

FDOT DISTRICT TWO

Intelligent Transportation Systems Newsletter –
October 2010
Issue 37



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ITS Announcements

**First Coast TIM Meeting
Transpo 2010**

FDOT Urban Office-2198 Edison Ave.
Sawgrass Marriott, Ponte Vedra

**11/16/10 10:00 a.m.
12/12-12/15/2010**

Please contact the ITS Office at (904) 360-5465 if you would like to participate in the meetings.

Notes from the District 2 ITS Engineer

The month of October was filled with opportunities to “expand our horizon” within the ITS program. It began with training on grounding and surge suppression, an area of our industry that the Department has yet to master. We then had the opportunity to examine the future of ITS technology by learning about digital CCTV cameras, H.264 encoding and the next generation of TMC video walls. Keep in mind that this was only during the first week of the month!

Over the following weeks we were exposed to the latest and greatest in red light running cameras, transit signal priority/preemption and changes in the FHP communication infrastructure. We had a chance to participate in the development of the training manual for the fiber management software, learn new methods/techniques for 511 and participate in a Change Management Board meeting that addressed new technologies used in other Districts. Yes, I was totally worn out by the third week of October.

Sounds exciting, right!?! Well nothing could top the news we received earlier this week from Central Office. A little over one year ago we examined the possibility of providing laptops to our Road Ranger operators for reporting and receiving traffic incident information. At the time, the Service Patrol contract was in a transition

phase so we decided it was best to hold off until the new contract was in place this past Spring. Districts Four and Seven had already begun to use this type of technology, so it was an opportunity for us to sit, wait and learn from their experience.

Once the new Service Patrol contract was awarded it was time to revisit the laptop effort. During our team meetings someone mentioned Smart Phones as the latest and greatest technology with an abundance of applications and capabilities. We all agreed it was a pretty good idea but had no clue where to go from there, so I decided to contact Central Office for some guidance. Within minutes we had them jumping on the bandwagon and within hours I was getting a call from their SunGuide software contractor, Southwest Research Institute (SWRi).

After some discussion with SWRi we quickly realized we could drive the costs down significantly when compared to laptops because of the Smart Phone capabilities. We could employ drop down menus, interactive communication, the phones GPS and other features that usually require multiple pieces of equipment. Central Office agreed to support this effort and we are now beginning the process to complete this project by Transpo 2010 in December. It will be one of the featured displays

Notes from the ITS Engineer continued

at this event and is sure to turn heads from all the attendees. Likewise, the District has already received numerous calls from agencies throughout Florida who are considering Smart Phones as an option to laptop computers.

One final bit of great news is we have begun to take the necessary steps to incorporate rail into the ITS program. On September 30th we met with officials from CSX to discuss ITS and tools we could share to disseminate traffic information to the traveling public. Their staff unveiled their latest and greatest technology that could be used in the future within the TMC. Basically, their software tells us the location of the rail cars, the contents, the destination and incident information. All of this is within real time, thus we can now look at ways to improve our software to capture data within SunGuide.

The ultimate goal is to anticipate when a railroad crossing will be closed for a train, thereby allowing us to forewarn motorists about a delay via the 511 system. Likewise, when there is a derailment, we can provide incident responders with critical information as they head to the event. This is an opportunity for responders to be better prepared during this major incident while keeping them safe from any unexpected occurrences. As I mentioned, this is just the first step in a long process and I do not expect to see the fruits of our labor until about three years from now.

As a reminder, Transpo 2010 will be held in Ponte Vedra from December 12th through 15th. I strongly encourage you to attend if possible to see the latest and greatest in ITS technology. Please contact me if you have any questions or go to the website at:

<http://www.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?e=c6da3cfb-dd8b-4133-84a4-02a9611478c9>

Pete Vega
 District 2
 ITS Engineer



The Lighter Side

In my years before joining the Florida Department of Transportation, while raising my five (5) children, I ran a Piano Studio in my home. For 23 years I maintained an average student list of 22 per week and taught some very talented children and adults - some that advanced to polished pianists at Jacksonville University, churches, etc.

