

FDOT DISTRICT TWO

Intelligent Transportation Systems Newsletter –
May 2012
Issue 55



Notes from the District 2 ITS Engineer

As I sit in front of the television watching the San Antonio Spurs the only thing that I can say is “wow!” It amazes me that this aging group of players built around Duncan, Parker and Ginobili is still so successful against all the young bucks in the NBA. How do they do it with this aging infrastructure of bad knees, backs and ankles? Given that they are falling apart physically while being supported by fellow aging teammates like Bonner, Jackson and Diaw it’s beyond comprehension that they are one series away from the NBA finals. There’s one simple answer and that is management of the system under a great coach named Greg Popovich. He has taken this aging infrastructure, added bits and pieces to make it a more efficient system then turned them into a winner when everyone counted them out at the onset of the season.

This kind of segues to what I really intend to talk about when I address Transportation System Management and Operations (TSM&O). This latest effort by the Department basically addresses an aging infrastructure by providing the tools, means and methods to make it a more efficient system with the hope of utilizing the full capacity of the roadway network before additional asphalt or concrete is needed. Several studies have shown that a little “tweaking” here or there can help to improve traffic flows at a minimal cost. Whether it’s retiming signals, adding vehicle sensing devices, incorporating managed lanes or just improving an

area’s incident management program, each of these approaches could lead to an extended life-cycle for the roadway network prior to expanding the infrastructure.

On Thursday, May 24th, Central Office conducted a TSM&O workshop with District Two’s key leaders from several different offices. Attendees from PD&E, Planning, Design, Work Program, Construction, Maintenance, Administration and Traffic Operations participated in a five-hour session that should be considered the first step in the TSM&O process. Each office shared what they thought was their role within TSM&O and how they could be of assistance in the future. For instance, the concept of a project will sometimes evolve from the Planning Office. If a capacity project is being addressed the question was “do you consider other options prior to proposing more lane miles?”

Solutions like signal retiming, ITS, improved transit or limited access improvements might provide as much a benefit, if not more, than just constructing additional lane miles. The Planning Office’s reply was quite a confidence booster when they said yes they consider all options through a benefit/cost analysis prior to making their final determination. Ironically, Transportation System Management and Operations is nothing new for District Two. We have been utilizing this practice for years without putting a nametag to it. The biggest piece of the puzzle currently missing in District Two is a process by which to track and improve our TSM&O

Notes from the District 2 ITS Engineer cont.

process. For instance, Design may take a project and incorporate certain requirements for Traffic Operations; however they may overlook the needs for traffic management during actual construction. Likewise, the Planning office may address the needs of Transit without coordinating with Traffic Operations and ITS. Some benefits could be gained by improving signal timing plans, adding transit signal priority or just improving communications between a bus and roadway system. These little things could go a long way toward a very successful project that could extend its overall life-cycle.

A key point to TSM&O is coordination. The Department needs to begin taking a look at the “big picture” by assigning TSM&O champions from each office to look at benefit/cost ratios, return on investment and efficiency for each project within the Work Program. Improvements that should be considered are features that will improve incident management, pedestrian movements, bicyclists and transit, to name a few. If there is enough right-of-way “why not add three feet of asphalt for a bicyclist?” Also, if improvements are needed to address only one part of the day “why not consider adding signal retiming, ITS or access management solutions to the mix?”

FDOT Districts Four (Ft. Lauderdale) and Six (Miami) are considered the pioneers of the TSM&O program for the Department. It began with Managed Lanes on I-95 and continues with arterial

roadway improvements throughout each municipality. Both of these Districts encountered huge challenges due to limited right-of-way and an ever increasing population. In a sense, they finally realized they could not build their way out of congestion and needed to find other methods to manage traffic efficiently. The North Florida area is very fortunate because we have several years before this type of problem is encountered, but the key is to address it early before we need to play “catch-up” like Miami and Ft. Lauderdale currently face.

This TSM&O process does not begin or end with the Department. It will rely on all of our partners (that means YOU) providing input on the needs for this region. Whether it’s a traffic management issue or a safety concern, every suggestion is valid and shall be considered. A great example of this was presented a few years ago by Shands Hospital during a TIM meeting. Their representative stated that by allowing EMTs access to the Department’s fiber optic communication system, CCTV cameras and vehicle speed info the response times could be reduced and deaths from major injuries could be circumvented. After the discussion this request was incorporated into the overall ITS Master Plan and I hope to accommodate this request by 2014.

