



It's that time of the year! Who are you picking to win?  
(Take note that pumpkins are orange!)



## **NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER**

Over the past several weeks many of our partners have stated “gosh you guys are busy!” They don’t know the half of it and we could never accomplish such a feat without the dedicated staff working for our ITS program. It’s been so busy that I don’t even know where to begin. I could talk about the Managed Lanes effort in District Two. Or, I could touch on the new Activu video wall controller that has surpassed my greatest expectations. I could also address the three key projects rolling along that will now take us to another level of traffic management. Speaking of traffic management maybe I should mention the effort being placed on Transportation System Management & Operations. One of the best events to happen this month is that.....we may finally be getting a new car! No, seriously.....you must understand that our 14-year old Chevy Cavalier is on its last legs!!! Dash is cracked/caved-in, somewhat weird/eerie noises from the tires, seats that fit you like a baseball mitt due to no padding and 140,000 miles of wear and tear. Really? Who would have thought that a Chevy Cavalier could get over 100,000 miles without breaking into a thousand pieces?

Actually, I should touch on one of the most exciting pieces of news to occur this month. Central Office contacted District Two in mid-October to let us know the funding has been released for an I-75 deployment in Alachua County. The money will be tight so I decided to utilize the System Manager approach to stretch out the dollars. Central Office is providing design support through the State ITS GEC, Atkins. FDOT is purchasing the ITS equipment directly from Qualified vendors using the State APL contract. The City of Gainesville Traffic Signals Office has stepped up to the plate by providing staff who will inventory, test, assemble, configure and integrate the ITS equipment. The

current task is to develop a design that works north from the Marion County Line through the City of Gainesville until all the money is spent. We are also asked to design an ITS deployment along State Road 441 that envelops the Paynes Prairie area.

The design will incorporate DMS, CCTV cameras, Vehicle detectors and Visibility Sensors within the limits of the project. Our initial goal is to complete an I-75 deployment from one-mile south of Micanopy to one-mile north of State Road 121, as well as between the south and north ends of State Road 441 in Paynes Prairie. We have decided to incorporate a hybrid system of wireless and fiber to stretch the funds. At the moment it looks possible to expand the project past State Road 24 and possibly up to State Road 26. All of this is dependent on the status of contractors. Over the past year the ITS industry has turned very competitive with bids coming in at 20% below my initial estimates. My staff and I analyzed the situation and feel that the work and Department standards have become so commonplace that contractors have learned to trim the fat to deliver deployments. Two pay items that probably have been significantly reduced involve mobilization and MOT. Contractors have realized that the standard 10% rate will prevent them from winning jobs so they are figuring out ways to provide realistic pricing for these services. We hope to complete the design by early spring with a push for Letting in late June. This will be tough since realistically it should take one year from design to construction on a project but we are in the “attack mode” at the moment.

Another major milestone is advertisement and short-list of the RTMC Architect. The Department of Management Services (DMS) is



### **NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED**

providing the Project Manager for this job but we are working side-by-side with their staff. Four firms have been short-listed and will be interviewed in mid-November. We received submittals from 17 well qualified firms but the four selected for interview were just a cut above the rest. DMS has also begun the advertisement process for the CM@Risk firm. We anticipate that they should be on-board by the time 30% plans are being completed. DMS runs a tight ship so I am confident we can meet their schedule of 24 months until the completion of this project. As a refresher, this will be a 25,000 square foot facility that will have FHP Duty Officers, FDOT Operations staff, JSO Dispatchers, JFRD dispatchers and City of Jacksonville traffic signal staff under one roof. The facility will also include room for North Florida TPO staff. We were able to accomplish the latter by creating joint use space and value engineering in the preliminary design. I anticipate that once this project gets to high gear there will be little to no sleep for us as we try to keep up with DMS's pace.

A unique development during the past month was in-depth discussion about Transportation System Management and Operations (TSM&O) in the State of Florida. The City of Jacksonville is ready for this new venture based on the ITS and Signal infrastructure in place at this point in time. The communication infrastructure is there, the partnerships are stronger than anywhere else in Florida, the equipment is ready n' waiting and the new RTMC will be the final piece of the puzzle. In the NFTPO section I will address some of the components that will make this happen in the next year. During a video conference in mid-October it was determined that there were several components of TSM&O that needed to be under "one umbrella" in order to make this a successful effort. The Central Office ITS GEC was tasked with helping TSM&O

committee members determine what existing programs would fall under this umbrella as well as any new programs that may need to be created. The target is that by spring 2013 a TSM&O Strategic Plan will be in place to guide the Department in the coming years.