When I started with the Department I quickly realized I did not have the time to continue my love of teaching in the piano studio so managed to place my students with other teachers. Since that time I continue to play occasionally for church, weddings, etc., but mainly for my own pleasure.

Nothing is as rewarding and comforting to me as “getting lost” in music to forget any stress. Until a few months ago this has always been a personal and private escape for me.

However, I have recently realized I have another interested student – my cat Diva. Never can I sit at my piano and play “by myself” anymore because Diva has a love for the sound of the piano. At first I thought she was just interested in seeing my fingers move but she actually plays the keys herself. (And no, *Kitten on the Keys* is not her favorite piece...she actually prefers Beethoven’s *Fur Elise*.) Also while the piano is played, my love bird Bobbie starts singing her

heart out and of course – not to be out done – my Doberman, Daisy has to get my attention by trying to “nose” my fingers off the keyboard. From the outside, there are always 2 roosters, Rufus and George, that come to the door to see what all the commotion is. So.... I still love playing the piano and I find the love of my animals a blessing but I can certainly say no longer does my playing allow me to escape or “get lost” in my music.

...AND I THOUGHT MY FIVE CHILDREN KEPT ME BUSY!

Donna Danson



Donna Danson
 Diva practicing her *Fur Elise* with Bobbie, the love bird, watching from on top of the open Bible

Performance Measures

The weekly audit of events is still being conducted, but the number of events requiring review has greatly decreased. A year ago at this time, there were often between 10 and 20 events that needed to be audited each week, whereas this year, there are usually less than 3 events that require investigation. This attests to the value of the improvements made in the new version reports.

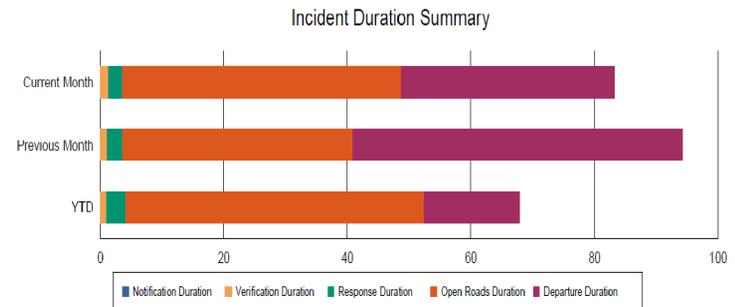
In September, there were 1,914 events entered in SunGuide. Over half of them were Disabled Vehicles, 17% were Congestion and 11% were Crashes. Of all the events, 177 were Performance Measured events, which means that at least one travel lane was blocked and there was at least one responder on scene. For these events, the Open Roads Policy was met on average by a significant margin. For events with Road Rangers the average Open Roads duration was 20 minutes lower than for events **without** Road Ranger response. However, a better understanding of the duration is seen when the average is compared between severity levels. The Open Roads Duration for “Severe” events year-to-date is 101 minutes and for September that average was 118 minutes. Fortunately, Minor and Moderate events in September had averages of 9 and 52 minutes, respectively.

The following table shows the Performance Measured data for all events. The chart gives a visual representation of how the Incident Duration is calculated. The Open Roads duration is included in the value.

Performance Measures Summary

	Current Month	Previous Month	YTD
Events included in Performance Measures	177	193	1,509
Notification Duration (min.)*	0.0	0.0	0.1
Verification Duration (min.)	1.3	1.1	0.9
Response Duration (min.)	2.3	2.5	3.0
Open Roads Duration (min.)	45.1	37.3	48.4
Departure Duration (min.)	34.6	53.3	16.6
Roadway Clearance Duration (min.)	48.7	40.9	52.4
Incident Clearance Duration (min.)	83.3	94.3	68.0

*FHP Data is not available for Notification Duration



Jill Dawson
Metric Engineering

Construction

The Construction Contract for the Phase VII Project has been awarded to Southeast Underground Utilities. This project will install 96-fiber cable, CCTV cameras, Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), Vehicle Detectors and Roadside Weather Information Sensors along SR 9A from Atlantic Blvd North to I-95. The Project also includes two Arterial Dynamic Message Signs and two CCTV cameras on Heckscher Drive approaching SR 9A in each direction. Construction is expected to begin in early Spring of 2011.

