

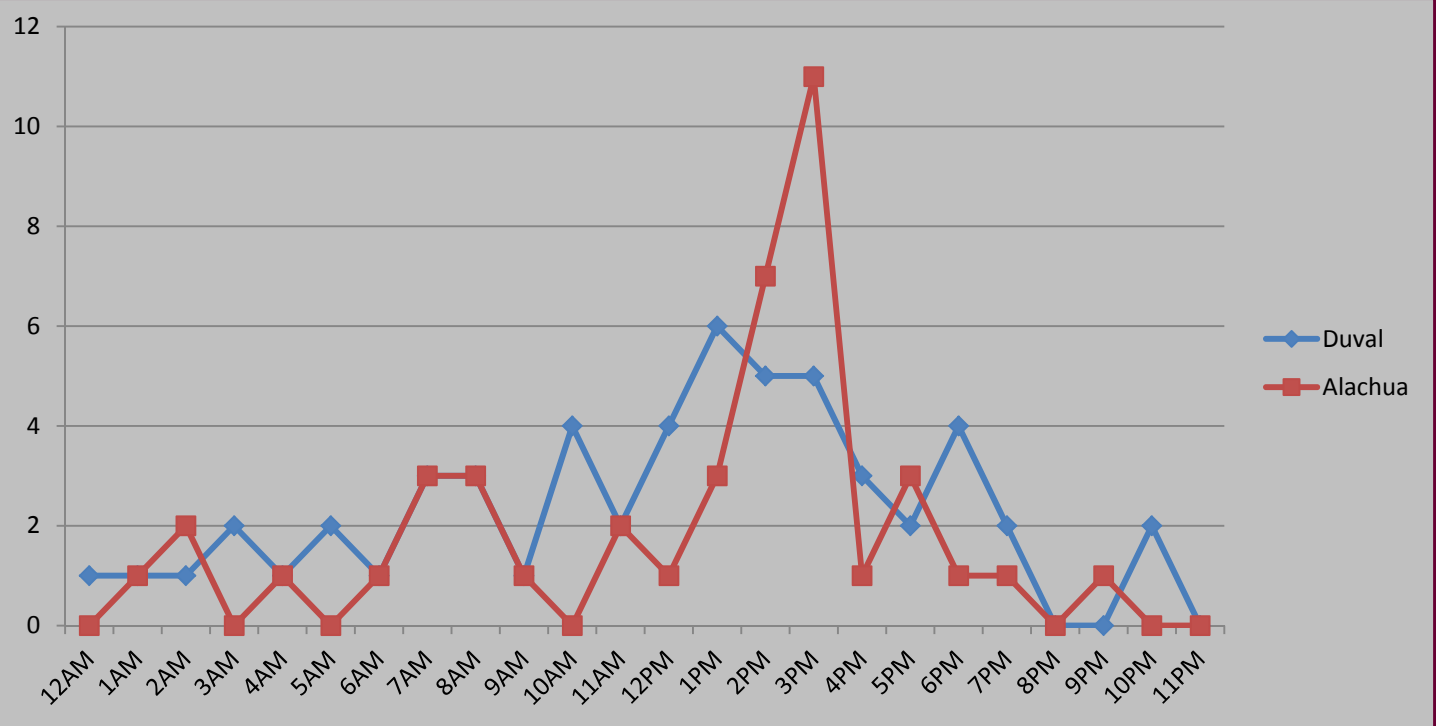
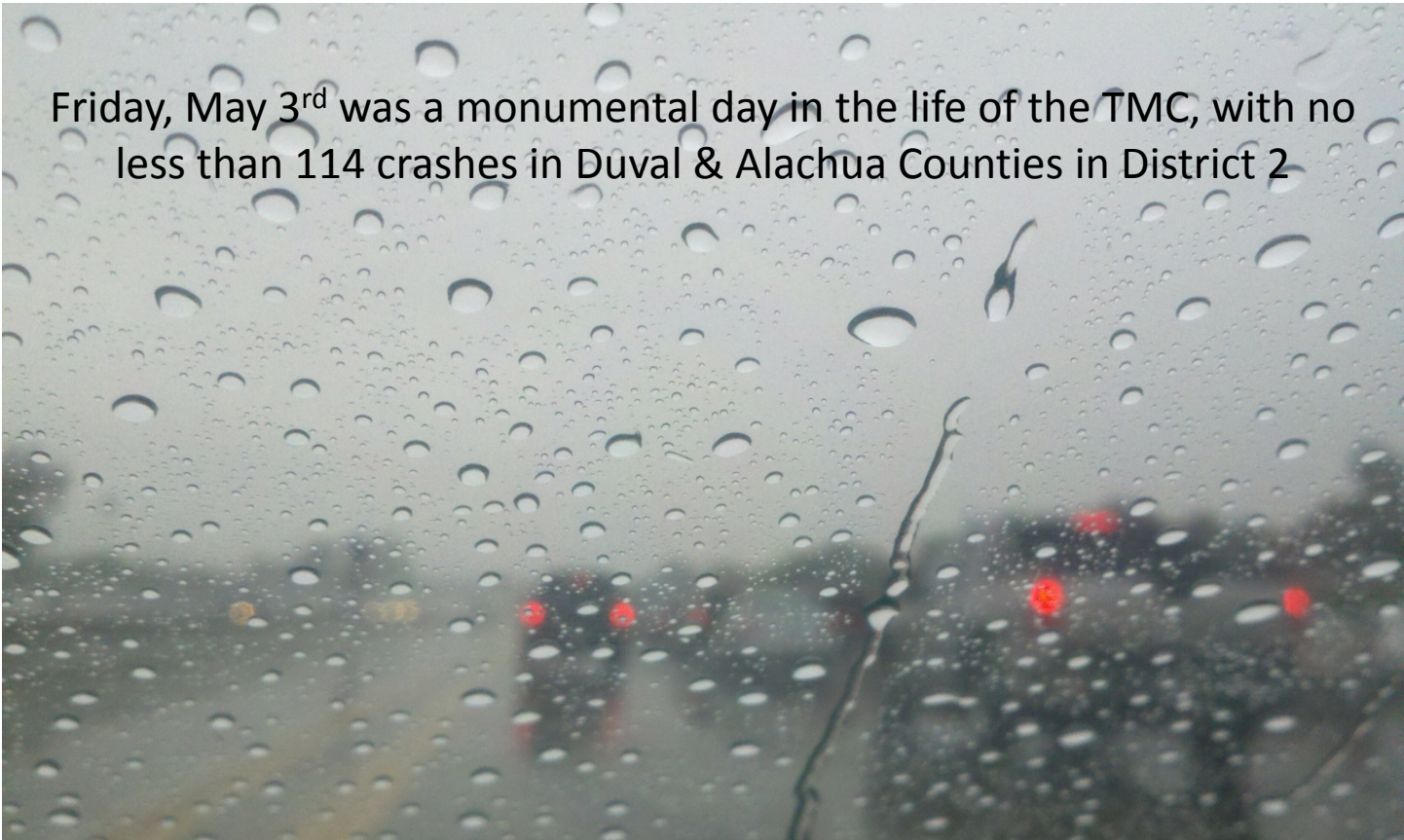


DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



May 2013 Issue 67

Friday, May 3rd was a monumental day in the life of the TMC, with no less than 114 crashes in Duval & Alachua Counties in District 2





NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER

I want to begin by saying that I hope everyone had a very safe and relaxing Memorial Day weekend. Hopefully everyone took a moment to share their gratitude for U.S. military personnel and those that lost their lives in battle to protect our freedoms. Whether at a parade, church or privately, the acknowledgement that these brave men and women dedicated themselves in support of the U.S. Constitution is something we should never take for granted. After several trips to foreign lands I consider myself lucky to call the United States of America my home. This country is a place where freedom is the driving force behind our solidarity and something that could not be achieved without the strength of our military forces.

Now it's time for some interesting ITS news for the month of May. Let's begin with Friday, May 3rd, the day that is now remembered as "What the Heck Is Going on Day!" If you recall, that was the day we had heavy rains come in from the Atlantic Ocean that headed west across most of District Two. The "fun" started bright and early that morning as accidents began piling up (no pun intended☺) throughout our Interstate System. The final count for the day was 70 accidents along I-10, I-95, I-295 east beltway and I-295 west beltway. To get a feel for a normal day we average about 15 accidents during the non-rainy season.

But remember!!! I just gave you the events for the Jacksonville area and did not even mention the western half of our District Two region. On I-75 we saw similar results as the accidents peaked to 44 that day. A normal non-rainy season day would involve about 3 accidents. To make it worse, many of these were not your normal fender benders that pulled off on the shoulder and generated rubber-necked traffic. Instead, several involved multiple lane or

roadway closures due to the number of vehicles involved. I can assure you that our Roadway Maintenance staff and FHP earned their keep on this day! What impressed me the most was the level-headedness maintained by our TMC Operators, the JRCC Duty Officers and all the Supervisors involved. I don't think they've juggled this much since the days when their checkbooks held a balance of less than \$10.