If we are successful with implementing this feature it will assure us improved clearance times and hence better traffic flow on a consistent basis.

Notes from the District 2 ITS Engineer cont.

Intelligent Transportation Systems are only a small portion of the overall TSM&O process but it will play a key role in the overall success since it will be the instrumentation utilized to gather data for Performance Measures. Our leaders, Citizens of Florida and the Department concur that we need to know where we are before we decide where we want to go and it will all revolve around measuring our performance. More to come in the following months

Pete Vega
 District 2 ITS Engineer

North Florida TPO Update

The North Florida TPO projects are coming along nicely. If you've driven down Philips Highway in late May you may have noticed the new arterial dynamic message signs being placed on their foundations. A few more months to go before final acceptance then the TMC can begin dynamically moving traffic from I-95 to Philips Highway due to upstream congestion and/or accidents. I believe it will take the TMC staff a few months to master but by Thanksgiving we should be pros at traffic diversion onto Philips Highway AND San Jose Boulevard when major incidents occur along I-95.

The College Drive project that will connect the Clay County Traffic Signals office to its signal system at State Road 21 is about 60% complete and should be

finished by mid-summer. After this project is finished the Clay County staff can dynamically change timing plans for the signal systems on State Road 21 and State Road 15 when the need arises. For instance, if there is a major incident on State Road 21 northbound the Clay County staff can change the timing plan on State Road 15 to account for additional volumes created by motorists diverting to this parallel roadway.

The NFTPO success story for the month involves the wind sensors on the area's bridges. This project is still set to be completed by June when the vendor will deliver the software package but the need arose for us to utilize the system a little earlier than anticipated due to Tropical Storm Beryl . The Duval and Nassau EOCs requested wind speed data from the bridges as part of their coordination efforts during the storm. The problem was that all we had available was raw data from the NOAA website so the TMC contractor provided staff at these EOCs to translate the wind sensor information being generated. We discovered that a couple of bridges had wind gust readings over 60 MPH at times even with average wind speeds shown at 30 MPH. At the moment only two bridges have been closed during the worst part of the storm.

By the end of June the process should run a little smoother. The goal is that the EOC can tap in directly to a website with the "cleaned" data that will provide an average for the wind speed, wind gust

North Florida TPO Update continued

and direction, with an alarm triggered when thresholds are met. Currently, the data that is being acquired has 27 pieces of information that need to be deciphered by experienced personnel. The final steps begin in early June when we will have finished analyzing the data generated from Tropical Storm Beryl and address any equipment problems that are found. By mid-June we will provide access to local agencies for testing the website with a goal of going live by the last week of the month.

That’s about all the information I can share on the NFTPO projects. A couple of upcoming projects are the Arterial Road Dynamic Message signs, the Airport connectivity project and the interconnection of Jacksonville’s Seaports to the TMC and incident management partners. Until next month wish us luck as we work to complete these projects listed in the region’s ITS Master Plan.



Maintenance

For the first time in several months we have been seeing severe storms in the area. These storms have included significant amounts of lightning and as we have found out in previous years, ITS devices do not like lightning. In the past few years the District 2 Maintenance Team has beefed up the grounding systems on their ITS cabinets and devices and have made sure that proper Transient Voltage Surge Suppression (TVSS) is being used at cabinet and device locations. With these precautions taken, we are seeing fewer lightning related issues and the majority of the issues are with the TVSS that sacrifice themselves so the much more costly ITS equipment does not take damage. The ITS Maintenance Contractor has been monitoring the devices and correcting issues as they appear after the storms have passed.

The Maintenance team was able to install the final two bridge wind sensors during the month of April. Wind sensors were installed on the CR 210 bridge in Palm Valley and the Bridge of Lions in St. Augustine. With Tropical Storm Alberto starting the Hurricane Season a little early this year, we are glad to have these wind sensors in place so that wind speeds can be tracked for closing and opening bridges to keep motorists safe while traveling during high speed wind events.

