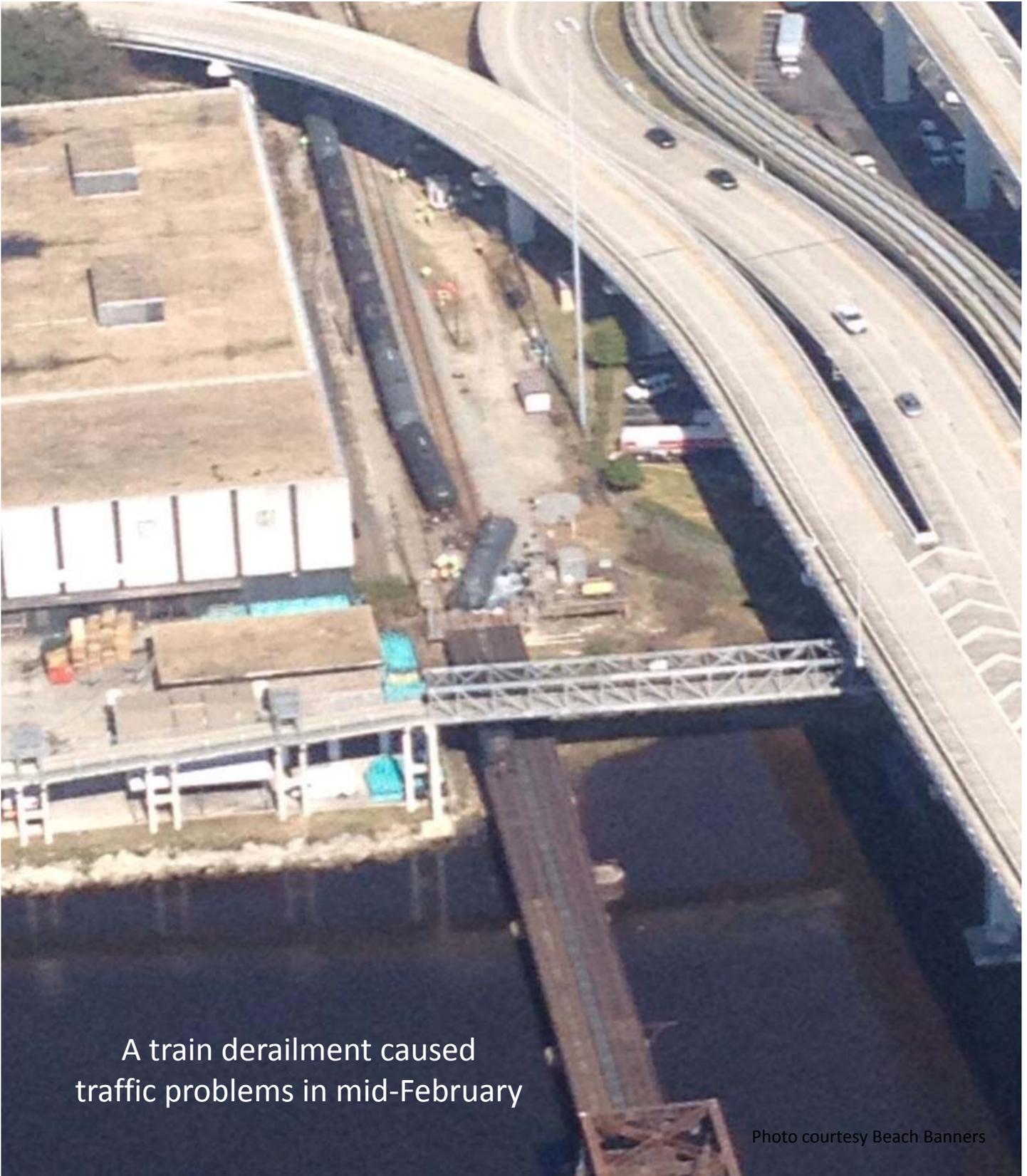




## DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



*February 2014 Issue 75*



A train derailment caused traffic problems in mid-February

Photo courtesy Beach Banners



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

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, an unfortunate accident occurred along a stretch of I-75 within the Paynes Prairie area that claimed the lives of 11 individuals. A mixture of fog and smoke enmeshed this area in a matter of minutes, leading to near zero visibility within the prairie limits and little to no advanced warning for motorists. In March 2012 State Representative Keith Perry spearheaded a Florida State Legislative bill to provide three million dollars of funding for the deployment of Intelligent Transportation System equipment along this area of I-75 and US 441 with a goal of avoiding similar events in the future.

