information. The survey indicates that 95 percent of the drivers that utilize the DMSs to get traffic information believe them to be accurate with 61 percent trusting the signs to be very accurate. Ninety-one percent feel that the signs are easy to read. When asked about the usefulness of posting travel times on the DMSs, 91 percent

felt that was useful information with 59 percent indicating travel times were very useful. When asked if they would change routes based on what they read on the signs, 79 percent indicated that they would be likely to change routes based on what they read on the signs, with 45 percent indicating it was very likely they would change routes.

Another system that is available to the public to use to get information on traffic conditions is the traveler information system, which is characterized by the 511 phone number, the FL511.com web site, and the iPhone application. The survey asked peopled if they would utilize a free service that provided traffic information and only two percent indicated that they would not utilize such a service. A majority of those surveyed, 51 percent, indicated they would likely use the service. The number of survey respondents who indicated they are aware of FDOT's traveler information system increased by 15 percent over those previously surveyed, a significant increase in usage. Of those who utilize the system, 89 percent indicated they either change routes, departure time, or mode of travel based on the information they receive from the system.

The Road Ranger program was also surveyed and a variety of questions were asked of the public. From the survey information over two thirds (69 percent) were aware of the Road Ranger program, which is an extremely good number considering a significant area of the state does not have Road Rangers available and would not necessarily be familiar with Road Rangers. When asked how useful Road Rangers are, 95 percent indicated that they were useful with 82 percent indicating that they were very useful. Although not many surveyed have been assisted by a Road Ranger, 86 percent of those who knew about Road Rangers felt the Road Ranger operator was helpful with almost three quarters (74 percent) indicating they were very useful.

The survey results generally provided a positive indication of how the public perceives the information provided through the deployment of ITS in Florida. However, the survey only addresses one aspect of the ITS program by assessing the systems that provide an interface with the public. A significant benefit of ITS happens behind the scenes and away from public view. However, what is provided to the public is a by-product of what happens behind the scenes. Without a successful operation behind the scenes, the information provided to the public through the various programs and interfaces would suffer and be reflected in the survey.
Although the survey does provide an indication of areas where additional emphasis needs to be directed to improve systems, it does provide validation of FDOT's successes in the deployment of ITS.

For information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or e-mail to Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.

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Announcements

Welcome to the FDOT Team Raj!

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Traffic Engineering and Operations office is pleased to announce the appointment of Raj Ponnaluri, PHD, P.E. to the position of Traffic Systems Studies Engineer. Raj comes to us from Staff College and was involved in consulting, research and training there. Prior to that, Raj served with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada as a Principal Civil Engineer. Before joining RTC, Raj served as the Polk County Traffic Engineer in Polk County, Florida. Some of you may already know Raj as he also served as a Traffic Engineer for the Turnpike under a general engineering consultant contract. Raj received his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, his Masters in Transportation from Duke, MBA from University of Central Florida, and recently obtained his Doctorate degree. Raj has over 17 years of work experience in traffic engineering and operations, intelligent transportation systems, bus rapid transit systems, and project management.

Please join us in welcoming Raj to the FDOT team.

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Make Plans for August

The 2013 National Rural ITS Conference is set to take place in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, on August 25-28. Now is the time to make plans to attend this conference, which will provide an opportunity to network and share in a wide variety of ITS disciplines. This event brings together both traditional and non-traditional ITS users to address such issues as rural safety, multi-agency coordination, and workforce development as well as emergency medical services and transit issues.

More information is available at http://www.nritsconference.org/index.html.

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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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