



Jamaica...no ITS, yet!





**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS (TSM&O)
PROGRAM MANAGER**

On June 22nd the Central Office ITS group hosted a Regional ITS Architecture (RITSA) update workshop in Jacksonville for District Two and partnering agencies. This workshop focused on editing previous work done with the RITSA for our District as well as to add any new projects that may have been generated since the last workshop. For those unfamiliar with the process, the Federal Government has a National ITS Architecture (NITSA) that the Department uses to develop a State ITS Architecture (SITSA). Each District is required to build their RITSA from the SITSA, however if any new and ingenious technological project is desired by a region then the change begins at the RITSA level and bubbles up to the NITSA. Do I have you confused yet?

Basically, the goal at the end is to deliver a successful FDOT project which involves technology and a large amount of investment that will meet initial expectations. Issues that arise with these types of projects include scope creep, ballooning project budgets and extended construction schedules. Many federal agencies like FHWA, FTA and the Department of Homeland Security require that any federal funds used on these technology type projects are shown in the RITSA. These government agencies can deny funding to a region if the requested project is not shown and can actually delay or deny funding for future technological projects if the District does not incorporate this project in RITSA (i.e. use State funds instead). In the past several years, funds for ITS projects have been denied to certain Districts who did not comply with this requirement. The Department's initial SITSA was completed around 2003 and the initial District Two RITSA was done in 2005.

About five years later this RITSA was updated to address any changes in the District's ITS program as well as to train new individuals involved in ITS.

The workshop held on June 22nd was to update what was done since 2010 and to display a change in the website format that will make it easier for future projects.

Josh and I were told that we had a fantastic turnout when compared to attendees at the District One, Five and Seven workshops. I attribute it to the team type atmosphere we have with our partnering agencies. I was honestly disappointed that there were not more participants, however we had good representation from traffic signal offices, law enforcement, transit, FDOT and public works staff. The workshop began by going over the basics, the website and then the requirements for a System Engineering Management Plan (SEMP), Concept of Operations (ConOps) and Traceability Matrix. The instructor touched on the "V-diagram" and the purpose of each step in the process for a technology project.

Central Office staff were in attendance and had a keen interest in this workshop since they recently received their ITS Program Assessment Review (PAR) from FHWA that touched on items addressed during the day. To my knowledge, this was the first PAR ever done by FHWA in my 13 years with the ITS program. Each District provided four projects for review by FHWA. The analysis looked at if the project was in the RITSA, if a SEMP was done, did it contain a ConOps AND SURPRISINGLY if the District had done a PITSA (yes, Project ITS Architecture!). In my opinion, the Districts did pretty good yet there was room for improvement. The major concern in this PAR was that federally funded projects handled by partnering agencies via LAP agreements were not complying with all the

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**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS (TSM&O)
PROGRAM MANAGER continued**

requirements. This became a bone of contention because the Department's ITS program was not included in the planning, design or construction of these projects, yet we were being held accountable for the end result. As an example, let's say a local agency wants to upgrade their traffic signal controllers, add CCTV cameras, incorporate new signal controller software and a few arterial DMS along a corridor using federal funds in the amount of over \$500,000. This agency signs a Local Agency Project (LAP) agreement with the District that allows them to design and construct the deployment using these federal funds with no involvement from the ITS staff. If they do not insure that this project is contained in the RITSA, create a SEMP/ConOps or develop a traceability matrix then the District ITS office is held accountable for this mistake and "gigged" during the PAR. Not fair, huh?

An even better example is that a local law enforcement gets a federal grant to install CCTV and vehicle cameras for dispatch operations using Homeland Security funds. They must also follow the same process required by FHWA if federal funds are to be used for this effort. On most occasions, the ITS office is not part of the application or decision making process, therefore we are unaware of this project. The law enforcement agency is now REQUIRED to insure that we are made aware of this effort or they must take the lead on the documentation needed or they may not get the federal funding once the project is completed. Sounds kind of scary, doesn't it?

The process we are required to follow is not new, just different from what the Department has been accustomed to in past dealings with

FHWA. This concept was first developed by the military during World War II when technology was being used to make better war machines. Scope creep and expanding budgets were the main concern back then but then the realization came to light that documentation for what had been done on successful projects was not being maintained. The federal government had enough when they saw an enormous amount of technology projects missing expectations and schedules. Most involved software development to make the system work properly, so schedules could be missed by years if the responsible agency did not get a handle on the project.