As for the Activu video wall controller all I can say is "WOW!" This technology will take the Incident Management program to another level in the coming year and I'd be surprised if we are able to master just half its capabilities in that time. The Collaboration feature they provide will enable us to share snapshots, video, maps and SunGuide data anywhere in the Country with just a few clicks. Likewise, we will be able to manage on the fly with the Whiteboard feature so that a multitude of partners can be on the same page when a plan of action needs to be adjusted. For example, let's say a Tropical Storm event hits north Florida and I-10 is flooded, so FHP needs to close the road. Primarily, we would use our diversion route maps to detour around the closure, right? Now, imagine if Ed Ward called us to say the EOC has learned State Road 90 and US 301 were also closed due to flooding. At that point a new plan of action needs to be developed immediately but this may involve multiple calls and coordination. With the Activu system and whiteboard feature we can now communicate, draw out and implement a plan in a matter of minutes.

On a final note I want to mention that we will soon be getting a new member to our ITS team in North Florida. Metric Engineering has hired Diana Rivas, P.E., to assist with TMC Operations and she will begin in the month of November. The highlight area of this month's newsletter will provide some insight into Diana thereby giving everyone the chance to say "Stop! Whoa! Send her back to South Florida!"

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### **NORTH FLORIDA TPO**

The North Florida TPO projects are still being churned out at a steady rate. The Arterial Dynamic Message Sign contractor, TCD, is beginning to put the infrastructure in place and have been coordinating with us on the wireless device that will be used for this project. DRMP has nearly completed the design for the JaxPort connectivity project that will tie us into the freight communication network. The Jacksonville International Airport connection project should begin actual construction in the next month. As mentioned previously, the RTMC project funded through the NFTPO should begin design in a few months and Construction is expected to begin by next October.

Some milestones are that we have installed BlueToad devices in Nassau County along State Road 200. We have confirmed that the devices can be pinged on their network and are waiting for the Nassau County IT Department to adjust the firewall so that data can be retrieved from our network. Once this is complete we will be able to collect travel times, roadway speeds and origin/destination information from commuters who live between Amelia Island and I-95 in Nassau County. This is exciting news that will be complemented by the planned deployment of BlueToad devices along State Road 21 in Clay County. Once the SR 21 deployment is finished we will be able to determine the impact on traffic that St. Johns, Clay and Nassau commuters have on Jacksonville's transportation network.

Another bit of great news is that the wireless device along Beach Boulevard was installed the last week of October. This means that we can now communicate with traffic controllers, CCTV cameras and BlueToad devices from Ponte Vedra to Mayport. There are still some slight adjustments that need to be made, however this valuable information will allow us to address any signal timing issues in this area. It will also be

helpful to Milton Locklear at the NFTPO because this information can be incorporated into his models, thereby telling us what type of impact the Beach community has on the "townie" side of the bridges.

I'd be remiss if I did not mention that a key partner with the ITS Coalition has recently retired. FHP Captain Grady Carrick will be leaving FHP by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Grady was a valuable asset to the NFTPO and Coalition because he always thought outside the box and presented projects that were not only valuable but also put North Florida on the nation's transportation map. His leadership during the creation of the TIME4Safty video has spread the knowledge of our Incident Management program throughout the country and into other parts of the Globe. Grady was also very valuable in coordinating several TIM partners who participated in the Bridge Wind Sensor deployment funded by the NFTPO.

I had the chance to attend Grady's retirement party and was amazed by the number of attendees. Several high ranking officials were in attendance that afternoon and each had a personal story to share. I did not take the mic that day but feel I need to share my "Grady" moment in this newsletter. One weekend I was visiting my mom in Orlando. On this trip my wife asked if I could swing by IKEA and pick up a few items. Since "yes, honey" is the safe response I decided to swing by IKEA just after lunch with the hope of getting in and out within a few minutes (for those of you that have never been there, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE to ever accomplish a quick trip at IKEA. There are way too many neat things to look at).