We have received some of the new Power Over Ethernet (POE) BlueTOAD travel time devices. As described in previous articles, the new POE units are taking the place of the older version of the

Maintenance continued

device due to the ease of maintenance and increased reliability of the newer units. The team has been replacing existing devices at sites that have been deemed to be issues and once all of these sites are completed, the team will begin deployment on I-295. Once completed the BlueTOAD devices will be placed on all of the Interstates and many of the major arterial roadways throughout Jacksonville enabling travel times and Origin/Destination information to be generated from the data they gather.

ITS Maintenance and Operations personnel have been testing a Visibility Sensor throughout the month. Maintenance personnel installed the sensor on the property at the FDOT Urban Office in Jacksonville near a retention pond that is known to have fog in the early mornings. As could be expected, since the Visibility Sensor has been installed, we have not been seeing much fog near the pond. Putting our heads together, we had several ideas to test the sensor and

so we got all of our plans together and items purchased and we tested the sensor on a nice clear day. We even invited the folks from District 5 who are currently testing a portable Visibility Sensor unit. The first idea was to put dry ice in the pond to see if we could get the “fog” to cover the pond and then rise into the area of the sensor. It was a good idea and made a cool science experiment but in the end the fog would not lift off of the pond and we declared the dry ice to be a failure. The next idea was a fog machine, after all it makes fog and you can control where the fog goes, plus who doesn’t want to play with a fog machine. We were able to get some results from the fog machine, but not the results we had hoped to get. Our final attempt was our greatest achievement, Fire. We rolled a smoker out to the site and lit a fire and let the smoker do what it does best, make smoke. As you can see from the picture, we were able to get very good results



Fog machine, dry ice and smoker fire



Mike Smith, D5,utilizing the dry ice “cup” method



Jason Summerfield with the fog machine & 511 bag

Maintenance continued

It appears that we have finally found a low cost effective wireless communications product. The new Ubiquiti wireless units were tested by the TMC Consultant in their test lab and were found from using the smoker. We are continuing to test the sensor and will possibly get another manufacturer to provide a demo unit to compare results. to be easy to set up and very reliable. So, the existing units on I-10 were replaced with the Ubiquiti units and so far have performed very well. If these units continue to operate as they have been, we will be able to extend the ITS Network along arterial roadways that do not have fiber optic cable infrastructure, which would allow for traffic monitoring in areas that would not be possible to have fiber communications for many years.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist

Two small future ITS Engineers came in on "their" day off to see dry ice fog and smoke.



Pete Vega and Craig Carnes rethinking methods of testing the fog and smoke sensors

Construction

There has been very little change in status for the Phase 7 Project, on SR 9A from the northern SR 9A/I-95 Interchange going south to Atlantic Boulevard. The surety company received bids from companies interested in completing the work. The surety hopes to have a contractor working on the project by July. ITS personnel are eager to have this project completed as this project will provide communications to JaxPort and allow for monitoring of the I-295 Eastern Beltway northeast quadrant.

The Phase 8 Project, on I-295 from I-95 South to I-10, continues to be on pace for an early Fall completion. The contractor has continued with installation of power services, conduit and pullboxes. A manufacturer has been listed on the Qualified Products List for manufacturing spun concrete CCTV poles. The contractor has ordered the CCTV poles for the project and they are in line to be manufactured within the next few weeks. Once completed, this project will finish the ITS installations on the Western Beltway of I-295.

The Phase 9 Project, on SR 9A from Atlantic Blvd going south to the southern SR 9A/I-95 Interchange, has completed the design phase. Signed and Sealed plans were submitted to FDOT on May 25th. The Project will be advertised in July and the Letting will be in September. It is anticipated that construction will begin in early 2013.

The Phillips Highway (US 1) Project, on US1 from Greenland Road going north to Wishart Road, continues to progress. Crews have been installing pull

boxes and tying in conduits. The Arterial Dynamic Message Signs and structures were installed this month with the exception of one site, which has a foundation, which has been rejected and needs further testing and possible remedial work. Acceptance Testing is expected to begin in July with Project Acceptance anticipated after the required burn-in period.

The College Drive Project includes the installation of fiber optic cable along College Drive, a small section of CR 220 and Sleepy Hollow Road to provide a communications link from the Clay County Traffic Operations Center to Blanding Blvd. The contractor has been progressing a little slower this month and has fallen behind schedule. The end of the month saw a slight increase in activity, with the Contractor and sub-contractors installing conduit, directional bores and pullboxes. The Contractor anticipates being on schedule by the end of June and staying on schedule to complete the project within contract time.

