



DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



June 2013 Issue 68



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It was the month of Summer Solstice AND the Supermoon



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER

On June 3rd I had the opportunity to participate in the Department's first FDOT Modal Academy at the University of North Florida (UNF). This three-day course was developed by UNF to give Department staff an idea on the process taken by manufacturers in getting their product out to the market. The student make-up was an assortment of individuals in the areas of Planning, Design, TSM&O, Work Program and Operations. From the onset this class displayed a sense of preparedness and focus on how a company relies upon the Department to provide a fully functioning transportation network that can get a product from point A to point B at minimal cost. Our ability to provide them with a reliable Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) allows them to have a competitive advantage within their industry. It also is a means to strengthen the American economy that relies on efficiencies and productivity to gain the competitive advantage against other Countries.

Once we got started the course material was pretty easy to understand. Basically, a company takes raw materials, manufactures it to the product they plan to sell and then must determine how operations will get this product to the market. Some firms may maintain a large inventory in the warehouse while others may rely on Just-In-Time delivery. In either case the decision they make factors into the cost of getting this product to the market. For instance, if the company decides to warehouse manufactured products they incur the cost of real estate, insurance, staffing, risk of spoilage and other costs that are a negative on their balance sheets. On the other hand, a company that goes to the other extreme of Just-In-Time delivery takes the risk of lost sales, increased insurance and potentially a higher delivery cost. Some of the firms we examined included FedEx, Dell Computers, Apple and Amazon. Each

company took a slightly different approach in getting their product to the market; **HOWEVER** all were dependent on the transportation network to complete delivery from point A to point B. That's where the Department and the State of Florida come into play because if we can provide that reliability that can lower their cost then our State economy benefits as a whole. This thought process can't only focus on roadways but must take into consideration Seaports, Rail and Air as well. Providing a multi-modal approach for these potential "customers of Florida" will be a method of giving Florida a competitive advantage over surrounding States on the Atlantic Seaboard.

As we all know, time is money and it's extremely true for these firms. As Florida ports increase the amount of imports into the Country the Department must find solutions for getting these products to their final destination. A good example would be a manufacturer from the Far East. They must decide whether to spend an enormous amount of money flying their product into the U.S. , putting it on a ship that utilizes the Panama Canal or trying the pirate infested Suez Canal as an option. In either case, when the product arrives in Florida it must now find alternative means to its destination. Should they use rail? This option is inexpensive but has an impact due to delivery times and risk. Should they use trucking? This has been the most commonly used method but the costs are higher, the demand is increasing and the labor market (truck drivers) will not be able keep up with demand. Should they use a combination? This is the most likely alternative but with it comes a risk created by using multiple third party services that can throw the delivery cycle off kilter.

I will admit that I thought "yuck, three days of training!" but when it was all said and done each



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED

minute spent was worthwhile to understanding my purpose with the Department. In case you're interested I should mention that this Academy provided a mixture of lessons. In the morning there was classroom lecture and in the afternoon we had the chance to visit several local firms. A few places we got to tour included the **HUMONGOUS** Winn Dixie warehouse, the **EXTREMELY** large Seaonus warehouse at Jaxport's Talleyrand facility (pictures at end of article) and the Florida East Coast Rail dispatch center. These were among the many sites we visited with each touching upon something we learned in training during the week.

In any case these companies are depending on the Florida Department of Transportation to provide a reliable, efficient and cost effective solution that will ultimately help in the growth of Florida's economy. Due to the success of this inaugural class the University of North Florida plans to offer this Academy on a regular basis in the future. If you had not heard the news but are interested in the direction the Department is taking I suggest you read the article located at the following link:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/jacksonville/blog/morning-edition/2013/06/florida-unveils-freight-strategy.html> .

Another exciting event that occurred June 17th and 18th was the FHWA sponsored SHRP2 **National Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Responder** training hosted by the District Two ITS office.