Ironically, this had to be the day that our "greenest" TMC Supervisor was on duty. Mr. James Speed has less than four months under his belt as a TMC Supervisor yet he was tasked with being the TMC "conductor" for utilizing all the tools and resources we had available. Ryan and I provided as much support as possible but felt this would be a good time to see if James would "sink or swim". I can proudly say that he didn't drown and he would have given Mark Spitz a run for his money! I am guessing that on the evening of May 3rd he slept like a baby because he looked so worn out by the end of the day. Think he's a keeper?

The following week you'd think there'd be time to recover but I think you would be sorely mistaken. This was TPC week! It's one of the biggest events of the year in Jacksonville and our program had the chance to play a major role in providing information on traffic/parking resources. On May 7th we held a 511 outreach media day at the Jacksonville TMC in partnership with the Central Office Marketing firm, Global Five. We had all five local television news stations present (WJXT, FOX, CBS, ABC and NBC), print media and radio that morning. When I say morning I mean **EARLY MORNING** since television news staff set up before the break of dawn for their morning broadcasts. TMC Supervisory and Marketing personnel had to be at the office by 3:30 AM that morning to let



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED

the media set-up their equipment. By 4:30 AM the “show” began and it did not end until around 8:15 AM.

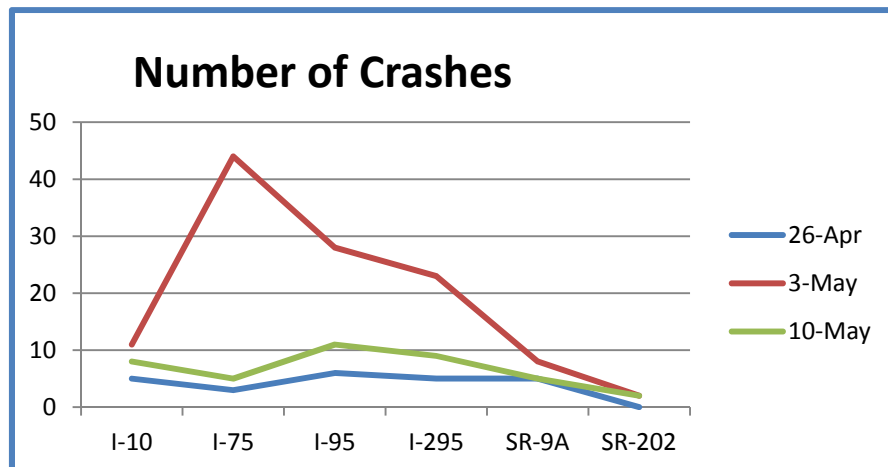
Christie from Global Five and our Marketing Manager, Sherri Byrd, did an awesome job for this event! They coordinated with other agency staff like the TPC Chairperson, FHP and St. Johns County Sheriff who could provide guidance on tournament traffic plans for motorists. Once everyone got into the groove it appeared that we put on quite a show. We were spitting out information left and right to traffic reporters from all the TV stations. There was never a dull moment and by 8:00 AM it was time to say good-bye. I had a feeling this was going to be a positive event when I walked up to the loading dock area and saw three vans with antennae reaching way out into the sky. I never expected it to flow so smoothly though and it’s all because of Christie and Sherri.

Since many of you know me to be “greedy”, “thrifty” and “frugal” you shouldn’t be surprised that I plugged the 511 and Road Ranger program each spare second we had available during the media day. By the time they left

each station committed to doing stories on our program more frequently. They did not blink when I asked for at least 4 stories per year from each of them. Also didn’t hurt when I mentioned more surprises were ahead with some upcoming deployments. The goal was to solidify a long established relationship that’s seen its ups and downs over the past 11 years. Most of it was mainly due to TV stations struggling with their budgets and our inability to give them a poke in the belly every once in a while due to scheduling constraints. My objective is to change all of that before the new RTMC is completed so that they can see the true value of the ITS program when dealing with traffic management.

Again, I hope everyone had a wonderful Memorial Day weekend! Please be careful during your summer months of driving. It seems like some individuals take an early vacation to la-la land while maneuvering their vehicles this time of the year and the accidents end up being worse than the norm. Defensive driving is your only recourse.