The Arterial Dynamic Message Sign (ADMS) Project has been awarded to Traffic Control Devices. This project will install various sizes of ADMS on arterials around the southern area of Jacksonville to provide traffic information to motorists and assist with signing for Detour routing during Interstate closures and other events causing heavy congestion and delays in the area. Construction is anticipated to begin in the Fall with Project Completion in 2013.

John Kell
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager

Operations

The month of May is upon us and is about to fly by before we know it for 2012. For most of us, the month of May also marks the beginning of summer routines such as, school being out for summer break, summer vacations, etc. This year, AAA predicts an uptick in summer driving due to dropping gas prices since early spring. Memorial Day weekend officially starts the summer travel season, and for most of us that means heading out of town to enjoy the holiday break, or for those of us who have served in the military, remembering the fallen.

For the Traffic Management Center, in the month of May we gear up for the beginning of Hurricane season which officially starts June 1st. As you have seen in the news recently, we've already had two tropical storms for the 2012 hurricane season spin off the coast of Florida. This could be a sign of busier things to come, and we want to remind everyone to have your hurricane kits ready and your hurricane evacuation routes planned and up to date.

As for the TMC, we prepare for worst case scenarios (such as evacuations from South Florida) and we strive to ensure that our roadways are safe for motorists traveling through our area. Our TMC Operator James Speed states, "I feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment knowing that our actions here at the TMC help people travel through North Florida safely." All of the TMC staff feels the same way when it comes to

hurricane season, and we know that every little thing we do can mean a lot to the motoring public.

On a personal note, the month of May reminds me as to why I enjoy working at the TMC. I joined the Traffic Management Center back in 2008 knowing that the job description entailed monitoring cameras, posting messages, posting incidents into 511 and dispatching Road Rangers. Since I first joined, I can see now that the little things we do here on a daily basis can change the motorist's outlook for the rest of the day or evening. For example: dispatching a Road Ranger when the motorist is in need of gas, jump starting their vehicle or even changing their tire. It's a great honor knowing that the motorist is safe and that we (the TMC) and the Road Rangers work side by side to ensure they will get to their destination without incident.

Without ITS devices outside of Jacksonville (and parts of Jacksonville) the TMC depends on FDOT and FHP personnel to give us traffic information reports. You can reach our 24/7 line at (904)359-6842 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 the story above and

“Know Before You Go! Dial 511”

Santos Morin
TMC Supervisor

RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE – UPDATE

On May 3, 2012, the RISC program was put in place when FHP Captain Fincher notified University Towing Company owned by Rick Moore to respond to an incident on I-75 at MM 376 in Alachua County. With great Team effort displayed by all responders, the incident was cleared within the *Local Open Roads Policy* guidelines so bonus will be paid to University Towing. A debrief meeting will be held at our Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team Meeting on June 13th.

Thanks to all incident responders for the great teamwork and success!

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Update

FIRST COAST TIM TEAM UPDATE

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team Meeting for May was conducted in conjunction with a 2-day training provided by FHWA for *Advanced Traffic Incident Management Workshop for Mid-level Managers* on May 15 – 16, 2012. After reports from our team agencies, incidents were debriefed followed by our bi-monthly report of performance measures. Captain Keith Gaston and Danny Hinson gave a presentation on the WebEOC being developed for all agencies to join. Captain Gaston will be conducting a more extensive training with the assistance of Danny Hinson for all agencies in the near future. This



FHP Chief Grady Carrick at FHWA Traffic Incident Management Workshop

training will be important as we will be developing the program for our area and need input from ALL agencies. If you have any questions, you may contact Captain Gaston at: KeithGaston@flhsmv.gov.

ALACHUA TIM TEAM UPDATE

Several Alachua Team members were able to attend the FHWA Advanced Traffic Incident Management Workshop for Mid-Level Managers on May 15th – 16th at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center. Thanks to all that participated – your input was valuable.

The Alachua Traffic Management Team will meet on June 13th at the FDOT Operations Office, 5301 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL. With the hurricane season upon us and our continued issue with wildfires, attendance is crucial. These meetings proved to be a great benefit to our Team’s success.

Marketing

May seems to be the month of festivals here in the south, and after coming off a whirlwind tour - hitting areas as far north as Fernandina and as far south as Gainesville - we're finally home. We sampled shrimp, hobnobbed with pirates, danced to local bands and even shared space with the ShandsCair trauma helicopter along the way.