A System Manager approach is being used whereby the Department purchases, tests, integrates and configures the 12 visibility sensors, 15 CCTV cameras, 2 thermal imaging cameras, 21 vehicle detection systems and 5 dynamic message signs being placed around the Paynes Prairie area. A low bid contract was awarded to Hinson Electric for the installation of structures, conduit infrastructure and 12 plus miles of fiber optic communication. The Gainesville and Jacksonville TMCs will be monitoring the system 24/7 for roadway incidents and potential fog/smoke events in the future. The objective was to provide advanced warning to motorists when traffic congestion or low visibility conditions were present along I-75 or US 441.

On the afternoon of January 21<sup>st</sup> the District Two office held a Ground Breaking ceremony at the I-75 southbound rest area near the northern limits of this project. State Secretary Prasad, District Two Secretary Evans and Representative Perry gave inspirational speeches on the reasoning and goals of this deployment. The ITS staff provided table top displays of all the equipment being deployed with the exception of a dynamic message sign. Instead of a thirty by eight foot

sign we showed them the inner workings of this device. We also incorporated a temporary installation of a thermal imaging/CCTV camera at the rest area so that we could display the features of this technology. All attendees were allowed to play with the camera to get a feel for the features of this device.

The amount of attendees was impressive, especially with a cold front and pelting rain hitting the area a few hours prior to the ceremony. We had TIM members, media and the public in the crowd that I estimated to be near 100. Several questions were posed to Department staff about the project with positive feedback from all. This region of our District has been eagerly awaiting the deployment of ITS in their area for the past several years, thus this was no "small event" to them. They totally understood the purpose and goals of our program with the commitment that they would help in any way they could.

When the Ground Breaking ceremony ended the focus was set for a quick and effective project that could help avoid similar events to what occurred on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Hinson has begun to work on the project with positive news that they will be housing their employees in the Gainesville area during the work week. This is a key financial and project commitment by them since it means they'll begin work at the crack of dawn and will not call it a day until sunset. With a one-year lease in hand I doubt if they want to incur additional costs by extending this project more than one year. We anticipate that this deployment will be completed by February of 2015 but hope to have access to the system by the end of this calendar year. Once the system is up and running several of our Alachua County TIM members will be given access to the CCTV cameras, visibility sensor data and detector

Continued on following page



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

information for better management of any incidents that may occur. I promise to share more information on this new technology in future articles.

On a program note I am happy to say that Donna Danson is back on her feet and should return to work in the month of March. In late January she had to take extended leave due to surgery on her spine. Everyone in the TMC kept their fingers crossed and said plenty of prayers along the way. Two weeks after surgery we paid a visit to Donna at her home and were amazed by the progression of her healing. She still has limited movement and is restricted by a neck brace but her goal is to be back at the office by the middle of next month.

I can honestly say we've missed her knowledge and skill set along the way as we tried to cover in this extended absence. Jill Dawson (Metric Engineering) has been a big help in picking up some of Donna's duties but it's not the same as having someone with 13 plus years under their belt. Let's hope that it continues to be smooth sailing for Donna as her healing process continues. Until next month...

Pete Vega  
District 2 ITS Engineer

### **NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE**

The month of February was a very interesting time for me when dealing with the North Florida TPO projects. First and foremost is that they've provided me with additional consultant staff support to accomplish their goals. Many of you may remember Don Fullerton, a former City of Jacksonville Traffic Signals staff member. Well, he's back and is providing significant technical

support to our local agencies in Duval, Nassau, Clay and St. Johns County. Likewise, the NFTPO System Manager, DRMP, has Nick Devito providing support on a full-time basis. Between the two of them we have made significant strides in addressing some outstanding tasks within the region.