Pete Vega
District 2 ITS Engineer





NORTH FLORIDA TPO

The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO) projects are transitioning towards some final completions. Final acceptance of the Philips Highway and Airport Road projects are weeks away. The Arterial Dynamic Message Sign project should be “rubber stamped” by early August. There are also projects that are beginning like the interconnection to Jaxport facilities and deployment of upgraded signal cabinets, CCTV cameras and fiber along US 17 in Clay County. There are still several BlueToad devices that need to be deployed and several bridge wind sensors that need their annual check-up, but all in all we are hitting our marks prior to completion of the new RTMC.

As for the Regional Transportation Management Center the site plan is being completed and the latest schematic should be provided to us very soon. Some recent changes incorporated potential staffing growth due to managed lanes, toll roads and TSM&O assignments. The overall size of the RTMC will be around 25,000 square feet with 5,000 square feet of this being space for NFTPO staff who will now be able to oversee the performance of our transportation system on a day-to-day basis. I recently spoke with personnel at Jacksonville Fire and Rescue about communication concerns involving incidents. They felt that we needed to improve and once I went over the Concept of Operations for the new facility I could see the excitement in their response. They were aware of our capabilities but had forgotten about the benefits it would provide to their program, hence my goal is to re-energize them as well.

The Regional TMC will try to incorporate the latest energy conservation technologies that should help keep O&M costs to reasonable amounts. We are also trying to design a facility that is “employee friendly” by providing a little more breathing room with ergonomic features

that help avoid them leaving the facility with that “beat up” feeling. We are generating a design that will allow for ease of maintenance and potential for future growth as well. For instance, if we were ever tasked with growing by 10% there should be enough space to do so while avoiding the potential of being crammed into space. This was the number one complaint from many of the TMCs I visited over the years. Most said that if there was one thing they’d like to change it would have been to build a facility that could address their needs in the future. Instead, they have to modify their current conditions until funding for a new facility becomes available. Keep in mind that many of these facilities are less than 15 years old.

My personal goal is to have the design far enough along where ground breaking can begin sometime in August or September. We anticipate that this facility will take about 12 months to complete, however FHP and FDOT has simplified the design enough where I think it could be constructed much faster. We’ve simplified the Data Room spacing, the TMC floor layout, the raised flooring aspects and incorporated other features that should help expedite construction. Since the site has minimal obstructions (i.e. underground drainage, existing buildings nearby and easy access to the lot) it should allow the contractor to expedite their work so that the schedule can be reduced somewhat.

In any case, we are nearing the point of reaching our goal and with some luck will not have a bad hurricane season that could create some delays down the line. Keep your fingers crossed for us. In the next few months we’ll know just how long it will take to complete this project.

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 continued to install DMS structures, CCTV poles, MVDS poles, ITS cabinets and devices. They have also started installing fiber optic cable on the northern end of the project and are working their way south. Stand-alone testing of the devices has started and will continue for the next several weeks. Integration of the devices into the rest of the ITS System is anticipated to begin in July and the project should be operational by the end of summer.

The Phase 8 Project, on the I-295 West Beltway from I-10 to the I-95 North Interchange has reached Final Acceptance. The TMC has full access to all of the devices on the project although there are still a few items left to fully integrate the project into the existing ITS System. The contractor is still responsible for maintenance of the devices for two more months at which time maintenance responsibilities will be handed over to Traffic Control Devices as part of the overall ITS System.

The contract award for the Phase 9 Project, on SR 9A from Atlantic Blvd going south to the southern SR 9A/I-95 Interchange, is currently awaiting a ruling on a protest. Resolution of the protest is anticipated within the next few months.

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. The contractor has completed installation of all ADMS foundations and all ADMS are installed. There have been several issues with the electrical power services, which have now been resolved. The project is currently behind schedule but is anticipated to be completed in June.

The Airport Road contract, which will provide connectivity between the FDOT ITS network and the Jacksonville International Airport network, had a major setback this month when a worker accidentally cut through the fiber optic cable. The cable had been completely installed when the worker cut the fiber optic cable near the midpoint. Since the cable had been installed in one complete piece, the contractor has had to remove the entire run and order a new reel of fiber optic cable to install. This contract is anticipated to be complete in early June.

The I-10 Interchange ITS Project, which is installing fiber optic cable, CCTVs and MVDS within the area of the I-10/I-95 Interchange, is progressing. The contractor spent the month trenching in conduit along I-95 and I-10. This project has a contract duration of 300 days and should be completed in February 2013.