This project is the first of three upcoming Interstate ITS Projects. This project will install Fiber Optic Cable and ITS devices along the NE Quadrant of the I-295/SR 9A loop around Jacksonville. This project is especially important due to JaxPort being within the project limits. With the expansion of JaxPort expected to continue, this project will provide benefit to the truckers, trucking companies and motorists alike, as the CCTV cameras and Vehicle Detection Sensors collect important traffic information for the corridor and then real-time information is disseminated via the Dynamic Message Signs and Statewide 511 System.

The I-295 Phase VIII Project is working toward 90% plan submittals. This project is installing 96-fiber cable, CCTV cameras, Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), Vehicle Detectors and Roadside

Weather Information Sensors along I-295 from I-10 North to I-95. It will complete the Fiber Communications ring on I-295 along the western side of Jacksonville. The importance of this project to this area of Jacksonville is due to the large number of trucking companies along the corridor and the proximity to Jacksonville International Airport.

The Phase IX Project, on SR 9A from Atlantic Blvd south to the I-95/SR 9A Interchange is currently working on 60% plans. The project will install 96-fiber cable, CCTV cameras, Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), Vehicle Detectors and Roadside Weather Information Sensors throughout the project corridor. It will complete the ITS ring on I-295 and SR 9A around the City of Jacksonville and is also in the area of Jacksonville that is expected to have the largest growth over the next few decades. The project will also include Arterial Dynamic Message Signs (ADMS) on the major arterial roadways throughout the corridor.

Several projects are ongoing with Duval and Clay Counties. The SR 21 project is nearing the end of construction. Device integration and testing is currently being done and the system should be operational by the end of October at the latest. The SR 5 / US 1 Project is still on hold until some issues can be resolved by the Department. The

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Construction continued

Designer for the US 17 Project is currently working on 100% plans. All of these projects are using existing fiber infrastructure and adding Arterial Dynamic Message Signs and CCTV cameras to allow for the City of Jacksonville, Town of Orange Park and Clay County to view their arterial roadways, provide information to travelers, and dynamically adjust their signal timing to help alleviate congestion.

John Kell
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager



The countdown is getting close for ITS Devices to assist motorists on SR 21/ Blanding Boulevard

North Florida TPO Update

The North Florida TPO projects are nearing completion over the next several weeks. The State Road 21 project is beginning the testing phase and construction on the SR 15 project should start by January. Likewise, the State Road 200 project should be completed by the first week of November. The ITS Coalition met to discuss the progress of these projects and future possibilities in the next three years. St. Johns County said they had just begun their deployment and will be busy over the next few months installing the necessary equipment, while Duval County is in the process of completing two of their traffic signal upgrade projects.

Projects the team submitted for the next three years are key elements to linking the traffic signal systems, so we are excited at the opportunity to get these moving forward. Ultimately, these projects will provide us with options when managing traffic along corridors and will allow us to react proactively when dealing with major incidents. Many of these projects will phase into the Design/Build procurement process since Arterial Dynamic Message signs will be involved in several. My goal is that by 2015 we will meet all the needs of the region and can focus in on improving performance using the concepts generated from TSM&O (Transportation System Management and Operations).

Pete Vega
District 2 ITS Engineer

Maintenance

The rainy season has wrapped up around Jacksonville so we are getting back to normal for our ITS Maintenance duties. Lightning strikes have subsided and as a result we are seeing fewer device failures. Throughout the summer the ITS Maintenance Team has been working on improving device grounding and trying to find better ways to protect the devices from lightning strikes. Our efforts seemed to pay off as the number of device failures due to lightning strikes seemed to decrease in the areas that had been addressed and stayed consistent in the areas that had not been addressed.