Anyway, when I arrived I had to hit the restroom first before I journeyed through this huge warehouse. As I was headed to the door this



### **NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued**

little boy kept on running here and there, running away from his parents. I began to dodge him the best I could until his dad got a grip on him. When I looked up it was Grady and his wife with their oldest son. I could tell Grady had his hands full that afternoon so I just commended him on his ability to keep up with the little Tyro. About a year later, I had the same situation and same reason for having to go to IKEA. Guess who I ran into? Yep, however this time Grady had command of the situation so there was no more dodging on my part. It sort of became a ritual that whenever I go to IKEA I always keep an eye out for the Grady clan just so I can catch-up on his family life.

Grady has been a dedicated partner to the Department and NFTPO but he won't be missed too long. His knowledge and abilities are too valuable so I am sure I will work with him soon while in his "Civvies." Not surprising, but when word got out that Grady was retiring I received calls from a number of consultants throughout the State wanting to get my insight on his plans. I did not have a clue but learned soon after that he declined all offers. When the consultants followed-up with calls to me to see if I knew why all I could say was maybe he needs a little time to decide. In reality, in the back of my mind I thought "geez" he's probably got his hands full with three youngsters now and just wants to take a while to relax and enjoy his family! Godspeed Grady!!!

Pete Vega  
District 2 ITS Engineer



### **CONSTRUCTION**

The contractor for the Phase 7 Project on the I-295 East Beltway, starting at Atlantic Boulevard and going North to the I-95 Interchange, has been testing conduits and ordering materials. They have found a few areas where the conduit was not completed or was broken and as they find these areas they install new conduit to make the conduit runs complete. They anticipate that within the next several weeks they will begin setting both the CCTV and MVDS poles and completing the conduit runs to the poles. The Contractor is also working with JEA to ensure that all of the power services are complete and ready for connection to JEA for power.

The Phase 8 Project, on the I-295 West Beltway from I-10 to the I-95 North Interchange, is progressing well. The contractor has installed all of the CCTV poles and is beginning to install the CCTV cabinets on the poles. They are also installing the fiber optic cable drops from the main fiber backbone to the poles. Installation of the MVDS poles is expected to be completed in a few weeks along with the MVDS cabinets. Testing is anticipated to begin by the end of the year and project acceptance is anticipated in the Spring of 2013.

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. Bids were received from potential contractors on September 26<sup>th</sup> and pending any protests the contract will be awarded to the lowest bidder, which was American Lighting and Signalization.

The Phillips Highway (US 1) Project, on US1 from Greenland Road going north to Wishart Road, is nearing completion. The Contractor has been experiencing some issues with two of their CCTV cameras and believes that the issues may be resolved. Once the system is working correctly, the testing will begin and project

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**CONSTRUCTION continued**

acceptance will be granted following successful completion of the testing.

The Arterial Dynamic Message Sign (ADMS) Project is installing ADMS on several of the major local roadways around the southern portion of Jacksonville along I-95. These signs will be used to provide traffic information about the local roadway as well as I-95. The contractor is currently directional boring conduit under the roadways and driveways and once completed with directional boring will begin installing the conduit along the roadways. This project is scheduled to be completed by summer of 2013.

Two additional ITS Projects are going to be under contract in Jacksonville by the end of the year. One of the projects will install fiber optic cable along Airport Road to provide communications connectivity between FDOT and Jacksonville International Airport. Bids were received from potential contractors on September 26<sup>th</sup> and pending any protests, the contract will be awarded to the lowest bidder, which was American Lighting. The other project will install new devices and fiber optic cable within the I-10/I-95 Interchange area. This project is scheduled to receive bids in late October and be awarded in November.

An ITS Project has recently been funded in Gainesville along I-75 from Micanopy (CR 234) going North to SR 121 (Williston Road) and on US 441 in the area of Payne's Prairie. This project will install fiber optic cable, Dynamic Message Signs, CCTVs, and vehicle detectors along the I-75 portion as well as visibility sensors on I-75 in the Payne's Prairie portion. The US 441 portion of the project will include Arterial Dynamic Message Signs and CCTVs on the North and South end of Payne's Prairie, a CCTV in the middle of Payne's Prairie, and visibility sensors on each of the CCTV poles to monitor both north and south of their location.