Don Fullerton is focusing on the performance of the traffic signal controllers, timing plans and trouble tickets. Nick Devito is focused on Bluetooth, CCTV cameras and the arterial communication network. This past month we began to conduct weekly meetings to go over anticipated and completed work within the region with a focus of finishing many of the outstanding tasks by this April. Our objective is to have the system fully "tweaked" this calendar year in anticipation of a clean shift to the new RTMC later next year.

Speaking of the new facility, we are now making significant strides in the project. The Architect is progressing towards design development plans that will allow the System Manager to begin turning dirt. The building footprint is complete, landscape design is nearly finalized and minor adjustments are being made to the floor plan. It began to get pretty exciting when we started talking about furniture, carpeting and interior design. At that point we realized "this is a reality" so we must now prepare for the move.

Likewise, I must now begin the task of developing MOUs with all the participants in this facility. Fortunately, we made a concerted effort to focus on the future so we could benefit on cost saving measures taken for lighting, HVAC and external climate. Our goal is to make this facility a benchmark for future RTMCs around the country and the State of Florida.



## **NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE continued**

I had the opportunity to discuss the future of the arterial ITS program with Jeff Sheffield near the end of this month and it felt good to know the NFTPO had the same vision as the Department. The objective is to do our jobs very well in a cost-effective manner with the use of economies-of-scale that builds upon the past relationships developed through our North Florida ITS Coalition. The road map has always been there but we are now witnessing the benefits of the ground work that began nearly 10-years ago.

Pete Vega  
District 2 ITS Engineer



## **MAINTENANCE**

As noted in the last Newsletter, we have started our new ITS Maintenance Contract and once again the Contractor is Traffic Control Devices. With no transition time or learning curve needed we anticipate the same service level we have been getting for the past several years. This means that the motorists of northeast Florida should continue to have up to the minute traffic information available when needed.

The District Two ITS Program has been seeing quite a bit of activity recently, including several new upcoming design contracts, more concentration on equipping arterial roads with ITS, connecting local agencies to FDOT fiber for data and video sharing and many other exciting

new initiatives. In preparation for several of these new initiatives the ITS Maintenance Section will be doing small projects to fix issues with the existing ITS infrastructure and make some wireless communications connections to ensure the projects are able to be completed with no issues on our part.

A few of these projects will include making new fiber connections to local agencies, repairing fiber optic cable damage, replacing loose/damaged fiber connectors and installing high bandwidth wireless antennas. These projects will allow FDOT and local agencies to share data and video between their networks and allow coordination between agencies for such important traffic related issues as traffic signal timing/coordination, emergency and transit vehicle preemption, freight movement, incident response and coordination and emergency evacuations. It will also create the groundwork for future projects to enable vehicles to communicate with roadside infrastructure in an effort to increase travel time reliability and decrease the number of incidents.

With Hurricane Season less than four months away, we are already making preparations to do maintenance on the bridge wind sensor sites in St. Johns, Clay, Nassau and Duval Counties. We want to make sure these sensors are functioning properly prior to the start of Hurricane Season so we can share wind speed data at these bridge locations with our local partner agencies during high wind speed events. We will also be reconfiguring several of these sensors, as NOAA has determined that we need to switch transmit channels on several sensors in order to avoid possible disruption due to other devices using the same channel at the time of our transmissions.

Kevin Jackson  
ITS Field Specialist



### **CONSTRUCTION**

The Phase 7 Project on the I-295 East Beltway, starting at Atlantic Boulevard and going north to the I-95 Interchange, has completed construction. Since the last Newsletter, all of the device subsystems have been tested with exception of the CCTV system. The project team is still awaiting delivery of the repaired CCTV lowering device, which failed in December. Once this lowering device is received and installed, the CCTV subsystem will be tested. Once the CCTV subsystem passes testing, the full system will be tested and upon passing the system test the project will be handed over to FDOT.

The final plans have been submitted for the Phase 9 Project on the I-295 East Beltway from I-95 going north to Atlantic Boulevard. This project was previously put out for bid, but there was a protest of the proposed contract award and so the project had to be put out for bid again. The project is now scheduled to Let in May 2014.