At the beginning of the month, we shook open our road map, smoothed out the wrinkles and plotted our course. First stop, the Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival in Fernandina Beach. The event was held May 5th and 6th and temperatures hovered in the upper 80's throughout the entire weekend. Visitors flocked to the 511 tent to escape the heat and learn about the new SmartPhone app for Apple products. We figured they either liked the cool cross breeze blowing through our tent, or they just liked us. Either way, they were loathe to leave, and we ended up making a lot of new friends that day.

Next, it was on to Blue Cross Blue Shield to attend the Hurricane Preparedness Expo at their Deerwood Parkway campus. We showed employees all the features of our comprehensive 511 system (phone, web, SmartPhone app) and explained how they could benefit in case of a major hurricane or other weather-related incident. As always, we were greeted with a warm reception and asked afterwards if we would like to return again next year. We, of course, said that we would and also promised to attend the upcoming expo at their Riverside campus next month.

Finally, we motored our way through one small town after another, eventually parking our 511 car at Citizens Field in Gainesville. As soon as we got into place, the Trauma One helicopter from Shands Hospital swooped in amongst a flurry of activity and landed right next to our vehicle. We were privileged enough to speak to over 200 adults and hand out beach balls to 273 kids that day. What a fun event. And even though our little car didn't have wings, it still got a fair amount of attention that day. (although I think it's still suffering from a good case of "flight" envy)

While I was in Gainesville, Alexis and Kim were hard at work closer to home at the 26th annual Dancin' in the Streets, where Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach "kiss the ocean." Festival goers danced their way over to the 511 booth where they received valuable information as well as friendly smiles from our 511 helpers! What a day! In fact, what a month! And as soon as we rest up a bit, we'll be ready for more.

As always, we welcome your comments, thoughts and suggestions. Remember, know before you go! Log onto www.FL511.com or dial 5-1-1 before heading out the door. Also, download our free 511 Traffic App today. It's available for use with iPhone, iPad or iPod devices. Simply go to the iTunes store and search "Florida 511." And Keep Moving!

Sherri Byrd
511 Marketing Manager

Performance Measures

This month, the Open Roads duration and Incident Clearance duration for events on I-10 were nearly 15 minutes longer than the average for the year. Performance measures data is based only on events that had lane blockage and responders on scene, which means only a small sample of events contributes to this average. Thus one or two events with abnormally long duration times could easily sway the data especially since data for the month was only gathered up to May 21. Similarly, an increase in duration time was seen for I-95. The Open Roads duration was about 15 minutes longer than the average and the Incident Clearance duration was about 10 minutes longer than the average for the year. On a positive note, the Open Roads Duration, Roadway Clearance Duration and Incident Clearance Duration for SR-202 and SR 9A saw a significant decrease compared to the annual average and the average for April's data. This is encouraging since traffic on SR 9A has been aggravated with the recent construction project just north of Philips Highway. Once the ITS deployments planned for this area are deployed, traffic in this area will be even easier to manage.

The total number of events for April and May was right around the average for the year. April had significantly more Scheduled Road Work events than the average for the year. There

were 211 entered in SunGuide, whereas for the last 12 months an average of only 134 Scheduled Road Work events are entered into SunGuide. Although the month of May has had more road work events than the average, it is not as great an increase as April. Construction on I-295 near Collins Road has changed the traffic patterns in the area and at least three times this month, the attenuator was damaged by traffic crashes. Fortunately the overall number of crashes in District Two has not increased. Although, April did have about 10 more crash events than the average for the last 12 months, May has had a much lower rate of crashes than the average for the year. Perhaps commuters have become accustomed to the traffic patterns around construction areas and thus reduced the risk of crashes.

On the following page, the table shows key performance measures data by roadway. The average is of the last 12 months, and the data for May includes data up to the 21st.