The design for this project started at the end of the month and is expected to take several months for the plans to be created as well as the utility coordination and permitting. Construction is scheduled for 2014.

John Kell  
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager



Example of Arterial DMS Showing travel times



Example of one brand of visibility sensor



## MAINTENANCE

The ITS Maintenance Section conducted a fiber splicing training this month. Members of the ITS Group were invited to the training to learn more about fiber optic cables and how the individual fibers are spliced together. Fiber optic strands are smaller than a human hair and made of glass, so not only is it difficult to splice, but fragile as well. The ITS Maintenance Section recently purchased specialized equipment to enable personnel to splice fibers efficiently and effectively. The photo below shows the splicing machine as seen through a magnifying glass.



Even with the use of the magnifying glass it is difficult to see the individual fiber strand that is about to be spliced. If you look very closely you may be able to see a small white line in the blue area just below the reflection, in the red oval. This is the fiber that is about to be spliced. The fiber splicing machine fuses the two fiber strands together by the intense heat that is produced by the machine. Once fused together, the fiber strands can pass information over the splice with very little loss of signal strength. Once the fiber is spliced it is protected by a small piece of rubber tubing, which is melted in place over the splice to protect it. By having this machine and the associated equipment to perform fusion splicing, the ITS Maintenance section can now respond to fiber breaks in the field immediately, instead of having to wait on a fiber technician

from the Contractor. This will provide faster response times to ensure the repair is completed as quickly as possible to get the ITS Network operational and providing important traffic information to the motoring public. This is just one more piece of the puzzle to ensuring maximum benefit to the travelers and commuters in the Jacksonville area.

The ITS Maintenance Contractor, Traffic Control Devices (TCD), has been working on upgrading and replacing the grounding systems for ITS devices on the section of I-95 north of I-10. As detailed in the last Newsletter, the portion of the system south of I-10 was upgraded last year and as a result there were fewer lightning related device outages on that portion of the system throughout the summer lightning season. Once completed, all sections of the ITS Network will have grounding less than 5 years old, which should mean that we will see even fewer lightning related damage next summer.

TCD also spent a few weeks of this month installing a new fiber optic cable to connect the main network fiber cable on I-95 at Emerson Street to a Level 3 facility on US 1. Level 3 is a company which provides communications services to customers throughout the US through its own network of fiber optic cables and the leasing of others fiber cables. In this case, the ITS Section is going to connect to the Lambda Rail fiber, which has fibers residing in the Level 3 facility, in order to connect to the City of Gainesville's Traffic Management Network. Lambda Rail is an organization which provides fiber optic cable connections to Florida Colleges, Universities and Government agencies. By utilizing the Lambda Rail fiber, the FDOT District 2 TMC and Gainesville TMC will be connected by a high speed/high bandwidth connection to be able to share data and video between the agencies. This is especially important to

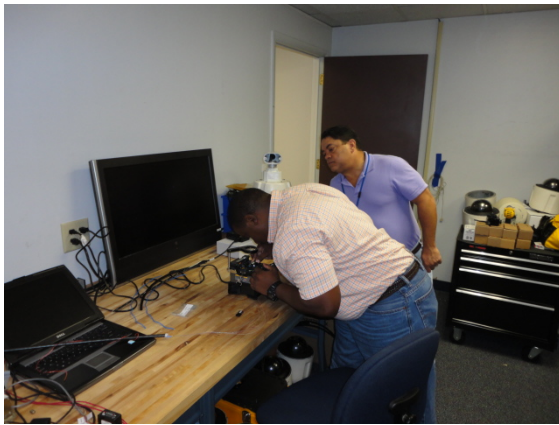
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## MAINTENANCE

motorists in the Gainesville area because the Gainesville TMC does not have the funding to monitor their CCTV cameras and signals on a full-time basis. So, after hours on weekends and holidays, the FDOT District 2 TMC will take control of the Gainesville TMC Network and be able to monitor the streets of Gainesville for traffic incidents and post messages to 511. It is also important, because as you will find out in the Construction Section of this Newsletter, there is a new project, which has recently been funded for an ITS Project on I-75 and US 441 in the Gainesville/Payne's Prairie area.