Fortunately for District Two, we banged the drum loud enough where we have the necessary augment staff (i.e. consultants) to assist the ITS Office and our partnering agencies with this effort. The effort is not really hard, however the key component is communication! During the workshop I used the example of the Homeland Security funds that the City received to install CCTV cameras for the 2005 Super Bowl. The funding process was quick so the RITSA, SEMP and ConOps were not done. Once the City completed the project we learned that the only access to these cameras was at the Stadium and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, hence partnering agencies like Fire/Rescue, Transit, FHP and FDOT had to be on-site if we wanted to utilize this resource during the week-long celebration.

If we'd followed the process there would have been an opportunity to put the necessary network equipment and software in place to provide the back-up support. We could have done this to monitor the cameras at the TMC and the operators could have redirected motorists away from congested areas to other roadways accessing the stadium area using the Interstate DMS. Instead, the staff had double duty by having to make multiple phone calls to

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**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS (TSM&O)
PROGRAM MANAGER continued**

get information regarding congestion that could be disseminated on the signs and through the 511 system. In the end we survived but I feel it was because the Philadelphia and New England fans were so used to congestion and having to walk that they could not tell the difference.

On a final note, near the end of the workshop Central Office realized that they needed to expand training opportunities for consultants and agencies that do not normally deal with ITS projects. They have tried providing training at the annual Design Conference but this has a limited reach so other options are being considered. In the end, the reality is that we do not want federal funds denied because such a simple process was not followed. It would be quite embarrassing to lose out on a million dollar project because someone forgot to comply with federal requirements.

Pete Vega, District 2
TSM&O Manager



**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS
ENGINEER**

As ITS Deployment Project- Phase 9 nears completion the amount of ITS cabinets deployed in the field continues to rise. With SR-23, Express Lanes and Payne's Prairie to follow in the not so distant future, security has become a focus for us. ITS deployments carry a large financial investment to not only design and build but to operate and maintain. We, as in the Department, looked for ways outside of the trusty number 2 key that could help not only protect our investment but assist in tracking access and maintenance activities. The number 2 key has long been used by the Department

and several municipalities as a universal access point into cabinets statewide. This standardized, all-encompassing key is now becoming outdated as a measure of security due to the off the shelf nature of the lock and key hardware. The type of tracking available with the CyberLock would allow for more accurate performance measures on ITS Device Maintenance and add a layer of accountability.

Where to begin? We looked for a solution that provided a cost effective system that allowed for control and versatility while increasing security and accountability. Our research brought us to CyberLock. CyberLock is a key centric system that checked off all of our To-Dos throughout our deployments. Through programmable keys our access and accountability should be managed at an entirely new level. We started off with purchasing about a hundred locks with smart keys that should be ready to install later this year.

With the purchase in place how do we roll it out? TCD, our ITS Device Maintenance Contractor, will replace existing locks at high traffic cabinets, followed by others, with CyberLock electronic cylinders. We estimate this to take about 30 minutes per cabinet. The Smart keys then need to be programmed for user access with defined privileges. We are now ready to use our new system.



Programmed access can be allowed on a per user basis to specific cabinets and time periods of the day/week with a set time that access will expire. With a ready to use Smart Key we are

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NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER continued

now in business. When the Smart Key meets the CyberLock the cylinder will be energized and access will either be denied or approved based on the user's permissions. Both the lock and key will record ALL access events to help with tracking and accountability. Once the key has expired it needs to be returned to the Department and linked with the communication device where data is downloaded to the Cyber Audit Management Software and reviewed for Quality Control. The Smart Key is re-programmed and ready to be used again!

Our initial purchase should get the ball rolling but it will take a lot of time and effort to get our entire network on the new system. The benefits are obvious and we look forward to getting started. We think we chose wisely with CyberLock providing us the cost-effective system that will add that layer of security and accountability we desired. Stay tuned to future newsletters for updates on how CyberLock is performing.