The I-10 Interchange ITS Project, which includes the installation of fiber optic cable, CCTVs and MVDS within the area of the I-10/I-95 Interchange, is still behind schedule. The contractor is currently working on installation of devices, power services and MVDS poles. Upcoming work will include installation of CCTV poles, bridge mounted conduit over King Street, fiber optic cable installation, and ITS cabinet installation. This project is currently scheduled to be completed in February 2014.

The JaxPort Fiber Installation Project, which includes the installation of fiber optic cable to connect FDOT to the JaxPort Talleyrand and Blount Island Terminals, has completed construction. The fiber optic cable was installed and tested this month and the project has been accepted.

The SR 23 Toll Project, which is installing ITS on SR 23, I-10 from I-295 to just west of SR 23, and I-95 through St. Johns County is still under design. The ITS portion for I-10 from I-295 to West of SR 23 and I-95 through St. Johns County will be the first stage of construction. This construction will complete the installation of fiber optic cable on I-95 from North of Jacksonville to South of Miami. It will also allow Florida's Turnpike to connect to SR 23 for their tolling needs.

The I-75 ITS Project in Gainesville from CR 234 to SR 121 began construction on February 11, 2014. This project will install fiber optic cable, CCTVs, vehicle detectors and Bluetooth travel time readers along the I-75 corridor within the project limits. The project will also install 2 DMS and 2 CCTVs on US 441 in the area of Payne's Prairie. In addition, FLIR infrared CCTVs and visibility sensors will be installed on Payne's Prairie on both I-75 and US 441. The contract duration for this project is 400 days.

John Kell  
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager



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



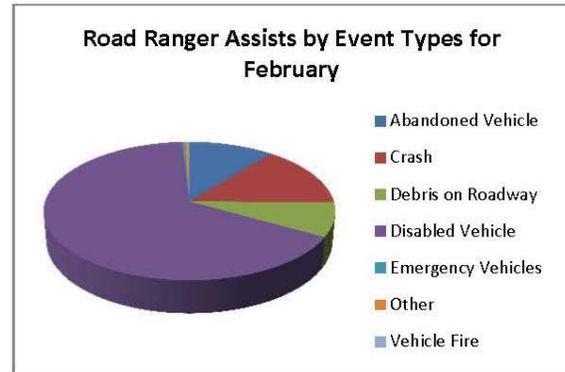
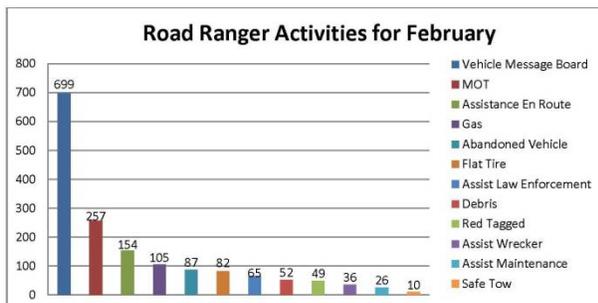
**ROAD RANGER UPDATE**

The Road Ranger service is a free service provided by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and its partners. It provides a direct service to motorists by quickly clearing travel lanes of minor incidents and assisting motorists on the interstates. It has proven to be an asset in incident management on our roadways.

In the month of February a Road Ranger Safety Meeting was held at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center at 11:30 A.M. Marshall Adkison from Adkison Towing kicked off the meeting by reminding all of the Road Rangers that this service is a group effort and we all learn from each other. The meeting mainly focused on the proper procedures and maintenance of traffic to help keep everyone safe. Two Road Rangers, Mike Livingston and Robert Highlands, were also recognized for providing excellent service to motorists who were stranded.

For this month the Rangers provided a total of 1,173 services to the motorists and incident responders. They keep on full alert and are prepared to assist motorists in their time of need.

The following charts illustrate the Road Ranger Activities for the month of February as well as the different types of reported events.



Road Ranger Safe Tow services on the arterial roadways in the Jacksonville area are also proving to be an essential service. The Safe Tow service is provided to motorists on a 24/7/365 basis. It helps with incident scene management by making incident scenes safer for all responding parties' involved as well as traveling motorists. For the month of February we have had 10 safe tows so far.

**RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE**

Fortunately, there were no RISC incidents in the month of February so none of our RISC vendors were activated. All of our vendors remain vigilant and prepared in case there is an active call. This program greatly assists with our goals set in the Open Roads Policy of clearing our interstates within 90 minutes.



### **ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team meeting was held on February 12, 2014 at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office at 10:00 A.M. The following agencies were represented: Metric Engineering, FDOT ITS, FDOT Traffic Management Center, Alachua County Environmental Protection, Atkins, FDOT PIO, FDOT EOC, DBI, Alachua County Sheriff's Office, FDOT Traffic Operations, Florida Forestry Service, Gainesville Traffic, Gainesville Police Department, FDOT Gainesville Maintenance, FHP, University Towing, and the Alachua County Fire Department.

Craig Carnes kicked the meeting off by welcoming the TIM Team to the Meeting and reviewed the purpose of the meeting for everyone involved. We then went right in to the Emergency Operations Center updates given by Ed Ward and Construction updates given by Laurie Windham. Ryan Crist gave the 511 update and discussed some of the enhancements being made to the fl511.com website to make it more user-friendly. He also informed the Team of the spike in the 511 usage during Winter Storm Leon and how important this service is to users during emergencies.

The TIM Team would also like to wish Laurie Windham all the best as she embarks on her new journey at Wild Adventures in Valdosta, Georgia! This was her last TIM Team Meeting and we are sad to see her leave but excited for her next venture.

Immediately following the meeting, the Team conducted a meeting to debrief the recent RISC incident which occurred on January 6, 2014. Recognition was given to University Towing for responding so quickly to the incident. The Team also discussed how communication between all

parties involved is an essential key to making incidents similar to this one easier to manage and look forward to working together in the future.

Our next meeting will be held on April 19, 2014 at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office. Looking forward to seeing the TEAM there!

### **FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The First Coast TIM Team will hold its next meeting on March 18, 2014 at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center at 10:00 A.M. We look forward to having members from all responding agencies to make this meeting successful so that we can provide a cohesive service to the public. The District 2 First Coast TIM Team also hopes to meet with the TIM Team in District 5 in Flagler County to discuss incident management between the borders of Flagler County and St. Johns County.

#### **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.*

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Traffic Incident Management Website:  
<http://jax511.com/D2TIMwp/>.



### MARKETING

It's a sound we're all familiar with here in the south. No, not the droning of Cicadas caught in their monotonous cacophony of song - that dissonant discord of chainsaw meets Uncle Bud's snoring - this is a more delectable sound. And if you strain your ear just right and lean in the direction of I-95 South, you'll hear the beginnings of a faint rumble. It's the sound of motorcycles, thousands of them, heading down to Daytona for the city's 73rd annual Bike Week. Every year, just as the smoke clears from the Daytona 500, motorists of the two-wheeled variety (and sometimes three) flock to Daytona for Bike Week.

In preparation for this annual pilgrimage, we set out on four wheels to make sure these seasoned riders had plenty of 511 information on hand. Our first stop was the Adamec Harley-Davidson showroom at the corner of I-95 and Baymeadows Road. Their store is a popular stopping point for riders traveling through the Jacksonville area. We left them with plenty of 511 brochures and a handful of goodie bags to distribute among riders and store employees. If you haven't had a chance to visit any of their area showrooms, stop in and say hi. You're in for a treat! My favorite is the "mini museum" of vintage motorcycles they keep on display. Some are originals, previously owned by some of the founding members of the Adamec Harley-Davidson family.

Our next stop was the I-95 Florida Welcome Center where we had the privilege of greeting riders as they crossed the state line. We set up our 511 booth and gave away brochures, beach balls and tissues. Based on the number of comments we received about this being "pollen and allergy season," I take it the soft tissues were a welcome relief. Bike Week is set for March 7<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>. For more information visit <http://www.daytonachamber.com/daytonabikeweek/search.cfm>.

Our busy, but extremely rewarding month, ended with a trip to the Jacksonville Equestrian Center where FDOT held its inaugural Northeast Florida Construction Career Days February 25 – 27<sup>th</sup>. Hundreds of area high school students showed up during this 3-day event for an informative time of learning and hands-on demonstrations. Ryan Crist regaled the troops with tales of wind sensors, car accidents and near misses with hurricanes...well, something like that. At any rate, it was good practice for when his twin preschool age children become teens!