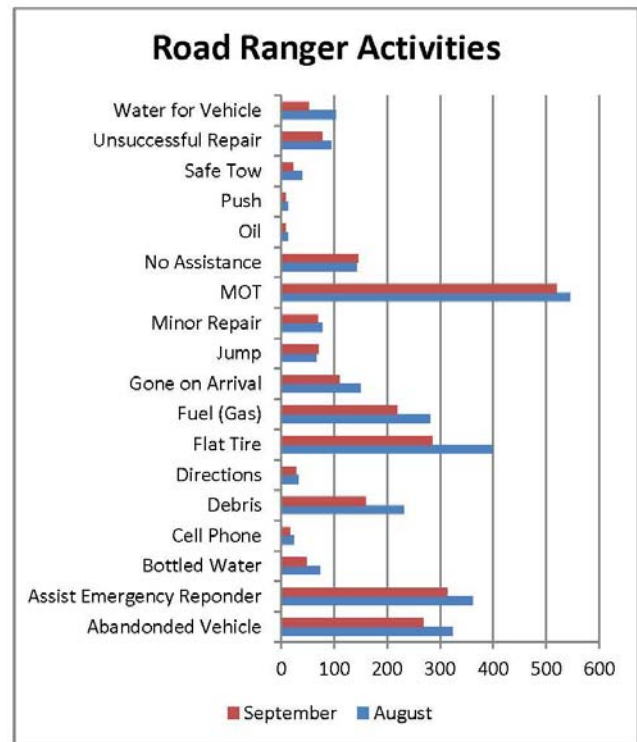
Kevin Jackson  
ITS Field Specialist



Kevin Jackson and Pete Vega testing out the splicing equipment

## ROAD RANGER UPDATE

Over 6,200 activities were performed by the Road Rangers in August, but in September the Road Rangers performed a little less than 5,000. The decrease in activities performed by the Road Rangers seems to coincide with the amount of rain. Several inches of rain fell in August, but September was a bit drier. School also began in August, overlapping tourist traffic that is usually quite high that month. The following chart shows a comparison of the primary activities handled by the Road Rangers in August and September.







**ROAD RANGER UPDATE continued**

Road Ranger sponsor JaxLegal.com renewed their contract for another year. There are other potential candidates to be sponsors for the Road Rangers, but no firm commitments have been made yet since it is the beginning of their fiscal year.

Optic Cable from CR 234 going North to SR 121 on I-75. This deployment is a result of a recent study by the University of Central Florida, which rated this area as the worst stretch of Interstate in the State, in regards to fog, which was not already instrumented with ITS.

**RISC – Rapid Incident Scene Clearance – Update**

Fortunately for motorists, no RISC events have been activated since the last newsletter. Though, our RISC contractors – Southern Wrecker, Walt’s Wrecker, Johns Towing and Recovery, and University Towing – are ready to respond when needed.

**D2 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.

**FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The next First Coast Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team meeting will be held November 13 at 10:00 AM at the FDOT Training Center at 2198 Edison Avenue. The purpose of the TIM meetings is to discuss recent accidents/incidents and to work together as a team to improve incident management. These meetings also provide an opportunity for all to be updated on construction projects, emergency operations, and ITS projects.

**D2 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 Danson  
District 2 ITS Program Manager

**ALACHUA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The Alachua Traffic Incident Team met on October 10<sup>th</sup> in the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office. Pete Vega discussed a new ITS Deployment that has been approved for the Gainesville area.

The ITS installation will install DMS, CCTVs, Visibility Sensors, Vehicle Detectors and Fiber