Josh Reichert
ITS/TMC Program Manager

NORTH FLORIDA TPO

The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization eagerly awaits the move to the new RTMC. They anticipate relocating their staff sometime in October after the dust settles from the partnering agencies moving in during the month of September. In the meantime, there's lots of preparation needed for the North Florida ITS Coalition since it's been a couple of years since we've generated new projects for the NFTPO. Based on the article related to the

RITSA I feel it's about time that we have another North Florida ITS Coalition meeting in the next two months. There are many new faces involved and mature systems that need to be interconnected so the timing is right now that the new facility will be put into use before the end of the year.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the NFTPO has earmarked a minimum of one-million dollars per year for ITS efforts in the region. If the partnering agencies follow the RITSA process and communicate we can stretch these dollars exponentially by using local resources. A majority of the pieces are in place so many of the new ITS projects will be smaller in scale. There are some larger, more expensive projects needed in the St. Johns County area, however we are hoping that our partnering agency, JEA, can come to the rescue by handling the most expensive part of our work. Fiber communication efforts can be 60 to 70% of the cost on a project and JEA has tons of dark fiber that would benefit Coalition partners. If they were willing to "lend" us a few strands then we could take care of many denser communities in St. Johns County at a relatively low cost.

The timing for the move to our new facility could not be any better since Jacksonville will be hosting this year's FDOT Autonomous Vehicle Summit in December. The tentative location for all the activities will be on Jaxport property but we hope to show off the new RTMC by being a staging area for many of the activities and presentations. We realize it's a gamble to host an event in Jacksonville during that time of the year but we are ready to put on a show with the NFTPO leading the way! The last time Jacksonville hosted a major ITS event was nearly ten years ago in December. I still



NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued

remember everyone’s quivering lips on the golf course as temps barely cracked the 60 degree mark. Luckily for us, the Jaguars were hosting the Steelers on a Monday Night so all was forgiven by the end of the week (who would have known there were so many Steeler fans in Florida!!!).

For partnering agencies reading this article, I ask that you prepare a list of desired ITS projects that can be presented to the NFTPO in the coming month. Doing so will expedite the process and will assist in prioritizing everyone’s needs for the next five years. If you are not certain what projects are needed in your area please reference the North Florida ITS Master Plan at the www.NFTPO.com website to refresh your memory. If you need to discuss, please do not hesitate to call me with your questions.

Pete Vega
District 2
TSM&O Manager



CONSTRUCTION

All of the Dynamic Message Signs and Arterial Dynamic Message Signs have been delivered to the Phase 9 Project (I-295 from the south I-95 interchange to Atlantic Boulevard). The Contractor has also received all of the structures

for these signs. They are scheduled to begin installing the signs along the Interstate and local roadways in the coming weeks. They are also currently working on the installation of the final device poles, establishing power services, installing device cabinets, and installing pull boxes and fiber optic splice vaults. Project completion is anticipated around the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Crews have been installing fiber optic conduit, pull boxes and splice vaults along the southbound shoulder of I-95 in St. Johns County from the CR 210 rest area going south to US 1 near Flagler County. Once this work is completed, the contractor will install fiber optic cable within the conduit. This fiber will be used to connect FDOT District Five’s ITS system with FDOT District Two’s ITS system. The fiber will also be used for communications to new ITS devices to be installed under an upcoming construction project which will start following the completion of this fiber optic installation project.

The project to install ITS devices and infrastructure on I-75 and US 441 in the area of Payne’s Prairie is close to the integration and testing phases. The majority of the ITS device cabinets have been installed, the fiber optic cable is being installed, and the majority of the power services are complete. Integration and testing should begin in June but due to some issues with receiving power at two sites and remaining contractor work items, project completion will be delayed for several months.

Craig Carnes
Metric Engineering



MAINTENANCE

Technologies are constantly evolving and ITS is very reliant on technology. Within the past few years, the District Two ITS Department has started using digital CCTV cameras instead of the older analog technology. The new digital CCTVs can provide 1080P HD resolution and are now beginning to have the 4K technology which is being used in newer TVs. Not only is the picture quality better, but the digital CCTV does not need a separate encoder meaning that there is one less failure point. Recently it has been decided that when an analog CCTV on the ITS system fails that it will be replaced with a new digital CCTV. Traffic Control Devices has also been replacing the CCTVs on I-10 from I-295 to I-95. Some of these CCTVs have been in use since the project was constructed over 15 years ago.

This picture, at right, was taken within the current Express Lanes Project on the I-295 West Beltway. This cabinet, as installed in 2007, was approximately 3 feet above grade. The Express Lanes Project is widening the roadway and will be relocating much of the existing ITS infrastructure and many of the devices. As you can see they have raised the area around this device considerably and did not take into account that heavy rains would cause water to pool in the depression. During a recent storm, water got into the cabinet as well as the power service and caused damage.