SHRP2 stands for Strategic Highway Research Program and is the means used to develop a program, by responders – for responders, with the objective that responders acquire a common

set of core competencies for traffic incident management. We had over 65 participants in the course covering the disciplines of Fire, Law Enforcement, Transportation, Towing and Environmental Management. This one and one-half day training contained nine modules that addressed the incident management timeline. Module one began with incident notification and module nine ended with roadway clearance. In between the trainers addressed every aspect related to safety and maintenance of traffic that an incident responder may encounter while performing their duties.

On the second day there was a break-out session for the attendees that addressed much of the information presented in the classroom training. It was fun to watch these various disciplines go through tabletop scenarios because there were many aspects of each individual's job requirement that others were unaware of at the time. For instance, Fire/Rescue has been trained to always close an additional lane for operational and safety reasons (plus one principle). When questioned about this approach by other incident responders the Fire/Rescue folks explained that the gurney they use is 8 feet long (that's 2/3 the length of a travel lane!) so they need the additional lane to maneuver since they assume the injured party is immobile. Huh! Who would have thought! And here we always assumed they were just being greedy with roadway real estate!

At the end of the course I could see the benefits gained by each individual attendee. To a person, everyone had nothing but positives to say about the course and how it was conducted.



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED

I want to extend my gratitude to Metric Engineering, Ex-FHP Chief Grady Carrick and Ex-Fire Chief Ron Moore for putting on such an outstanding training. The hope is that all the participants will take what they learned back to their agency so that they can share the wealth of knowledge acquired in this SHRP2 training.

Pete Vega
District 2 ITS Engineer



Above, pictures from the Seaonus warehouse at Jaxport's Talleyrand facility

NORTH FLORIDA TPO

The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO) has been patiently awaiting fruition of the projects they've sponsored over the past few years. The Airport Road and Arterial Dynamic Message Sign projects are near final completion. The Philips Highway project is weeks away from transitioning to the next Phase of analysis whereby the NFTPO consultant will begin to examine timing plans for incident diversion. The Jaxport projects are set to begin in late summer and the US 17 project in Clay County should be awarded in September.

As for the Wind Sensor deployment some minor maintenance is being performed on the devices in preparation for the meat of the Hurricane season. A decision was made to remove the devices located along the I-95 interchanges at I-295 and I-10 so that more spare parts are available in the future. The initial deployment at these locations was done more for research and performance tracking of the equipment. Since we would never close these interchanges it was decided that their removal would not impact the overall performance of the program. We currently have two locations that need further attention and these issues should be resolved by the first of July.

The Bluetooth sensor deployment has run into some snags due to fiber communication issues on various roadways. We are currently having communication losses on Atlantic Blvd, San Jose Blvd, Blanding Blvd, US 17 and Baymeadows Road. A couple of these problems are due to fiber damage caused by traffic accidents and others are due to ongoing construction projects that have taken the network off-line. We are working with the City on resolving these problems with the hope that these issues are ironed out within the next few months.



NORTH FLORIDA TPO CONTINUED

We just learned that the North Florida TPO has awarded a contract to England, Thims and Miller. Part of this firm's responsibility will be to assist in taking the NFTPO funded deployments to the next level so that the overall ITS arterial system will be fully functioning and useful by the time the new RTMC opens in late 2014. This firm has brought an old face and name into the mix by hiring Mr. Don Fullerton as a sub-consultant to this contract. Don has emerged from retirement and will now be assisting with Traffic Signal issues that involve NFTPO deployments throughout the region. Let's hope that Don can shake off the rust since he's been gone for over one year now!

Pete Vega
District 2 ITS Engineer

MAINTENANCE

As detailed several times throughout this Newsletter, Tropical Storm Andrea made its way through Jacksonville at the beginning of June and brought with it quite a bit of rain. Luckily, the storm was moving pretty quickly through the area and didn't stay around and cause a lot of damage and flooding. As for the ITS System, once the storm passed the ITS Maintenance Contractor had several devices to troubleshoot and repair. Many of the devices, which were offline after the storm, simply needed to be reset due to localized power outages causing issues with communications. Overall there were very few device failures and the ITS Maintenance staff was able to get all of the devices operational in a short amount of time. I guess we can consider Andrea as our practice for larger and more destructive storms we are likely to see this Hurricane Season.