John Kell
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager

MAINTENANCE

The main communications link between most of our ITS devices is fiber optic cable. I'm sure that many of you know what fiber optic cable is and what it does, but for those who don't I will provide a brief explanation. Fiber optic cable is used to transmit data and works by sending light waves over very thin glass fibers. The fibers are so thin that they are smaller than a human hair and since they are made of glass they are very fragile. The individual fibers are protected by an outer coating and then the individual fibers are grouped together within the cable around a central strength member and then a plastic outer



MAINTENANCE continued

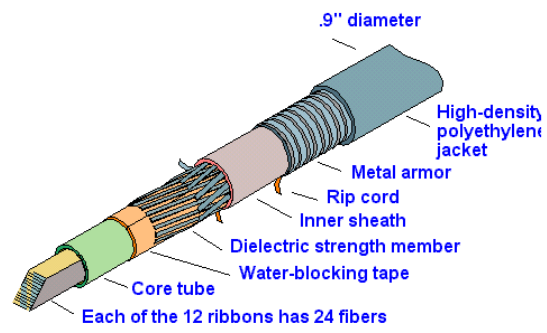
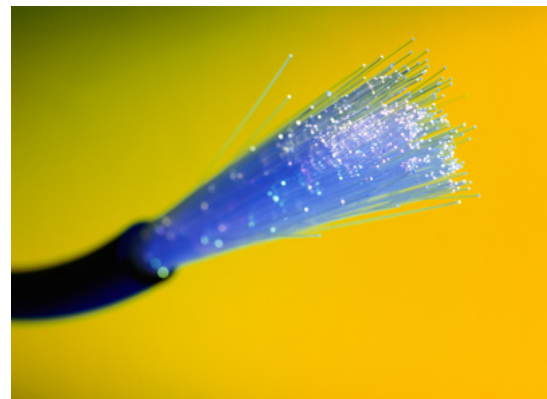
jacket is placed around the combined fibers to create the fiber optic cable. The fiber cable is then installed along the roadways to connect our ITS devices. Although the fibers are fairly well protected within the cable, they do get damaged on occasion and fixing the damage takes specialized equipment.

This month we had two issues with fiber on our ITS System. Traffic Control Devices, the ITS Maintenance Contractor, has a van which is solely used for fiber optic splicing and repair. TCD had previously diagnosed the issues as a broken connector at the Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) north of Emerson Street on I-95 and a broken fiber optic cable in a pull box north of University Boulevard. The fiber optic technician was able to install a new connector on the individual fiber at the DMS sign and had to do a splice of all of the fibers (72) within the fiber optic cable in the pull box. This took him several hours as the fiber optic cable had to be cut in half and then each of the individual fibers from the two halves have to be exposed and cleaned and then put into a fusion splicer, which heats the glass up to the point that the two fibers then “splice” together to become whole again.

Last month’s article detailed the accident which destroyed the ITS cabinet at Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. TCD has ordered the cabinet, devices and accessories to replace the cabinet and get all of the devices attached to the cabinet working again. This work should be completed within the next few weeks once all of the materials have been delivered.

The lightning storms have returned with vengeance and have damaged several of the ITS devices on the system. TCD has been keeping up with the damage and has been able

to keep our devices functioning and have maintained device availability around 99% for the system as a whole. I will keep you updated as we push forward into the summer months and throughout hurricane season.



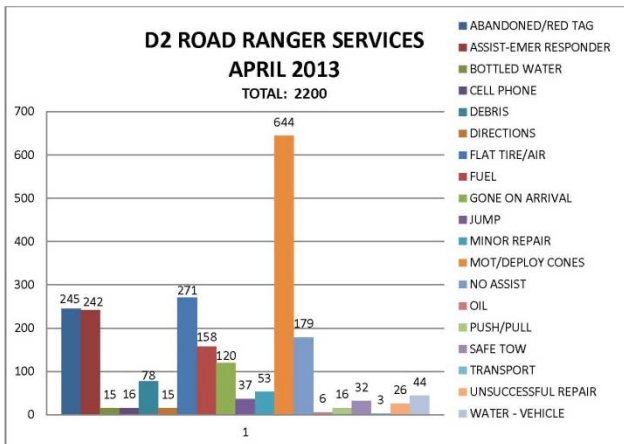
Fiberoptic Cable

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist



ROAD RANGER UPDATE

The Department is proud to announce the Road Ranger Service Patrol Contract will be renewed with First Coast Road Rangers, LLC., as the Contractor. Our District 2 Road Ranger Program has been successful due to the leadership of Contractors Greg Gaylord and Marshall Adkison. As shown in the chart below, 2200 motorists/responders received assistance from our Road Ranger Service Patrol Operators in the month of April 2013 proving their importance to our Traffic Incident Management Program. Patrolling 5 days a week from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, the Road Rangers help keep our interstates clear and safe. With the hurricane season upon us, the Road Ranger Operators are gearing up to work extended hours and routes if necessary to keep our motorists and responders safer.