There was also another fiber optic cable hit on the Overland Bridge Project this month which caused communications issues for our ITS Department as well as the City of Jacksonville's Traffic Signal network. With all of the construction that is occurring around Jacksonville you never know what issues will

arise from one day to the next. Oh, and we can't forget about all of those upcoming summer thunderstorms that are going to keep us busy.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist



ROAD RANGER UPDATE

The First Coast Road Rangers provide a free service to the traveling motorist and play a crucial role in incident management. They are dedicated to helping stranded motorists and they accomplish that by responding to all types of incidents along the District Two's Florida interstates. The Road Rangers help clear the roadways by assisting motorists with activities such as providing fuel, assisting with tire changes, jump starting vehicles and even providing small emergency repairs. The main goal is to help reduce traffic delays caused by minor incidents and help improve the safety conditions for first responders.

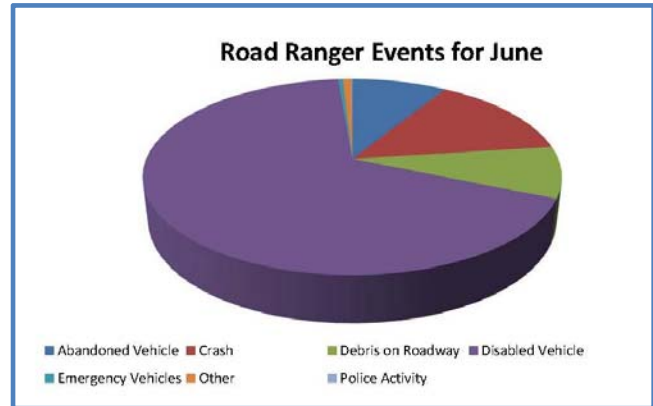
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ROAD RANGER UPDATE continued

As usual, the Road Rangers held their monthly safety meeting this month on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 11:30 AM at the FDOT Urban Office. Greg Gaylord welcomed the First Coast Road Rangers and then gave a brief presentation on why these meetings are held and reminded them of the best safety practices. He stressed the fact that these meetings are held every month to keep all of the Road Rangers alert while helping motorists on our interstates and to reduce the risk of an incident. The Road Rangers learn from one another and these meetings present a great opportunity for the Road Rangers to meet and share their experiences to help one another while out on the roadways.

The following charts illustrate the event types and activities that the Road Rangers have performed and responded to so far for the month of June through the 18th. Our Road Rangers always contribute to clearing the road quickly and have been extremely busy this month. We can always count on them to provide MOT for first responders and respond quickly and efficiently to any given incident as we can see below with the range in their activities. They also helped close to 800 disabled vehicles so far in June. This number alone serves to show us how necessary this service is here in District Two.

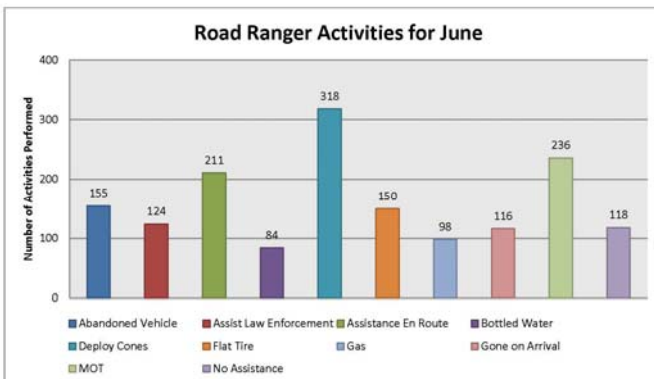


RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE

The Rapid Incident Scent Clearance (RISC) Program is a quick clearance improvement initiative which is designed to clear major incidents quickly and efficiently while keeping under the Open Roads Goal of clearing our interstates within 90 minutes.

The RISC program is most commonly used during major incidents that cause complete roadway closures on limited-access facilities where a smooth traffic flow is key to traffic management. District 2 currently has RISC in 9 counties covering I-10, I-75, I-95, I-295, 9A, and J. Turner Butler Boulevard.

Fortunately, District 2 has not had any RISC incidents so far in the month of June but our partners remain vigilant and prepared if needed.