Speaking of Hurricane Season, we have had several of our bridge mounted wind sensors stop sending data over the past few months. Due to slow response time from the wind sensor

manufacturer we have exhausted our spare parts inventory and do not know when we will get replacement parts back into our inventory. In an attempt to get all of these sensors operational before the next big storm, the ITS Maintenance staff went out to the sites to troubleshoot and repair the devices. Before they went to the sites that were down, they took down the existing sites on the overpasses at both the northern and southern I-95/I-295 Interchanges to use these devices as spares for the others that were not working properly. They were then able to go to the other sites and repair the devices using the newly acquired "spare parts". So, if you look at the wind sensor page and notice that some of the sites aren't showing data, check to see if you are looking at one of the sites that was taken down from the overpasses so that the waterway bridge sensors could be repaired.

The ITS Maintenance Contractor also replaced several broken pull boxes along I-95 north of the downtown Jacksonville area. These pull boxes have been in place for about 10 years and had been damaged by mowers, construction vehicles, and other large vehicles running over them. Although these pull boxes are rated to withstand 20,000 lbs of pressure, they sometimes "crack under the pressure" and need to be replaced so they do not damage the cables inside of the box.

Finally, the ITS Maintenance Group has been working on BlueTOAD devices on the Interstates. Several of the devices were not reporting properly and were found to have various issues ranging from bad antennas to bad processor cards. In the near future we hope to begin installing more BlueTOAD devices on the arterial roadways so the TMC will have real-time information on more of the major corridors around the Jacksonville area.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist



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, is working on final connections to many of the sites throughout the project. The installation of the Fiber Optic Cable along the main trunkline is going well and should be completed in early July. Once the trunkline is completed, the contractor will begin installing the fiber cable drops to each of the device cabinets and then making final connections. Stand Alone Testing of the devices has commenced and will continue throughout July. The TMC should have control of the devices sometime in August and the project should be completed in September.

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. This new portion of the ITS System proved its value this month when a wrong way driver struck a charter bus and caused I-295 northbound to be closed for several hours near Pritchard Road. The TMC was able to monitor the scene and traffic congestion throughout the morning.

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 been replacing sections of sidewalks, which needed to be removed to install conduit for power service runs to the DMS. The contractor has requested a contract time extension due to Design errors found during the project and the extended amount of time they have been waiting on JEA to connect the power services. The project is currently behind schedule and will be completed following connection of the power services by JEA.

The Airport Road contract has been completed. This project provides connectivity between the FDOT ITS network and the Jacksonville International Airport (JIA) network. This connection allows FDOT and JIA to exchange data and video and will be used in the future to provide traffic information to motorists leaving the airport and parking information to motorists on their way to the airport.

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. The installation of conduit underneath of the ramps within the interchange will begin this month by using directional boring machines to drill underneath of the roadways. This project has a contract duration of 300 days and should be completed in February 2013.

The JaxPort Fiber Installation Project has been awarded to American Lighting and Signalization. This project will install fiber optic cable along three different roadways to create a communications connection various JaxPort facilities and connect JaxPort to FDOT to allow sharing of data and video between the two agencies. The first project section is along Martin Luther King Jr Parkway and will connect the FDOT ITS fiber system on I-95 to the



CONSTRUCTION continued

JaxPort fiber system near the Talleyrand Terminal. The second project area is on New Berlin Road from I-295 to the JaxPort Security Building to connect the building to FDOT, the Talleyrand Terminal and Blount Island. The third section is along Heckscher Drive from I-295 to the Blount Island Main Gate and will connect the Blount Island Terminal to FDOT, the Talleyrand Terminal and the Security Building. The Notice To Proceed is anticipated for August and the contractor is being given 60 days to procure fiber and materials, resulting in an estimated construction start date in October.