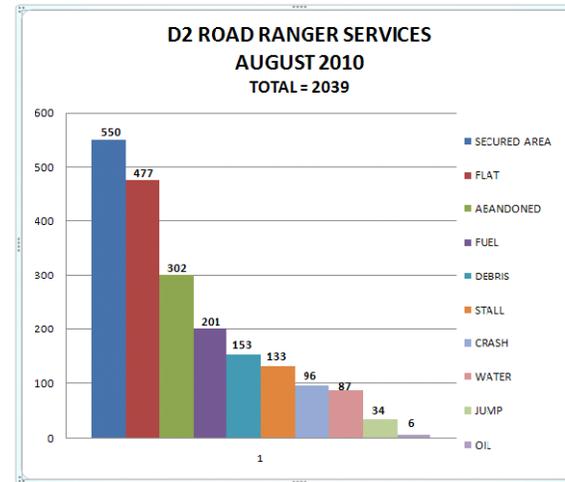
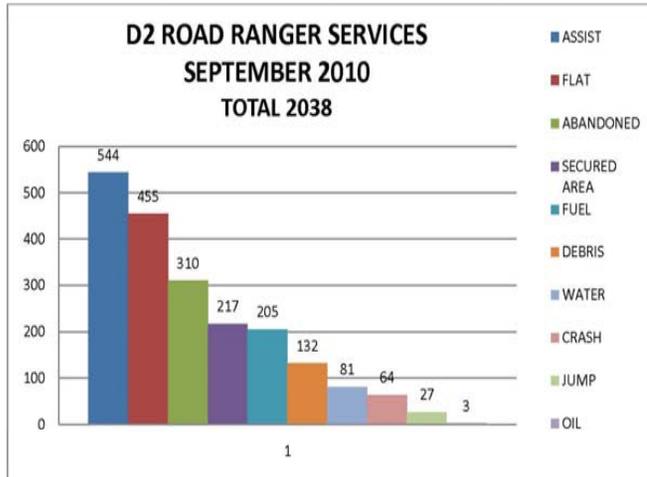
As the final update on the fiber connection to the Jacksonville Maintenance Yard, the Jacksonville Maintenance Yard complex is now able to view CCTV images from the District 2 Traffic Management Center. Several staff offices and conference rooms have been equipped to enable viewing and control of D2 ITS camera images. This advancement is expected to provide benefit by allowing personnel to see incidents before responding while allowing them to gauge the severity and determine the equipment needed for response. Traffic Management Center staff have been at the Maintenance Yard and provided Maintenance Staff with training on how to use the Software to view and control the camera images.

The westernmost DMS on I-10 should be in place by December. The structure is currently being manufactured by TCD's contractor and delivery is expected in the next 30 days. Once this DMS is installed we will look at upgrading the wireless communication equipment to the latest technology. The existing wireless is working fine but we are looking for additional bandwidth that would allow us to go further west along I-10. If we can find the right capabilities we just may be able to add some cameras at the new State Road 23 interchange, as well as Chaffee Road.

Kevin has adjusted from the move to his new office and is in "hog heaven." He now has the spare equipment and testing capabilities next door to each other. Over the past three years, most of this was separated in the Urban Office with storage being on the 3rd floor, testing equipment in the cabinet outside and Kevin's office within the TMC. He now has everything within a few feet of his office, thus enabling him to increase productivity while ensuring that all outgoing equipment is significantly tested before being placed in the field. Now, if we can just keep the smile down a level or two.