RISC – Rapid Incident Scene Clearance – Update

We have not had a RISC incident in the last month but our RISC Contractors remain ready to respond if needed.

FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

A successful meeting was held by our First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team on May 21, 2013, at the FHP Training Center at 10:00 AM. All members were introduced to the *Signal 4 Analytics Software* by FHP Captain Gaston who led a presentation on its use. Agencies represented were: FHP, Metric Engineering, FDOT ITS, St Johns County Sheriff’s Office, FDOT St. Augustine Maintenance, Jorgensen, Miracle Towing, St. Augustine Wrecker Service, FDEP, KCCS, Walt’s Wrecker Service, ASAP Towing, Transfield Services, FDOT Maintenance, Nassau County Sheriff’s Office, Road Ranger Service Patrol, North Florida Sales, St. John’s County, DRI Services, and John’s Towing.

Great participation was given to the debriefing of incidents occurring in the last 2 months and much knowledge was gained. Peter Vega announced we will be having a “Train the Trainer” Traffic Incident Management Responder Training on June 17th – 18th, given by the FHWA and led by Grady Carrick. Anyone interested in attending should contact Pete at: peter.vega@dot.state.fl.us or (904) 360-5463.





ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

Our Alachua-Bradford TIM Team will hold its bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 12th at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Ave. at 10:00 A.M. Since plans are being finalized for our *TIM Responder Training*, your attendance is valuable to the Team. Bruce Strickland will be contacting members concerning their assistance with the Training. We are looking forward to a successful training module that can be used and updated in the following years to maintain our Team's knowledge of performing our duties in the safest, most efficient manner.

Donna Danson
District 2 ITS Program Manager

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.

TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT 2013 MEETING SCHEDULE

FIRST COAST TIM TEAM MEETING
FDOT URBAN OFFICE TRAINING CENTER
2198 EDISON AVENUE- JACKSONVILLE
904-360-5400

JULY 16, 2013
SEPTEMBER 17, 2013
NOVEMBER 19, 2013

ALACHUA/BRADFORD TIM TEAM MEETING
FDOT GAINESVILLE OPERATIONS OFFICE
5301 N.E. 39TH AVE- GAINESVILLE
352-381-4300

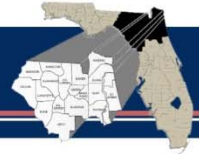
JUNE 12, 2013
AUGUST 14, 2013
OCTOBER 9, 2013
DECEMBER 11, 2013

Announcements

FHWA "Train the Trainer" Traffic Incident Management Responder Training
June 17th – 18th, 2013

NOW AVAILABLE – TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM WEBSITE:
<http://jax511.com/D2TIMwp/>.

Donna Danson
District 2 ITS Program Manager



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The warmer weather has finally arrived and along with it several inches of rainfall. The rainfall more than likely contributed to the increase in events noted over the past month.

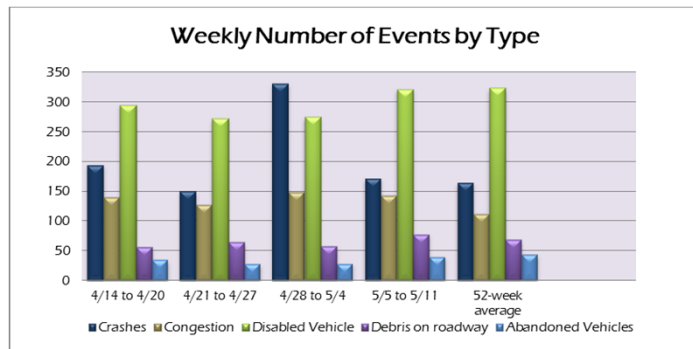
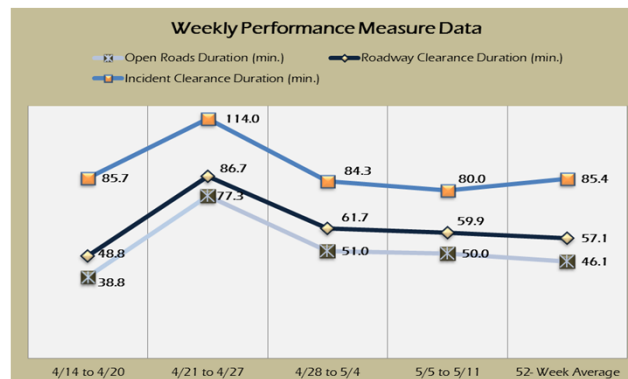
The week starting April 28th had almost 10 inches of rain, and even though the number of crashes reported in SunGuide was a bit over 330, which is twice the normal average, the Incident Clearance Duration did not increase as it stayed near the yearly average of 85 minutes.