John Kell
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager

MARKETING

June certainly has been a busy month! I do a lot of events in and around the Jacksonville area, and while I'm used to being thrown a curve ball every now and again, imagine my surprise when I stepped out of my car at the I-95 Florida Welcome Center last Friday and felt talons piercing my back. Okay, so maybe not talons... but claws... from a medium-sized black bird! As I watched in horror, a gang of them swooped down and began attacking other visitors, prompting one little girl to burst into tears and run into the arms of her mother. (a mother, who by the way, was doubled over in fits of laughter) I quickly hauled my gear into the Welcome Center (my gear, not my rear) where the ladies on duty at the front desk said, "Oh, so you've met our birds. They're nesting." No kidding! I personally think we should change the sign out front to read "Welcome to Florida. If the sun doesn't leave its mark, our wildlife certainly will!"

All in all, it was a great event (birds notwithstanding) I spoke to 214 people in just

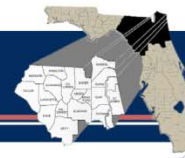
under two hours!!! Our ponchos were a big hit. A number of motorists had driven through torrential downpours as they crossed over the State Line, and the thunderstorms looming just to the south let them know they were probably in for more.

Other "safer" events we attended this month included the Checker Cab Employee Health Expo, Sea Star Line's Employee Preparedness Expo and the Downtown ArtWalk. It's a good feeling knowing that hundreds of people who had never even heard of 511 have now been introduced to its cost-saving and time management benefits. Not to mention that they'll now be able to navigate Florida's roadways a little safer, learning about accidents beforehand and making informed decisions to steer clear of them. Just a few weeks ago, I was stuck in accident traffic at the top of the span on the Dames Point Bridge. While waiting to do my traffic report for WOKV News Talk Radio, I heard squealing tires and looked in my rear view mirror just in time to see a motorist in the far left lane rear end another car that had come to a complete stop in the gridlock. By knowing about traffic incidents ahead of time, these secondary accidents can greatly be reduced.

And with that said, whether you're headed out to watch the fireworks this 4th of July or planning a trip to Disney, 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!

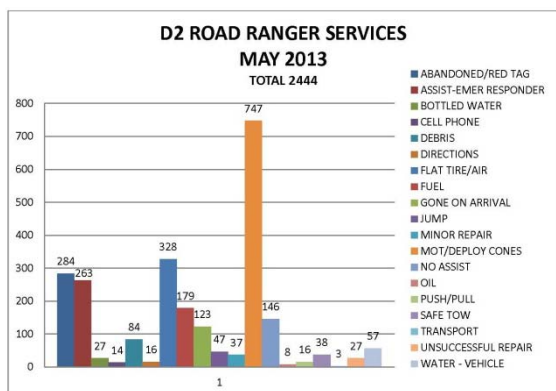
Sherri Byrd
Marketing Manager



ROAD RANGER UPDATE

So far this year, the Road Ranger Operators have not been called to perform extra duties due to a hurricane but all of the Ranger Operators stand ready for action. Safety meetings have been dedicated in part to training and information on how to prepare for the extra hours and services needed for evacuation of a hurricane. Greg Gaylord and Marshall Adkison are taking a serious approach to be prepared.

While we have not had a hurricane that does not mean the Road Ranger Operators have not dealt with traffic incidents caused by lots of rain! There has been rain almost every day that has caused extra congestion where our Road Rangers have been a great benefit. For the month of May 2013, 2,444 assists have been handled by our Rangers. We are fortunate to have the Road Ranger Service Patrol as they are very important to our incident management. Now that the Contract has been renewed, Greg and Marshall are aggressively trying to add sponsors so our program can expand.