Jill Dawson
Metric Engineering

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Performance Measures continued

<i>Performance Measures by Roadway</i>			
	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Average</i>
I-10			
<i>Events Included in Performance Measures</i>	27	10	27
<i>Open Roads Duration</i>	29.2	62.7	47.1
<i>Roadway Clearance Duration</i>	38.1	76.5	57.0
<i>Incident Clearance Duration</i>	86.7	99.8	87.1
I-295			
<i>Events Included in Performance Measures</i>	50	36	49
<i>Open Roads Duration</i>	38.9	40.9	35.7
<i>Roadway Clearance Duration</i>	47.5	48.2	43.6
<i>Incident Clearance Duration</i>	76.7	69.7	68.5
I-75			
<i>Events Included in Performance Measures</i>	11	11	14
<i>Open Roads Duration</i>	52.0	59.3	56.2
<i>Roadway Clearance Duration</i>	63.2	67.4	67.7
<i>Incident Clearance Duration</i>	106.4	100.1	105.4
I-95			
<i>Events Included in Performance Measures</i>	53	42	58
<i>Open Roads Duration</i>	41.2	57.1	42.7
<i>Roadway Clearance Duration</i>	49.2	63.7	51.4
<i>Incident Clearance Duration</i>	80.7	90.4	79.1
SR-202			
<i>Events Included in Performance Measures</i>	7	4	6
<i>Open Roads Duration</i>	46.1	22.1	34.6
<i>Roadway Clearance Duration</i>	53.6	37.8	39.8
<i>Incident Clearance Duration</i>	72.7	45.5	59.6
SR-9A			
<i>Events Included in Performance Measures</i>	29	12	16
<i>Open Roads Duration</i>	47.0	36.3	47.3
<i>Roadway Clearance Duration</i>	61.0	39.0	56.9

A DAY IN THE LIFE...Craig Carnes, EI TMC Consultant- Metric Engineering

There have been many days in my life, which were interesting enough to keep the attention of some people who may read this article. However, due to the professional nature of this publication and the fact that most people reading this article are in the business of keeping the roads in proper working order, I have narrowed those choices of days down to December 27, 2005. Believe it or not, even though it has been over 6 years ago, I remember the date very well. My family and I had moved into a brand new home in Clermont, Florida on December 22nd and had rushed through the holiday season as we were unpacking our things and trying to get the house in order. December 27th happened to be the day that I was going back to work after being off from work so that I could get the house in order and “enjoy” the holidays.

Believe me, by December 26th, I was looking forward to going to work the next day so that I could get away from some of the stress.

A little back story first, I grew up in West Virginia and had several uncles who owned mechanic's shops or used car dealerships and so as a teenager I was even more interested in cars than most young men that age. One of my uncles had a new Mustang when I was 16 and let me drive it for a day and that started my quest to own a Mustang as soon as I could afford one. After serving in the Air Force and then attending West Virginia

University and getting my Electrical Engineering degree, I moved to Florida and was able to get a job with Florida's Turnpike. I worked in several different positions at the Turnpike beginning in March 2001 and by 2004 I had worked my way up to Intelligent Transportation Systems Construction Manager. At the age of 27, I finally had the cash for a down payment and the credit to buy a brand new Mustang. And not just any Mustang, Ford re-designed the Mustang for 2005, which meant that I could buy one of the first Mustangs in the new body style.



I had not thought ahead and got on a waiting list, so I searched all over Florida for a new Mustang GT and apparently quite a few people had thought ahead and got on the waiting lists at their local dealers. Not wanting to go another day without driving a new Mustang, in November 2004 I bought a brand new Red Mustang V6 from a local dealer. For the next 13 months I drove the Mustang everywhere and for the first several months, being one of the only Mustangs around, it got a lot of attention. *-CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE*

A DAY IN THE LIFE... continued
Craig Carnes, EI, Metric Engineering

So, now that you have all of the relevant information, I now take you back to December 27, 2005. I got up that morning and started my drive to work as normal. I even stopped by the gas station to get a large Cappuccino to get the day started. It usually took about 20 minutes to get to work unless there was something going on in the area of the Turnpike/SR 408 Interchange construction area, which was only a mile or so from my office at the Turnpike Headquarters buildings at the Turkey Lake Service Plaza. To be honest, I don't remember exactly how long it took me to get to work on December 27, 2005, but it was quite a while, as was the commute of many other Central Florida drivers that morning, because something was "going on" in the Turnpike/SR 408 construction area.