**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

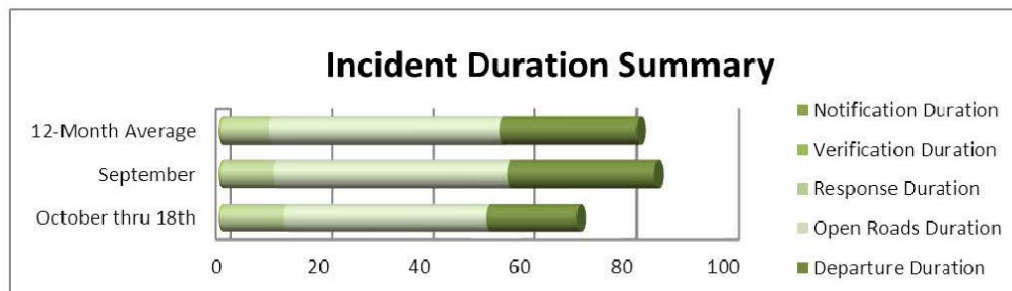
Crashes were up in August with an average of over 200 each week. September was much better with an average of about 180 crashes per week, but October has reached a weekly average even lower than the yearly average, with only about 150 crashes each week so far in the month. It is likely that summer travelers on the roads in August combined with an onslaught of school traffic mixed to create fertile ground for crashes. The decrease in crashes in September shows that most of the out-of-towners must have left town already, and local drivers were more accustomed to the traffic patterns of the new school year. Now in October, we have had much less rain and everyone should be thoroughly accustomed to their commute. The next couple months will likely bring a different story once traffic builds up and traffic patterns change during the holidays.

Ironically though, the number of congestion events each week has actually been a bit higher in October than it was in August and September. Here again, familiarity and a knowledge of what to expect may play a key role in why the number of crashes did not increase with the congestion.

When drivers are informed, they can make better decisions about their speed or other traffic maneuvers, such as when they decide to merge into another lane. So knowing that they are going to face congestion on the road helps them make a better decision, whether because they have been experiencing that pattern themselves for the last few weeks or were alerted through the 511 system. This highlights the value of accurately informing motorists through such tools as the Dynamic Message Signs, 511 phone system, 511 app, and 511 traffic alerts.

Another positive trend these last few weeks is that the Open Roads, Roadway Clearance and Incident Clearance durations have all been shorter in October than in September and in comparison with the monthly average for the year. One reason may be the fact that there has been much less rain this month than the last few months. So the severity of the crashes and the complication of clearance caused by rain was not a factor this month. The following charts show the performance measures data for September, October and the average of the last twelve months.

	12-Month Average	September	October thru 18th
Open Roads Duration	45.6	46.2	40.1
Departure Duration	26.9	28.8	17.8
Roadway Clearance Duration	55.4	56.9	52.8
Incident Clearance Duration	82.3	85.7	70.6





### OPERATIONS

Beginning this September, I transitioned from Operator to Supervisor. Truthfully, it had been a hard road to make the transfer as I had applied for open positions three times before. Each time crushed under the boot of Ryan Crist. Needless to say, it was discouraging and, at times, trying.

In hindsight, most professional operations do not want a 24 year old with an “attitude” leading and representing their organizations. Hey, I'm comfortable enough, I can say it. But, I put in the work and grew as both an operator and as a person. I dropped much of the attitude and pushed on. Perseverance or stubbornness, you make the call. Finally, with a new contract came a new opportunity. This time, feeling truly ready and capable, I applied. Lucky for TMC Management, they made the right decision and moved forward with myself as supervisor. A choice that I personally believe helped solidify the Metric bid. Yes, Metric had already won the bid but I don't let that fact ruin my fantasy.

Thus, I begin my journey into management. The first thing that hit me, and I assume most others who cross over, is the brand new set of problems I encountered. I really thought I knew most, if not all of the major issues faced when running Florida's best Traffic Management Center. I was wrong. What I first thought would be watching over staff and making sure protocols were followed soon became filing LogicTree trouble tickets, scheduling nightmares, many quality checks on our operators, lots of training, and more. Starting off, it was daunting but like anything else, with exposure it passes. To be honest, at this point it's a little fun. I come into work and am presented a challenge.

This also led to my major revelation. There are a lot more comments from the staff than I ever thought. Some good, some bad, some relevant

and some not so much. All in all, just a lot of comments/complaints/concerns. It never really occurred to me that so many different personalities produced so many different opinions. Then it got me thinking, was I a pester to Ryan, or Derrick, or Santos? Nah, couldn't be. All my comments/complaints/concerns were well timed and completely valid.

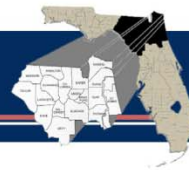
I do have to admit, the one thing I have not gotten used to is being on call. It's not a hassle, by any means. It doesn't even bother me. It does however, take some time to get used to 3am phone calls. Now keep in mind, I am a deep sleeper, which makes it that much more awkward. I don't think anything can prepare one for that. I'm slowly adjusting after a few missteps including sending incoherent emails to supervisors and sleep talking to an operator. Actually, I feel bad for our operators. They probably suffer the most in that.