Road Ranger Update

The Road Ranger Service Patrol Operators were busy during the month of September assisting 2038 stranded motorists. Our Road Rangers are an important part of the First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team assisting with clearing the travel lanes thereby preventing possible secondary crashes and minimizing incident duration. The Road Ranger Operators perform their services in a positive manner as proven by feed back to the TMC from motorists as well as incident responders. It is evident the Road Rangers are creating a safe environment for our traveling motorists as well as boosting the performance levels in traffic incident scene clearance to achieve the Team's mission of the 90 Minutes *Local Open Roads Policy*.



RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE – UPDATE

At 1:40 PM on September 27th two semi trucks, a truck pulling a trailer and 12 standard vehicles crashed on I-75 at mile marker 390 as a result of rainy weather conditions. Due to the quick action of FHP Captain Coby Fincher, the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program was initiated and our RISC contractor, University Towing Company, responded and had all vehicles moved from the travel lanes within the Local Open Roads Policy guidelines. All RISC deadlines were met so, once again, we have proven the benefit of our RISC Program. The RISC Debrief Meeting was held on October 13th and discussion from responders was positive. The quick clearance of this incident was greatly influenced by all of the responders from our Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team. **“HATS OFF” TO OUR RISC CONTRACTOR AND OUR ALACHUA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM!**

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Update

ALACHUA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The Alachua Traffic Management Team met on Wednesday, October 13, 2010, at the Florida Department of Transportation's Gainesville Operation's Office at 10:00 AM. The following agencies were represented: FHP, FDOT Traffic Operations, FDOT ITS, FDOT Maintenance, D8 Medical Examiner Office, Metric Engineering, PB&J, Alachua County EPD, FDEP, University Towing, City of Gainesville, and AAG Environmental. After incidents were debriefed, reports from agencies were given. Mat Weisman and Chris Dolan, City of Gainesville, announced the Gainesville Traffic Management Center is expected to open in two (2) weeks and plans are being made to have our December Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team meeting at this facility with a tour following.

FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE:

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management will hold its team meeting on Tuesday, November 16th at the at the Florida Department of Transportation's Urban Office Training Center – 2198 Edison Avenue - at 10:00 AM.

District 2 TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM MISSION:

The Florida Department of Transportation District Two's Traffic Incident Management Teams through partnering efforts strive to continuously reduce incident scene clearance times to deter congestion and improve safety. The Teams' objective is to exceed the Open Roads Policy thus ensuring mobility, economic prosperity, and quality of life.

District 2 TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM VISION:

Through cooperation, communication and training the Teams intend to reduce incident scene clearance times by 10% each year through 2015.

Donna R. Danson
 FDOT District 2
 ITS Operations
 Program Manager

Operations

This past month has come and gone quickly and we all welcome the relief from scorching temperatures that the Fall brings! The drier weather presents safer road conditions day-to-day, allowing us to focus on the subtlety evolving patterns of recurring congestion we have written about here in recent months. Of course, the nights will get longer, too, which can present new challenges to motorists using our recently completed interchanges.

As we transition into this new season, the experience and observational skills of our TMC Operators are especially important. To assist them in this, we have just completed a comprehensive upgrade to our video wall at our 24/7 TMC facility, which is co-located with the Florida Highway Patrol at the Jacksonville Regional Communication Center. A new array of eight flat-screen monitors, as well as a new projector monitor, has given our TMC Operators a larger, clearer view of our District 2 roadways than ever before.

Additionally, to better serve our law enforcement partners and make best use of our resources, we were able to re-deploy the six previous monitors that had composed our old video wall for our supplemental use, thereby expanding our CCTV monitoring capability by 75%.

The feedback we have received from our weekend/over-night TMC Operators and FHP personnel following the completed installation has been especially positive. Going forward, we expect this significant upgrade will help us more quickly identify traffic issues and more accurately assess roadway conditions.

As for the events worked by the TMC since our last newsletter, September held steady at just over 1,900 events. Of those, 239 events involved travel lane blockage. Road Rangers were involved in over 1,307 events and performed 2,253 assisting activities while on duty.