The interchange project was well into construction and the Contractor had placed barrier walls along the median and outside shoulder of the roadway and were working on milling and resurfacing the asphalt on the Turnpike. Being a nice, cool December morning it was a bit foggy, but not too bad, just enough to leave a little bit of condensation on everything, including the roadway. As I topped a hill in the construction area, all I saw in front of me were brake lights. I didn't know how far I needed to be able to stop my Mustang, but I was pretty sure that it wasn't far enough. I looked for an escape route and found nothing but barrier wall to my left and a car to my right. I applied the brakes, pumping them slightly once the ABS started making the car slide. I was able to get the car straight just seconds before I hit

the Ford F-150's bumper in front of me. It wasn't a violent collision, just some damage to the hood and front bumper of the Mustang and the rear bumper of the F-150. For a split second, I thought, well that could have been worse.

We all remember being kids and getting to go on the bumper car ride at the fair or amusement park. Remember how fun it was being able to "crunch" the guy in the car in front of you and then being surprised that five people had just rammed into you one after the other and made you look like a life size bobble head doll. Well, it's not that fun in a real car with real cars, trucks and a semi creating the collisions.



First, I got hit by a Utility Truck on the right rear of the Mustang as the driver tried to avoid me. This spun me around and crunched me into the median barrier wall. Then a small SUV spun sideways and hit into both me and the utility truck. For a few seconds the collisions stopped and I was able to feel the burning Cappuccino as it ran down my leg. Other than the

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A DAY IN THE LIFE... continued Craig Carnes, EI, Metric Engineering

burning from the Cappuccino, I didn't feel any real pain, so I thought that I was good to go. Then I heard the sounds of some type of large vehicle trying to stop as its tires squealed against the pavement and then a loud collision and another impact to the Mustang. A semi-truck had just made impact with the passenger side of the small SUV.



Several of us made it to the SUV simultaneously knowing that what we were about to see was going to be horrifying, but knowing that we needed to do something to try to help the occupants of the vehicle. But, to our amazement, there was nobody in the vehicle. The two passengers had apparently seen the semi cresting the hill and had been able to get out and jump the barrier wall to safety. None of the other drivers involved in the accident were injured and the occupants of the SUV were taken to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

I looked around and saw several people on their cell phones speaking with 911. That being taken care of, I knew I had to make a call. Clearly not being in the right state of mind, instead of calling my wife to let her know that I was ok, I called the Traffic Management Center to let them know that there had been an accident. I told them that the roadway was closed, so the best access to the scene was northbound in the southbound direction starting at the Service Plaza, there were two injuries and that they needed 2 small tow trucks and a large one for the semi. After taking all of the information, Vito, the Turnpike TMC Operator, asked me how my wife August had taken the news. That's when I realized that I should have made another call first and hung up with Vito to call my wife to let her know what had happened. One tip that I can give you is to start the conversation with "I'm ok, but I just wanted to let you know that...".

Over the next few hours the two injured motorists were taken away by EMS, the tow trucks came and loaded up the vehicles and FHP did their accident reports. One of the troopers informed me that the accident had started when a driver had a tire blow out and couldn't exit the roadway due to the barrier wall and they were driving so slow that they had been rear ended by another vehicle, which then set into motion the accident I was involved in.

So, everything that I have told you up until now leads me to the final reason that I will always remember this

-CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

A DAY IN THE LIFE... continued
Craig Carnes, EI, Metric Engineering

day. As I am standing in the middle of Florida's Turnpike with vehicles strewn across the lanes of traffic, and thousands of people stuck in traffic trying to get to work, my cell phone rang. I looked at the number and it was one of my co-workers and good friends from the Turnpike. I answered, thinking that he had found out about the accident and was making sure I was ok. Instead, the first thing I hear is, "I'm watching the news and there is a bad accident blocking the Turnpike near SR 408. The news helicopter is on-scene and I see a Mustang that looks like yours, if that's you in the accident, wave to the helicopter so that I can see you on TV."

That's the kind of friends I have.



From dream car to nightmare, in less than a minute

PHOTO GALLERY 1



FHWA and local first responders discuss "safe" efficient MOT that allows traffic flow.



TS Beryl from roof of Duval EOC (Hart Bridge, directly beyond church steeple, but unseen due to rain.)

PHOTO GALLERY 2



Isle of 8 Flags Shrimp Festival-goers learning about 511 and FL511.com



Attendees of the Isle of 8 Flags Shrimp Festival wait in line to "spin the wheel"



The "hottest" ticket at the "Touch a Truck" event in Alachua County was the ShandsCair Medical Chopper

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