When analyzing the SunGuide report data, an interesting increase in Incident Clearance Duration was observed for the week ending April 27th. Even though this particular week only had about two inches of rain, SunGuide reported several events that had very long durations. One of them occurred the night of Saturday April 27th on Interstate 95 southbound near Mile Marker 302 in St Johns County. A multi-vehicle crash

involving a truck and two small passenger vehicles caused the truck to roll over and spill several gallons of fuel as well as various other liquids. All southbound lanes were closed for over 10 hours and one of the drivers of the passenger vehicles was transferred to the hospital in critical condition. Unfortunately, the severity and duration of only a few major crashes will generate a spike in the performance measure data, and even more when those incidents happened on weekends and during late night hours when there is decreased visibility and the numbers of responders is limited.

The following two tables show the Performance Measures data for the past month as well as the different types of event reported weekly.

Diana Rivas
Metric Engineering





MARKETING

Standing room only! That's the best way I can think to describe the recent Media Day we held at the Traffic Management Center in conjunction with THE PLAYERS prior to this year's highly acclaimed TPC. Reporters from all five area television stations (Channels 4, 12, 25, 30 and 47) were in attendance along with local radio station WOKV (AM 690 and 104.5 FM) as well as a reporter from the Financial News and Daily Record.

Representatives from the Florida Highway Patrol, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, FDOT, THE PLAYERS and First Coast Road Rangers were on hand to field questions from the media, especially as it pertained to parking logistics, travel information and traffic details. Spotlights were turned on and cameras were hoisted atop tripods for the four hour event. Live interviews and traffic reports were conducted from inside the TMC, as well as packaged pieces that were recorded and broadcast later in the day. 511 received valuable air time as well as online coverage. Reporters stood shoulder to shoulder, practically talking over each other as they went live throughout the morning... often with only minutes to spare before the next broadcast

began! Many thanks to the staff and management of the TMC who helped make this such a spectacular event, and of course to Pete Vega who by now probably has enough on air experience to earn his wings as a Field Correspondent.

Next month we'll be heading downtown to experience ArtWalk for the very first time! Join us Wednesday, June 5th as we highlight our Smartphone App for the Apple product line, and hopefully debut the new app for Android as well! Exciting things are happening with the 511 system, and we want you to be a part of them!

Whether you're headed to the beach or a fun family day at the zoo, make sure your trip begins with a call to 511. You can also log onto www.FL511.com or, of course, download our free 511 Traffic App. It's available for use with iPhone, iPad or iPod devices. Simply go to the iTunes store and search "Florida 511." As always, we welcome your comments, thoughts and suggestions.

Know before you go and keep moving!

Sherri Byrd
Marketing Manager



From l-r, Ashley Michem, WJXT; Tracy (.com) Collins, WTEV/WAWS; Katie Jeffries, WTLV/WJXX (behind camera).



Media Day made for a busy, crowded TMC



OPERATIONS

We have a saying in the Transportation Management Center (TMC), "Just add water." Similar to Sea Monkeys, when you add water, roadway traffic conditions change dramatically. This concept was prevalent on May 3rd of this year when heavy rain bands ripped through District 2. Supervisor James Speed and Operators Rachel Crisler and Ashley Zirkle had their hands full with over 85 crashes and 173 total events! That is over 14 events per hour with multiple updates, pushes to 511, multi-agency coordination on crashes, Road Rangers and updates to partnering agencies! Thanks for the hard work as the three of you did a marvelous job!