**ALACHUA BRADFORD TRAFFIC
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team held its bi-monthly meeting on **June 10, 2015** at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Avenue at 10:00 A.M. Josh Reichert opened up the meeting by letting everyone know that the purpose of these meetings is to work together as a TEAM and learn from one another. The meeting was kicked off with the Emergency Operations Update by Ed Ward. Ed gave brief highlights from The Governor's Hurricane Conference that was held in May and shared some of his knowledge with the group. He also informed the group that, per predictions from Dr. Gray and the National Weather Service, District 2 is expected to have a low number of hurricanes this year. However, please be aware that all responders need to be prepared. Similar predictions were given in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew hit the First Coast and left a lasting impression.

The TEAM then jumped right into their 511 and ITS updates. Josh gave the good news to everyone present that the Florida Department of Transportation is looking into potential private sponsors for 511. This is extremely good for the TEAM as certain updates can be made to the system to provide an excellent service for the motoring public. Rebecca White then informed the TEAM of the many Construction Projects

occurring in the area and also provided updates on current activity which has the potential to affect congestion here in District 2. As usual all attending agencies were allowed to voice any concerns that they may have to provide a way for the TEAM to come together as a whole and have unity.



Craig Carnes then provided an update on the SHRP 2 Incident Management Training Course which was recently held in Starke on May 5, 2015 from 6PM to 10 PM. He stated that there was a great attendance and that there has been an overall positive response from the SHRP 2 training. If anyone is interested in the SHRP2 Incident Management Training Course please contact Craig Carnes at ccarnes@metriceng.com or Misha Gonzales at (904) 260-1567/melder@metriceng.com. Craig has a flexible schedule and is willing to work with any agencies' schedules; including nights and weekends to make sure the course is available for groups of ten or more trainees.



The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team will hold its next bi-monthly meeting on August 12, 2015 at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Avenue at 10:00 A.M. Please mark your calendar to attend this meeting. Your attendance is valuable to the success of the Team.



FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The First Coast TIM Team will hold its next bi-monthly meeting on **July 21, 2015** at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center, 2198 Edison Avenue at 10:00 A.M. Please mark your calendar to attend this meeting. Your attendance is important to the continued success of the TEAM.

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.

TEAM VISION:

Through cooperation, communication and training the Teams intend to reduce incident scene clearance times by 10% each year through 2015.