Whether you're headed to Bike Week next month or just hoping to plant your toes in the sand at one of our area beaches, make sure your trip begins with a call to 511. You can also log onto [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com) or, of course, download our free 511 Traffic App.

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

Sherri Byrd  
Marketing Manager



Adamec Harley-Davidson is ready for Bike Week, and making sure the Bikers "Know before they go with 511"



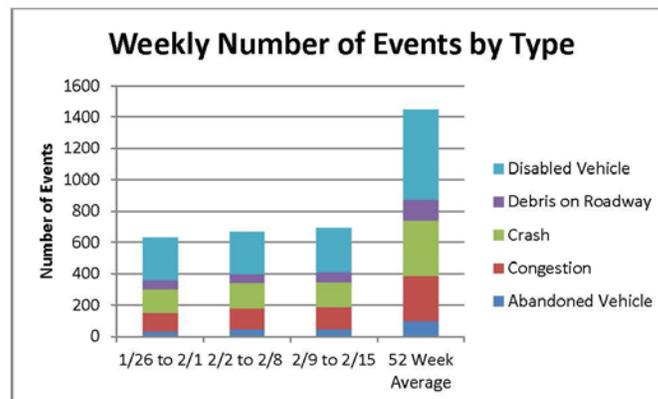
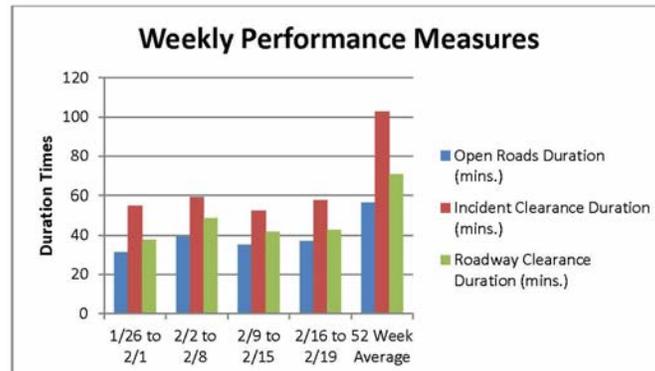
## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Winter Storms and Polar Vortices? We have had an interesting couple of months since the year has begun, but thankfully we have had a significantly lower number of events in February than previous months. Due to the cooler temperatures of 29 degrees and below some nights, which have inflicted the District 2 area, there have been fewer travelers on the roadways. The congestion events for this month have also decreased by a substantial amount which correlates to less drivers being disabled on the road, a lower amount of debris on the roadway and fewer abandoned vehicles sitting on the highways.

During the month of February, the number of crashes has significantly decreased in comparison to the previous holiday months. Between January and February alone there is a significant difference of about 30 crashes.

The Incident Clearance, Roadway Clearance, and Open Roads durations were slightly higher this month than the previous month of January, but substantially lower than the average for the past 12 months.

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



Sherrell Lall  
Metric Engineering



## OPERATIONS



Although we did not experience our own snowpocalypse like our neighbors to the immediate north, the effects of Winter Storm Leon (aka cold weather) were felt in District 2. While we were not bombarded with 2.5 inches of snow, District 2 did face the very present danger of ice.

The District 2 RTMC coordinated and worked out plans for possible ice closures on Northeast Florida's interstates and arterials with Construction, Florida Highway Patrol, FDOT Maintenance and Asset Managers, and EOC. The main focus being on communication and early detection. ITS equipment was utilized to identify ice as early as possible and alert partner agencies while also utilizing Road Rangers, Law Enforcement, and Maintenance Asset Managers for our "boots on the ground".

Though even before the threat of ice appeared we began a rigorous campaign to warn motorists of possible ice when temperatures dropped into the lower thirties. In anticipation for what we had already seen in Atlanta and throughout the Panhandle District 2 RTMC operators warned motorists of possible ice and reminded everyone on the roadways to use caution. Our deployment spanned from the 511 web and phone system to Interstate DMS to our newly minted ADMS on major arterial roadways.