So that is what I've learned in the past month. It has been both fun and challenging. I just keep trucking and remember the words from the immortal Sean Payton; “Do your job”.

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,

**“Know Before You Go! Dial 511”.**

**Jesse Gilmour**  
**TMC Supervisor (finally)**



### **MARKETING**

We've reached that magical season in Florida we affectionately refer to as "flip flops and hoodie" weather - cold in the morning yet unbearably hot by noontime. We layer ourselves in clothing only to shed like molting lizards once the sun clears the last of the palm trees. And nowhere else was this more evident than the Sea and Sky Spectacular in Jacksonville Beach the weekend of October 20 and 21<sup>st</sup>. Visitors braved traffic jams and road construction projects in order to stake out prime viewing spots along our area Beaches. Our 511 Team members combed the beach the week before the big show to make sure our 511 brochures were easily accessible to residents and visitors alike. Thanks to our friends at the Beaches Library, the City of Jacksonville Beach, the City of Neptune Beach, the City of Atlantic Beach and the Ponte Vedra Chamber of Commerce, 511 was well represented. And the show did not disappoint either. The Blue Angels as well as a host of other aerial performers took the skies in a dazzling display of skill, speed and acrobatics. This was definitely a weekend to remember!

Our 511 team also had the privilege of visiting the Stein Mart headquarters in downtown Jacksonville on October 10<sup>th</sup>. This event is by invitation only and vendors who secure a coveted spot at their annual Benefits Fair work hard to remain in good standing with the company. At the conclusion of the event, I am happy to say we received a personal phone call along with a follow-up thank you note in the mail, asking if we'd *please* consider attending the event again in 2013. Apparently, our prize wheel was a big hit! And motorists were delighted to hear about all the available options 511 has to offer on their busy commutes into the office. One sweet lady even told me she drives all the way in from Gainesville five times a week, and that 511 has saved her more times than she can count! (especially on that stretch of I-10 that runs between US 301 and I-295)

And finally, we're rounding out the month with a visit to Transpo. This year's convention will be held in beautiful Bonita Springs on the southwest coast of Florida. We can't wait to share with you in next month's newsletter all the exciting ideas and innovations that are brought to the table. We're certainly excited about sharing the latest features of the 511 system, our Road Ranger SPARR application, as well as our new Activu Video Wall controller with transportation officials from around the globe!

As always, we welcome your comments, thoughts and suggestions. Remember, know before you go! Log onto [www.FL511.com](http://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."

***Know before you go and keep moving!***

Sherri Byrd  
Marketing Manager



[www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com)



## FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Diana Rivas, the newest member of our ITS staff, set to begin work with Metric Engineering's Jacksonville Office on November 1st. I had the opportunity to meet Diana several weeks ago and was extremely impressed with her credentials. Since Diana passed my "litmus test" I thought I'd share some information about her as an ice breaker in case you are ever involved with the ITS office on an assignment in the coming months.

Diana was born in Bogota, Colombia, where she was raised until the age of 15. On her 15th birthday she was under the impression that Mom and Dad were sending her to Florida so that she could get to know Mickey Mouse. Diana expected that this was some sort of a present but "surprise, surprise!" she was actually sent to permanently live with her oldest aunt in Ft. Lauderdale. Fortunately for Diana her mom, dad and younger brother joined her two years later.

Diana attended JP Taravella High School in Coral Springs. After graduating she started to work in the insurance industry as an agent. She was servicing all types of insurance lines and policies for at least 6 years, however her family pushed her to pursue her dreams in order to become a better woman each and every day. Diana loves her family dearly, but especially her Mom who has always supported her and encouraged Diana to reach for the stars.

When Diana was in middle school she developed a keen interest in science and biology. She grew up thinking one day she would become a general practice physician to help others and look after their well being. Little did she know that very shortly after reading the "patients inform consent" document for her brother's appendix surgery she was going to faint in the prep room and thereby decided that the medical field was definitely not for her.