The line chart on page 1 shows the traffic crash volume on Interstates within Alachua County and Duval County on May 3rd, 2013 by Time of Day. You can see the mid-day volume spike as rain bands worked their way across our District. Crash volumes tend to be highest when volume and occupancy are at their peak during morning and afternoon rush but just add water. You can see how the rain really made those numbers jump on the 3rd, especially mid-day when volume and occupancy is low. For comparison sake, on April 26th (the previous Friday), Alachua experienced 0 crashes on I-75 and Duval had only 19 over that 24 hour period. On May 3rd those totals were 43 and 55 respectively. Wow, just add water!

After almost nine years at the TMC I must admit my driving habits are much improved. It only takes a visit to a few traffic accident scenes to change your ways. Seat belt, always. Speed, reduced. Alert driver, check. Sometimes it is nice to have a reminder on some tips when dealing with driving in the rain. 1) **SLOW DOWN!**

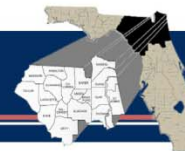
2) If your wipers are on, so should be your headlights. 3) Keep up preventative maintenance on wipers and fluids. 4) Proper air in tires. 5) Keep up with car maintenance. 6) Avoid puddles if you are not sure how deep they are. 7) Stay off the road if possible. 8) Only use your hazard lights if you are stopped in a safe area out of the travel lanes. These are just a few. Now if we can only get these tips to all of the bad drivers out there....

Enough about rain and the month of May. April was a busy month for the TMC. April brought 3,279 total events for our staff to manage! That is over 100 events per day which also puts the 12 hour shift on May 3rd's total of 173 into perspective. The Road Rangers were busy as well handling 1,733 events. That is almost 80 events handled by them per day (22 days worked in April). With May showers here drive safely!

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. The 511 iPhone App is currently available and please feel free to contact me if you would like to Beta test the Android 511 App. Remember the story above and

"Know Before You Go! Dial 511".

**Ryan Crist
TMC Manager**



FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Laura Simpson, JRCC

Serving in a management role at FHP's Regional Communications Center, Laura Simpson has pretty much seen (or at least heard) it all. When dealing with the public, especially in her early days working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, she found that no two days were ever alike. Here's her story.

Tell us a little about your upbringing. Where were you born/raised?

I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii. We lived there till I was two, then relocated to Jacksonville, FL. Been here ever since.

Describe your Early Career:

I started my State career in 1999 as a Senior Clerk with the Department of Health. Wanting a change, I applied for a duty officer position and was hired by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in 2004.

Job Description:

In my current role with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida Highway Patrol, I serve as the Regional Communications Center Manager.

How long have you been at your current job?

Since February of 2013.

Any funny stories relating to work?

Working for the FWC, and covering Alachua County, a lot of college students would call our dispatch center wanting to report fictitious, and to them, humorous complaints. My favorite was the "I have a manatee in my swimming pool."

Best advice anyone's ever given you?

"It does not matter who you are, your character will be defined by your actions."



Job Related Awards:

In 2011, I was named as the FWC North Central Region Employee of the Year. In 2012, I received an Exceptional Performance award.

Tell us a little about your family.

My biological father passed away when I was five, so it's just been my mother and I ever since.

Worst/Best job ever:

The best and worst job I had was at the Health Department. I worked in a clinic that dealt with a lot of terminally ill patients. It was the best job, in that I met so many wonderful people who taught me so much about living life to its fullest and never taking what I've been given for granted. The worst part of the job was that the patients were terminally ill.

Hobbies:

My hobbies consist of anything that has to do with Florida Gator football and Nascar.

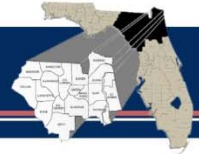


PHOTO GALLERY



Matt Rapp, Executive Director of The Players Championship during a television live shot



Many thanks to all of our Media Partners who joined us for our kick-off to The Players!

FINANCIAL NEWS &
Daily Record

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WOKV
690 AM • 104.5 FM



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May 2013 Issue 67



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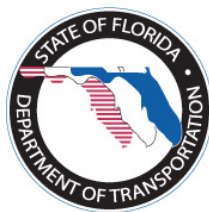
Donna Danson
ITS Operations Project Manager
904.360.5635
Donna.Danson@dot.state.fl.us



Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist
904.360.5454
Kevin.Jackson@dot.state.fl.us



John Kell
ITS Construction Project Manager
904.360.5455
John.Kell@dot.state.fl.us



Peter Vega
District 2 ITS Engineer
904.360.5463
Peter.Vega@dot.state.fl.us