Donna Danson
District 2 ITS Program Manager



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

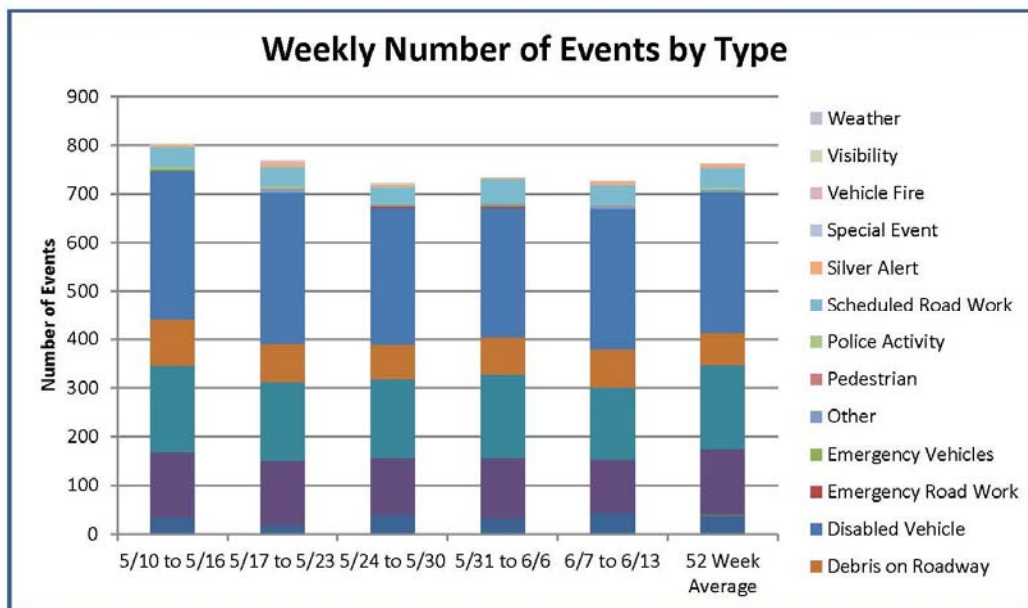
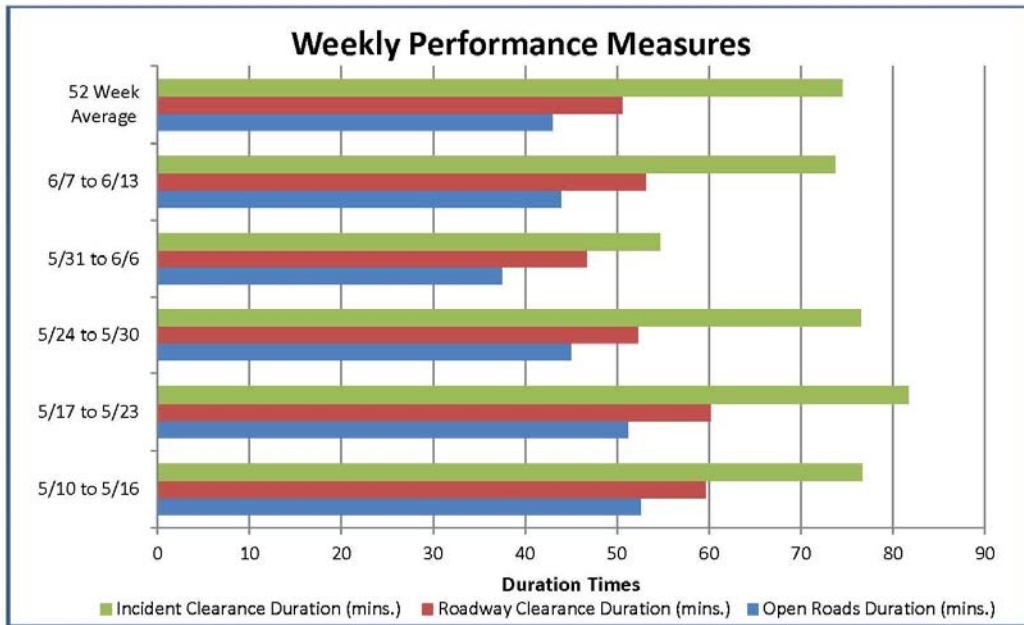
Ah June! The month with the longest daylight hours of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and when school is out for the summer. This of course means more travel here in District 2 and of course, with increased travel brings more incidents and congestion on our roadways. So far for the past month, the Road Rangers have been involved in close to 4,500 activities alone here in District 2. This has contributed to a spike of almost 1,500 more activities from last month around this same time. We sure are keeping our first responders busy! Thankfully, we have not had that much rain in the month of June, only 0.88 inches, but typically June is ranked number 3 with the most precipitation in the month. This can definitely contribute to the number of vehicles we have traveling on our roadways. Who wouldn't want to travel with all these sunny days?

Our Open Roads Duration, Roadway Clearance Duration and Incident Clearance Duration also reflect the amount of travel on our roadways. All of our duration times have been above the 52-week average for the month of June, but we are still well under the designated goals. The main activities that the Road Rangers have been involved in include debris, abandoned vehicles, congestion and crashes, but we have had a significant increase in the number of disabled vehicles on our roadways.

The charts on the following page show the Performance Measures for the Open Roads, Roadway Clearance, Incident Clearance durations and events for the past four weeks.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued



Sherrell Lall
Metric Engineering

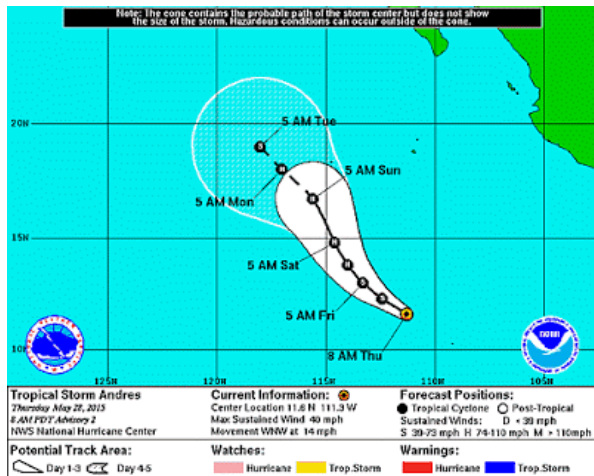


OPERATIONS

Hurricane Season has begun! With that comes a time to look at our plans and procedures we have in place and work through our own TMC Preparedness Plan. Thankfully NOAA has predicted a slower than usual season however we all know it only takes 1. So far, named storms Andres, Blanca and Carlos stayed away from us and just plain old fizzled out. Hopefully NOAA's prediction stays the course and delivers another year of preparedness with no actual storms. While we get ready for Hurricane Season June marks the start of another shift for the TMC, summer break. Let's take a peek at what these two things mean to us.