RISC – Rapid Incident Scene Clearance – Update

It is fortunate we have the RISC Program available on I-75 as there is a significant semi tractor trailer and large vehicle population. On May 5th, FHP had need of the RISC vendor,

University Towing, twice in one day. The first crash at 11:45 AM, I-75 NB at mile marker 392, involved 2 semi tractor trailers with a fuel spill and the 2nd crash at 2:20 PM, I-75 SB at mile marker 381, involved 10 vehicles including semi tractor trailers. On June 14th and 15th, there were also incidents (these will be discussed in our next issue after the debrief meetings). The RISC Program is proving to be a valuable tool in our incident management quick clearance.

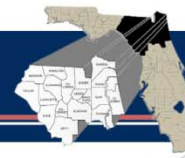
FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

On June 17th and 18th, the First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team hosted the FHWA SHRP 2 “Train the Trainer” Traffic Incident Management Responder Training. Grady Carrick, with the assistance of FHWA Ron Moore, conducted a successful 2-day training, including several “hands on” tabletop incidents (see below) with 62 attendees from multiple agencies. Members of agencies from both our incident management teams were present so now this training can be shared with all incident responders in our District. If you are interested in presenting a training session for your agency and would like assistance, please contact Team Member Craig Carnes with Metric Engineering at: ccarnes@metriceng.com.



The First Coast TIM Team will hold its next meeting at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center, 2198 Edison Avenue, at 10:00 A.M. on July 16, 2013. These meetings are important so please mark your calendar. See you there!

Continued on following page



ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team held its bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 12th at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Ave. at 10:00 A.M. Members from the following agencies were present: AAG Environmental, FHP, FDEP, Metric Engineering, Alachua County EPD, Alachua County Fire Rescue, FDOT Traffic Operations, FDOT Maintenance, FDOT ITS, Gainesville Police Dept., Florida Forestry Service, Medical Examiner's Office, Atkins, City of Gainesville, and University Towing.

The Team continued to finalize our *TIM Responder Training*. Bruce Strickland has been busy contacting members concerning their assistance with the Training. We are looking forward to a successful Training Program 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. The actual training date will be announced at a later date.

Following the meeting, four Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) incidents were debriefed.

Donna Danson
District 2 ITS Program Manager

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

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
ALACHUA-BRADFORD TEAM
TRAFFIC INCIDENT RESPONDER TRAINING - TBA



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Tropical Storm Andrea made its way through the Jacksonville area just six days after the beginning of the 2013 Hurricane Season. The storm shocked us with several inches of rain, and a corresponding increase in events. Over 270 crashes, which is nearly twice as many as the weekly average for the year, were entered into SunGuide® for the week starting June 2nd.

As would be expected, with the increased rainfall from Andrea, the Incident and Roadway Clearance Durations were higher for that particular week than for the other weeks illustrated in the chart below. Our busiest roadway, Interstate 95, had 29 events included in the performance measures for the week of the storm, which is greater than the yearly average of 17 events per week. Although the number of events reported for Interstate 95 is clearly higher for the week, unexpectedly, the Open Roads, Roadway Clearance and Incident Clearance Durations were substantially lower than the

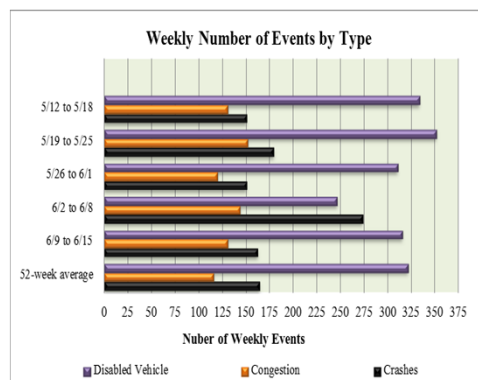
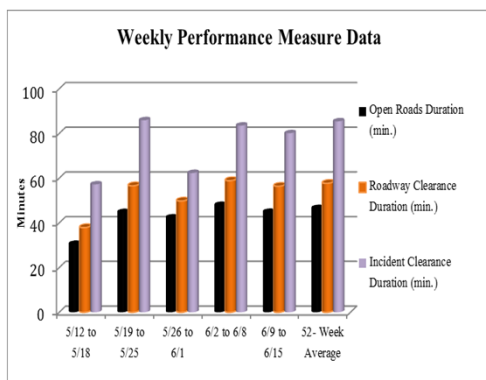
yearly average despite the heavy rain. This was more than likely the result of many of the incidents being minor incidents such as “fender benders” and guardrail strikes due to the wet asphalt, driver speed and attention and decreased visibility.