District 2 RTMC Operators also assisted with the dissemination of traveler information for the Panhandle during their massive roadway closures on Interstate 10 and state roads. Our operators aided in the placement of floodgates and coordination with the Florida Highway patrol. During the 3 day storm period our Operators posted almost 200 floodgates providing detailed information to motorists. Not only were we posting floodgates to the 511 system but people were listening. 850 area code calls jumped from 1% of statewide calls the previous week to over 10% the week of the storm. I-10 requests jumped from 577 to almost 4,000 over the same period. People know where to go when there is trouble on the roadways!

ITS Operations had a busy time but prevented the worst as we all buckled down for the extreme cold. To paraphrase Montgomery Burns we "turned a potential Chernobyl to mere Three Mile Island. Bravo!"

Jesse Gilmour  
RTMC Supervisor



### **SPOTLIGHT ON...KARI BISHOP**

I am currently a senior at the University of North Florida (UNF) graduating with honors in late April with a Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering. Many times I am asked why I chose to pursue engineering, as are most engineering students. Everyone understands that the curriculum is not an easy feat. My answer to the question usually beats around the bush, but, honestly, engineering chose me. I started college not having a clue where I wanted to go in life and changed my major, regularly. I started a civil engineering major because it seemed to be one of the majors with the most math classes. I got into the classes required as prerequisites and realized, for myself: this is not going to be effortless. Normally, I got by without cracking a book and still excelling. Physics I woke me up. I was in a class with tons of other students who were naturally brilliant. I had to study every day, but after I completed that class, I found it to be the most rewarding grade I had ever earned. Semesters went by with classes that just kept getting harder. I loved every minute of it, even if I was constantly complaining. Graduating will be the biggest accomplishment of my life and, most likely, one of the paramount feelings.

When taking classes at UNF, I was able to experience a little of all the different fields of civil engineering including environmental, geotechnical, structural, and transportation. I learned the processes of wastewater management, how to achieve soil strength parameters from laboratory testing, the elements that go into designing columns and beams, and then, there is transportation. I learned about traffic queuing and density parameters. I was fascinated with the requirements in designing highways. There are many elements that go into creating a roadway that most people overlook. The size of lettering is a calculated part as well as the distance each sign is placed from

intersections. There is a required width of shoulder for different circumstances. I was eager to learn more and the timing could not have been better.

I was brought on with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) as an intern in the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). My official duties were meant to assist the Traffic Operations Office with the development of ITS. Thus far, I have been able to learn how ITS operations actually work and how much more effort is required than meets the eye. I started the program by learning about SunGuide. I shadowed operators to gain an understanding of how they incorporate the cameras (CCTV), dynamic message boards (DMS), BlueTOAD devices, and detectors (MVDS) into their everyday works. The operators' main job is to alert travelers of traffic incidents to help keep the roads safe. The behind the scenes, technical aspect of ITS requires the most thinking. The engineers have to decide where to place each device. The technology cannot be placed too far apart, but it would be uneconomical to place them too close together and then, there is always a question of where the power supply will come from. All the devices are connected to their cabinets, master hubs and eventually, to the operators. This is done with fiber optic cable (FOC) and an engineered redundancy to ensure the functionality of all the devices all the time. After the beginning stages are done, the devices have to be installed and maintained, regularly.

Some of the greatest opportunities being a part of the FDOT has presented me have come from outside the office. I was able to do a ride along with a Road Ranger where I saw first-hand the importance of implementing ITS on our roadways to keep travelers safe. I went to site locations to calibrate MVDS devices. This



### **SPOTLIGHT ON.. Kari Bishop continued**

was interesting to see how devices are only machines and require intelligent input to function properly. I participated in my first groundbreaking ceremony for the future Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC) which inspired me to want to be more involved with the future of ITS.

In order for ITS to operate properly, communication with the other branches of the FDOT Traffic Operations Office and other law enforcement offices in Jacksonville is vital. When incidents occur, the Road Rangers are dispatched to assist Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) and Florida Highway Patrol (FHP). The coordination of these departments allows for the incident to be better managed and the highway be cleared more quickly. ITS devices can assist Operations with obtaining crucial information for traffic patterns that, otherwise, may be assumed to be static. ITS proves that weather plays a key role in the function of traffic patterns. Likewise, traffic studies done in Operations show where ITS needs to be implemented to further enhance the safety of a particular region.