In areas without ITS, the TMC depends on FDOT and FHP personnel to give us traffic information reports. You can reach our 24/7 line at (904)301-3700 extension 122 or our work day line at (904)360-5465. You can now also leave feedback on the Next Generation 511 system about road conditions and bugs you may find in the system that is relayed to our operators in real time.

Remember: Know Before You Go! Dial 511.

John (Sean) Wilcox
TMC Supervisor

Marketing

The 511 Marketing Team has been on the move. We started off this month at the Fall Home and Patio Show, where for the first time ever, a new home was constructed right inside the Prime Osborn Convention Center! The Monty Anderson Construction Group built a beautiful 2 bedroom 1 bath home while Florida Backyard Creations designed and built a swimming pool for the home's "backyard." It was quite a sight!

Our bi-lingual operators graciously volunteered to assist the Statewide Marketing Consultant, Global 5, in giving the Spanish language side of the FL-511 IVR a "work out" as they strive to increase usage by Spanish speaking motorists. Along that vein, our own Santos Morin is currently working on 511 public service announcements to be aired on local Spanish language radio stations.

In addition to the Fall Home and Patio Show, we've also partnered with the Ponte Vedra Chamber of Commerce, all three AAA branches and the Suddath Company to take the 511 message out into the community. And rounding out this month, we'll be spending a little time down at the Georgia Florida Football Classic Saturday, October 30th. If you're in the area, stop by and see us. Just look for the 511 tent and the big blue prize wheel!

Sherri Byrd
511 Marketing Manager



Spotlight on...Lieutenant Maritza Gonzalez

This month's spotlight falls on Lieutenant Maritza Gonzalez. She has been with the Florida Highway Patrol for 14 years and recently transferred from Ft. Myers to the Jacksonville area. As you'll see from her "bad day at the office" story, no two days are ever alike. And some days, you're just grateful for the chance to go home at the end of your shift.

Talk about your upbringing – where were you born / raised? I was born in New York City- "The Big Apple". My family consists of seven; I am the second youngest, with 3 older brothers and 1 younger sister. They all currently reside in NY. I was the only one who ever moved away. I could not handle the cold weather.

Give us a general overview of your role in Transportation. I am currently the Commander over JRCC. I oversee the entire operation and work closely with TMC and various other agencies to make sure that traffic is constantly flowing smoothly, traffic crashes are handled promptly and road blockages are cleared quickly. Having TMC located within the JRCC is greatly beneficial to FHP because we are in very close proximity and can quickly communicate issues, get them dispatched and resolved for the motoring public.

How long have you been at your current job? I have been with FHP for 14 years. However, I have only been at JRCC for 1 year and 3 months. I transferred from Fort Myers, FHP.

Do you have any memorable experiences... something that really stands out? Such as a foot-in-mouth moment or a bad day at the office story?

There were two bad days at the office (in my case the Highway). 1). I was patrolling Alligator Alley- Naples and had conducted a traffic stop. Upon the completion of the stop, I was inputting notes into the computer when suddenly I got struck from behind by a vehicle. I thankfully survived but the other driver unfortunately did not.

2). The second incident was when I experienced heat exhaustion while investigating a lengthy traffic fatality scene on US 41- Naples with complete road blockage. It took several hours to clear during the middle of August. I came very close to passing out when a gentleman asked if I wanted water. He unfortunately was stuck in traffic. He must have noticed how pale and dehydrated(Thirsty) I looked, not to mention the position I was in with my upper body (head) bent over almost touching my feet. My partner Bob recommended I lower my head so the blood could rush to my head quicker, so I did. The gentleman threw 2-bottles of COLD, COLD water in our direction and I couldn't tell you how happy I was to drink them both. I then located a patrol

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Spotlight on...Lieutenant Maritza Gonzalez cont.

car (not mine) and sat in it with the AC maxed out until I felt better. These are just some of the things we Troopers deal with at some point in our career- this to me was a bad day.