Another interesting aspect noted, is the slight decrease in the number of congestion events after the school year ended during the second week of June. Hopefully this trend will hold true while school is out, allowing the responders to get a bit of a break throughout the summer so they can focus more on hurricane preparedness.

The following charts and table illustrate the Performance Measure data for the past few weeks as well as the different types of events reported.

Diana Rivas
Metric Engineering

Performance Measures in Interstate 95		
I-95	T.S Andrea week 6/2 to 6/8	52-week average
Events included in Performance Measures	29	17
Open Roads Duration(min)	34	47
Roadway Clearance Duration (min)	46	58
Incident Clearance Duration (min)	63	88





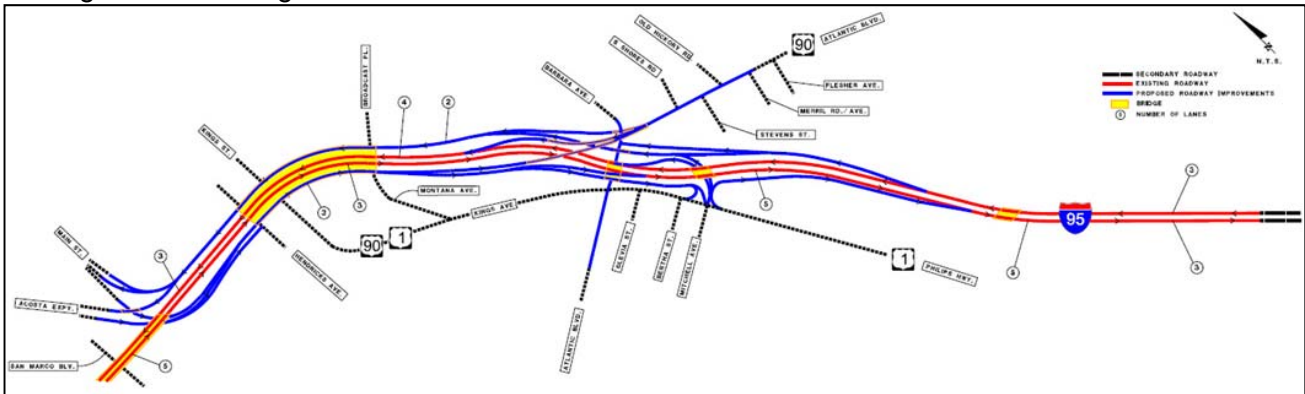
OPERATIONS

We are entrenched in the middle of summer and our traffic patterns here in Northeast Florida reflect that. Congestion is a little more manageable with school out but the heavy afternoon storms continue to cause issues with our motorists. On top of the storms, the Overland Bridge Project trudges forward causing motorists to deal with the shoulder lanes being squeezed and traffic shifts. Archer Western has done a wonderful job despite the obvious challenges and has been quick to respond to any issues that have popped up. Despite their responsiveness traffic remains slow through that area around the clock (yes, the speed limit there is 45).

Through the Overland site in May we had 48 crashes and 70 congestion events. These totals are slightly up from May of last year that saw 35 crash events and 54 total congestion events through that area. Big kudos to Archer Western

for their responsiveness and MOT plan. The numbers become more telling when you break it down by direction. Southbound from 2012 to 2013 actually reduced by one crash in the month of May from 16 to 15 while northbound crashes jumped from 19 to 33. The congestion totals raised by 7 northbound and 9 southbound which is the opposite of the crash numbers.