The future of ITS and its counterparts lies in interconnected vehicles, vehicle to infrastructure connection, and, ultimately, autonomous vehicles. Interconnected vehicles can provide safety and help prevent accidents, not just with motorists, but with pedestrians and bicyclists, too. It can, also, supply drivers with more detailed information of what is to come and allow better decision-making. Vehicle to infrastructure will allow the driver to connect much further than the approximate five miles with vehicle to vehicle. This connection is real time adaptive and will send incident information, including location and other important details, to traffic operators. Thus, the operators can send responders with more accurate information of what to expect at the scene of an incident. While

it appears safety comes from the previous vehicle connections, the autonomous vehicle comes with convenience. Travelers going longer distances will be able to chose the most effective route for their journey and sit back.

As the future of the Department evolves, I will, also, be growing professionally. To become a Professional Engineer, I will need to pass the Fundamental Engineering Exam. Per recommendation of several professors, I will take this in April. After graduation and passing this test, I will be considered an Engineer Intern (EI). As an EI, I would like to enter the FDOT PE Trainee Program to contribute my skills in problem solving while expanding my compass of understandings. I will be able to go through different branches, such as Operations, Production, Safety, and Maintenance. It will give me the privilege of learning the interconnections of every office. I will be able to grasp an understanding of how District 2 relates with the other Districts in Florida and across the nation. Meanwhile, I will be working on gaining a Masters Degree and Professional licensure. In five years, I hope to be back with the Traffic Engineering and Operations Office where the previous mentioned innovations have matured to help implement this cutting-edge technology in Jacksonville to make the highways and arterials a safer, more efficient place.

### **ITS Engineer Comments**

Over the past 12 years in the ITS program there have been many interns and COOP students that spent time under my supervision. Several have gone on to successful careers in the transportation industry while some have faltered along the way. During my time with many of these

Continued on following page



**SPOTLIGHT ON..Kari Bishop continued**

students I was able to pick up on the intricacies of a student that would lead to success in the Department. I can honestly say that Kari Bishop would be an asset to the Department if given the opportunity. Why may you ask? Well, the first thing that impressed me was her ability to accept an assignment and run with it from start to finish. Nothing pleases me more than to give my employees a task and then to let them find the answer on their own. Most times it's led to failure but I can honestly say Kari is unique in that she has not let me down during the time she has spent with our office.

One exceptional thing that separates Ms. Bishop from the rest is her ability to focus on the now AND the future. From day one Kari has wanted to know how she could continue her career in transportation and any opportunities that may exist with the Department. When I informed her about the P.E. Trainee program I saw her eyes light up like a Christmas tree! Unfortunately, I had to break the news that there were several dozen other college graduates shooting for the same "brass ring" so the odds were low that this opportunity would be available to her upon graduating. Did that stop her? Heck no! She continued to perform at a high level for me knowing that I had little to no pull in the decision on future trainees.

Instead, Kari took my advice and sought input from past trainees in the program. She even had the guts to request an opportunity to speak with our Director of Operations, Nick Tsengas, since he could provide his vision on the P.E. trainee program. I can count on my two fingers the number of students who would take the initiative to pursue their goals and dreams like Kari has done during the past few months. She will be graduating this coming spring with a focus on just trying to get an interview for a P.E. Trainee position. That's all she can ask for and



Kari Bishop, so many ITS devices, so little time

the rest is up to fate. I think the one thing that may have calmed her nerves was my comment that it would be the Department's loss if she was not given the opportunity but there will be another Engineering firm that would fully benefit from her talents. Best of luck to Kari Bishop over the next few months!

Pete Vega  
District 2 ITS Engineer



**PHOTO GALLERY**



**Construction Career Days**

Top L: Students from Nassau County  
L: Ryan Crist speaking about ITS and 511  
Bottom L: RTMC Staff



Sherri, with Welcome Center employee Gail Harris, demonstrating the new Visit Florida interactive photo display