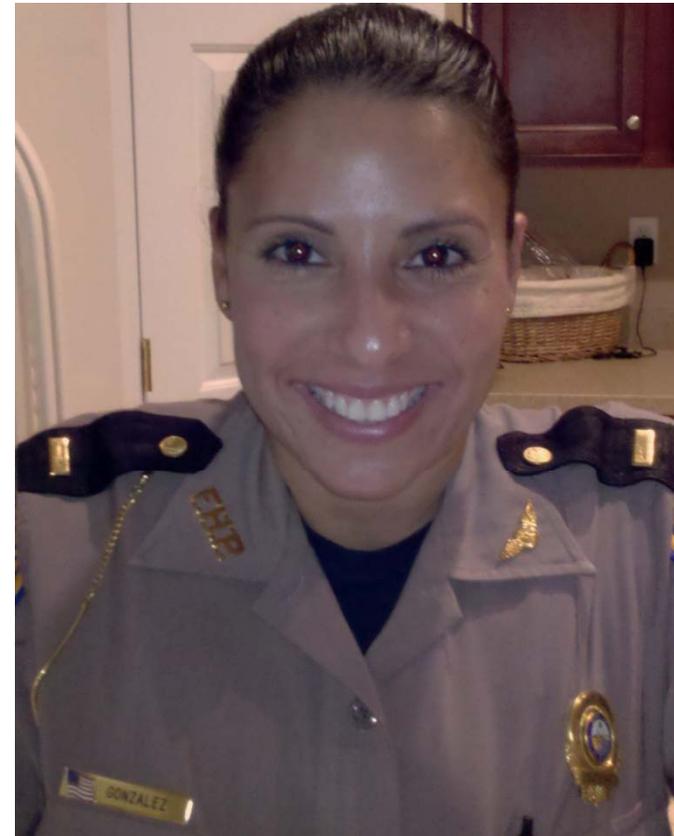
Do you have a favorite quote? Something that inspires you? “Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”. (Winston Churchill)

Best job ever / worst job ever... or both? I have not had many jobs. I served in the military (Navy) for 6 years stationed in San Diego, California. I was a Dental Technician at the time. I loved it. I then completed my tour and moved to Florida where I worked as a Dental Assistant at a private practice. I decided to change my career and trade my dental floss and tooth brush for a gun and badge. I joined the proud men and women serving in the Florida Highway Patrol.

Tell us a little about your family. I have two sons ages 19 and 20. One attends Johnson and Whales University and is working on becoming a Chef. The other is pursuing a career in Law Enforcement.

Do you have any hobbies? I love planting flowers and trees and watching them grow. It really relaxes me. I get that from both my parents. They both have a “Green Thumb.”

Do you have a favorite vacation spot? I love to visit anywhere in the Caribbean. It has to be a warm climate. I enjoy going on cruises most of all.



Lieutenant Maritza Gonzales, at the JRCC

Photo Gallery



The new CSX motto on their riverfront building



The magnificent CSX marble lobby, circa the 1950's with our folks signing in



Two attendees of the Home & Patio Show Learning about 511 and how it can help their drive



511 at the Home & Patio Show with our own Michelle Warren

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www.fl511.com

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Penny Kamish, Project Manager

Ryan Crist, TMC Lead Supervisor
 Jason Summerfield, Network Manager
 Derrick Odom, TMC Assistant Supervisor

John (Sean) Wilcox, TMC Supervisor
 Santos Morin, TMC Assistant Supervisor
 Sherri Byrd, 511 Marketing Manager

D2 Day Operators

Jesse Gilmour
 Kristin Kirk
 Donavan King
 Jessica Lakey

Fill-In Operators

Rob DeMello
 Kara Sanders

D2 Night & Weekend Operators

Jason Evans
 Rebecca Reid
 David Rolfe
 Tyler Sowers

D3 Day Operators

Ed Capps
 Adrienne Catapano
 Joanna Garcia
 Jessica Vazquez

511 Probe

Sherri Byrd
 Michelle Warren