May brought the traffic pattern shift in the project as well as the new exit to Main Street/ Prudential which might have increased the incident volume on the northbound side. It also seems that people are starting to obey the posted speed limit despite it not changing. When driving through the project limits you can see motorists over-correct to avoid the temporary barrier wall which doesn't help the situation. Due to having a solid MOT plan in place it usually takes just a few days before motorists adjust to traffic shifts and new patterns.



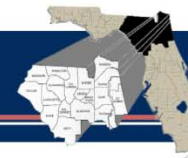
Remember to take it slow, obey posted speed limits and leave the proper distance between you and the car in front of you (at 45mph that distance should be 3 seconds or 198 feet in optimal conditions).

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.

“Know Before You Go! Dial 511”.

**Ryan Crist
TMC Manager**



FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Jill Dawson, Metric Engineering

Prepare yourself for a treat as you hear about another of "Jill's Grand Adventures".

It was early on a Thursday when I headed to JIA, thankfully with plenty of time to spare. Airport security wasn't too full, but when you go through the line twice, it seems, well, twice as long. The first time I went through I violated the liquid rule on two accounts. First, my water bottle was not empty. And second, my makeup remover bottle was too big, even though the liquid looked to be under the limit, and it fit in the quart size bag with my other liquids. So I gulped down the water and got in line again so they wouldn't throw away my bottle. The makeup remover, however, couldn't be saved. But I figured I had a good chance of finding that in Los Angeles.

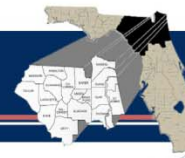
My next worry was the layover in Atlanta. According to my flight itinerary, my flight to LA would begin boarding before I even got to Atlanta. So it came as good news when the pilot said we would have an early arrival. I wondered though, how do they get there earlier if they leave at the scheduled time? Do they speed through the air? Do they have speed limits for planes? Well, maybe not. Anyway, as soon as they turned off that seatbelt sign, I sprung out of my aisle seat and snatched my overstuffed carry-on out of the overhead bin and held bags in hand ready to rush to my next flight, only to find myself waiting like everyone else to get off the plane. Finally, we disembarked and I hastily rushed for the nearest monitor to find the gate for my next flight. To my surprise I only had to walk like 30 feet to my gate, and the boarding had been delayed. Whew, what a relief. Los Angeles was getting closer.

LAX was, of course, busy, but because I crammed everything into my carry-on I didn't

have to wait in anticipation next to a conveyor belt hoping my bag didn't get lost. After just a few minutes my friends arrived and we were on our way into LA traffic. Oh joy. Fortunately, since it was about mid-day for them we didn't face the worst of traffic. Nonetheless, it was a great time to try out their 511 system. I had to get a little coaching from my friends on how to describe our location. The Californians call it "the 5" or "the 405" instead of "I-5" or "I-405." Once I got the location right, we were informed that there were no incidents on our route and it even volunteered us the travel time for the same location. Pretty informative, I'll say.



So even though this trip was supposed to be a weekend getaway, there were moments when I felt I was on a field trip about managed lanes. If I had ever wanted to experience it, this was my chance. Nearly every ramp had a meter, there was an HOV lane on almost every segment of the interstate, and most ramps had a combo of a ramp meter and an HOV lane. If you qualified for the HOV lane, you just scooted right on down the ramp in a separate lane next to the ramp meter without even having to stop. With the HOV lane on the interstate, there was a dashed line for a short distance that allowed motorists to enter and thereafter it was just a wide strip of a yellow striping pattern and reflectors that separated it from the regular lanes. Amazingly, the motorists seemed to obey very well. I saw them stop at ramp meters until the light turned



FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Jill Dawson, Metric Engineering

green and everyone seemed to be crossing into the HOV lane at the specified time, although my friends caught a glimpse of someone downstream cutting over the markings. Violators get hit with a hefty fine if they are caught, so law enforcement must be doing their job pretty well since it seems to be the rare occasion to find someone ignoring these laws.