Engineering was next on her list, but then again the dilemma..... Which discipline of engineering should she choose?? Diana had to thank the Florida Atlantic University (FAU) dean of Civil engineering, Mr. Scarlatos, for guiding her and expanding her views into the fields of engineering. Diana graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering in 2006. She was lucky enough to experience the private world of Civil Engineering at DRMP and the public sector world with Palm Beach County. Diana recently passed the P.E. exam and is now registered in the State of Florida. Six years after graduation Diana finds herself in the historical city of Jacksonville.... opening new doors, expanding her horizons and hopefully getting to know some great people.

Many of you are thinking right now...."I want more info!" To appease the masses I ran Diana through a gamut of questions that will give you some insight into the person you will soon get to know. For instance, she has a small dog named Muñeko (this means doll in English). Muñeko



Diana Rivas, enjoying life in Brugge, Belgium

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### FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

is the love of her life and best friend in the world. Diana takes great care in watching over her baby since he has epileptic seizures on occasion. She keeps a keen eye on Muñeko and tries to get home during the lunch hour to check on him. Fortunately for Muñeko his mother has ceased her routine of dressing him up and sneaking him around in her purse. Thank goodness now that Halloween is just around the corner!

While speaking with Diana I asked what would be considered her most embarrassing experience while working in the Transportation Industry. She mentioned a time when she was performing a field inspection during her stint with DRMP. Apparently she had a misstep, fell in a ditch that she thought wasn't that deep and ended up in water near her hips. Luckily, she was wearing jeans and sneakers at the time. I had to laugh because after 19 years in the Department I often amaze myself when the same thing does not happen to me. Just the other month I tried to cross a ditch that I thought was dry. I figured it was an easy 8 foot jump but forgot that I am no longer the athlete I once was, so...yep....knee deep in mud as I sank in the middle of the ditch. I'll take a ditch full of water any day of the week!

In digging a little deeper I learned that Diana's Dad has most of his family in the US. Conversely, most of her Mom's family is in Colombia. What is unique is that her Dad's family has a lifestyle that is mainly focused on careers while her Mom's family is focused on unity and family relationships. This drew a comparison to my family in Puerto Rico who put blood relatives above anything else in the world. Diana goes to Colombia about once a year to visit cousins and friends. These visits expose

her to the most important thing in life for her. This would be love, family and friendship.

I asked Diana about the transportation situation in Colombia. She said that Colombia has very congested roads similar to New York City. Ironically, the loan industry is so good there that most families can afford two to three cars. Maybe this is the reason the US Auto Industry bounced back so well the past couple of years!?! Diana said that it's expected most of Colombia's main roads will turn into a parking lot in the next few years. Think ITS may be needed there soon? If so, bet I know the first candidate to jump on a plane to help out. Pretty certain that we'd have to pry Diana's fingers from the wing of the plane if she weren't allowed to go. Ironically, they do not have commuter rail but do have larger commuter buses that have dedicated lanes. She said that most times every bus is filled to capacity with no seats to spare. I mentioned to her that Puerto Rico has a similar program then realized "hey, maybe this is a Latin thing?"

I'll end it by providing my two cents on this new addition to the District Two ITS program. From what I gathered Diana is high spirited, compassionate, driven, focused and open minded. Making friends seems easy to her and reaching for the moon is not much of a challenge since she's aiming for the stars. I have already mentioned that there will be an extensive learning curve because I'm an Ogre to work for but I think she'll survive. Did I mention I think she's thick skinned as well? In any case, please welcome Ms. Diana Rivas to the District Two ITS family the first time you meet her. I promise that she won't bite (however, I can't say the same about Muñeko).

Pete Vega



**PHOTO GALLERY**



Alachua Traffic Incident Management Meeting, October 10<sup>th</sup>.



The 511 Team was honored to be invited by SteinMart to take part in their annual benefits fair.



***ITS Calendar of Upcoming Events***

**TRANSP0-2012**

**OCTOBER 28-31, 2012**

**HYATT REGENCY COCONUT POINT, BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA**

**FIRST COAST TIM MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup>- 10:00 a.m.**

**FDOT URBAN OFFICE TRAINING CENTER – 2198 EDISON AVENUE- JACKSONVILLE 904-360-5400**



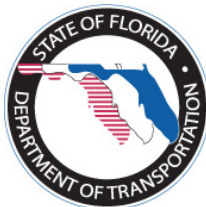
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