On Friday, we took a tour of Laguna Beach. Shiny new cars drove down streets lined with



beautifully designed homes and shops all engulfed in elaborate landscaping. The edge of town reached right onto the sunny, sandy beaches full of sunbathers and picnickers. With sand still stuck between our toes, we walked up the hill to see Wyland's home, which was easy to find with the mural of the whales painted on



the façade. After that we were on our way to Huntington Beach down the scenic Pacific Coast Highway when we suddenly hit a serious traffic jam. Within a few minutes we realized there had been a wreck that shut down at least one lane.



Fortunately I didn't see any secondary accidents, but we did see our travel time increase so much that we changed our plans for the evening and just stayed in Huntington Beach until sunset instead of getting back on the road to find another spot that was supposedly great for photos. Traffic is definitely a deterrent for me getting on the road and all the more so around Los Angeles. Taking pictures at Huntington Beach was pretty interesting except for when you see the silhouette of an oil rig off in the distance. Between that and the bird with a broken wing skipping around in the tide, I was ready to start filming a documentary about how to not ruin the earth.



FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Jill Dawson, Metric Engineering

Traffic wasn't bad the entire time though. To our surprise, on Saturday morning, it took less than an hour to get to the Griffith Observatory on the other side of LA. From this high point we could see the Hollywood sign and all of Los Angeles, covered in smog. That would be the next scene in my documentary. The Observatory was pretty fascinating though, and included several exhibits about our planet, moon, and sun. The next stop on our tour of LA was a visit to the Walk of Fame and the Chinese theater where Shirley Temple, John Wayne, Will Smith, and so many other celebrities had signed their name next to their hand prints in concrete. A quick stroll through that tourist trap was all we needed and then we were on our way to see the homes and palm trees of Beverly Hills. I've never seen so many BMWs and Mercedes in one place, outside of maybe the Brumos dealership. Driving through, we found the occasional Ferrari, Lamborghini and even a Bugatti parked on Rodeo Drive. Just beyond the shopping district boasting exclusive Italian and French labels were exquisitely custom designed homes nestled along streets lined with towering palm trees. So out came my video camera.

Sunday turned out to be quite special as well. Every summer Jehovah's Witnesses hold conventions in various locations around the world. I'll be attending in Jacksonville in July, but when I heard they were having one in Long Beach and there would be a special speaker, I couldn't pass up the chance to attend. Held at the Long Beach Arena where Wyland painted an underwater scene completely covering the exterior, it was breathtaking. On our way home we stopped at See's Candies. That was almost as unforgettable as the Wyland painting.

Monday morning it was time for me to leave and the fun with transportation had already begun. I

got an alert saying my flight would be delayed by about 20 minutes, but by the time I got on the plane, I had waited in the airport for more than an hour longer than I expected. Once I got to Atlanta, my flight to Jacksonville was long gone.

I quickly ran to the Delta service desk where I got a new flight itinerary and even a \$25 voucher to use in the airport because of the delayed flight. So while they were already boarding my plane, I scurried around the convenience store across the hall and grabbed up random items attempting to reach \$25. Finally the transaction was done and I was off to board my plane to Jacksonville. With my feet on the ground in Florida, I felt a rush of moisture enter my pores. It was at that point that I realized the difference between dry heat and 70 percent humidity.

One other difference, see the prices of gas below!

Jill Dawson
Metric Engineering





DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



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511's visit to the Checker Cab Safety Fair



The 511 booth at the Downtown Artwalk



An overturned vehicle on the 295 East Beltway



Ryan Crist's drive through the Overland Bridge Project. Note all the restriping!



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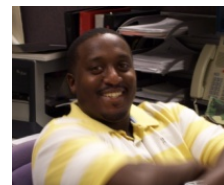
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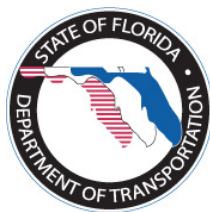
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