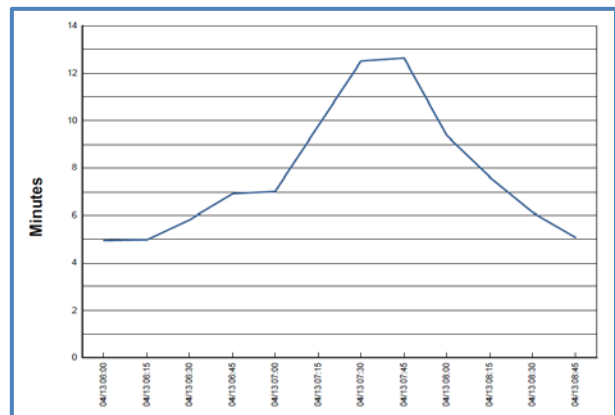
post and during storm activities as well as what should be done leading up to landfall 3, 2 and 1 day(s) out. The last part is making sure the TMC can handle staff that might be stuck here for 3 days. Checking food, flashlights, mattresses and more plays a role in being ready. We try to be ready for everything and annual reviews of these policies and procedures are critical to our success in the case of an emergency. For more information on forming a plan for home make sure to visit [Florida Disaster](#).

On the roads we all have enjoyed the travel times that come with summer break. I get that extra 20 minutes a day with my family because of it. That and the fact I know before I go and use 511 (shameless promo). Travel times have improved and rush periods have shortened but that does not mean we are in the clear. With increased speeds and more precipitation comes the increased likelihood of crashes. Remember to stay alert and use 511 to be an informed, safe motorist. You can see the 2 graphs below that show what travel times look like when school is in vs. when school is out on I-10 eastbound in the morning. Yes please!



School In (peaked at 13 minutes and lasted from 615AM-845AM):

Hurricane Preparedness is important not only for the Transportation Management Center but having a plan at home is equally important. Having the proper plan in place at home will help you meet your professional requirements as well. In the TMC there are 3 keys to our preparedness. First, figuring out who can work which involves checking Operator availability, how to get in touch with everyone and updating emergency contact information. Once we have who will be able to work we go through our Emergency Preparedness Plan and make updates on an as needed basis. This covers pre,

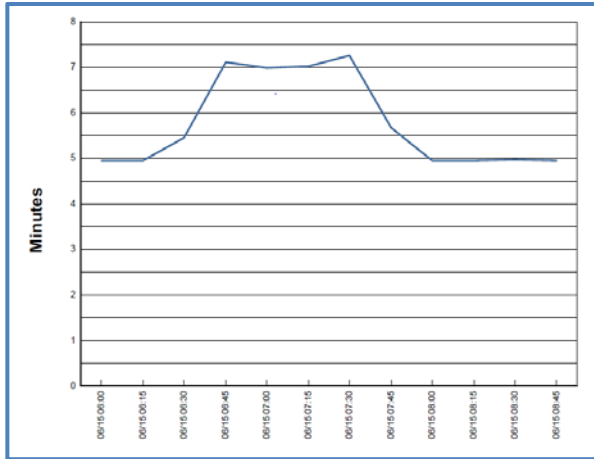


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OPERATIONS continued

School out (never reaches 8 minutes and ran from 630AM-8AM):



As we stay prepared for anything here at the TMC, May finished out strong. We managed over 3,300 events of which 500 had some type of lane blockage. The Road Rangers were busy as well helping out at 1,200 of those events. This is the time of year to remember to not only know before you go, use 511, but to also have a PLAN! So GET A PLAN and USE 511 this Hurricane Season!

“Know Before You Go! Use 511 and stay safe.”

**Ryan Crist
TMC Manager**



MARKETING

I am grateful for a lot of things; sunscreen, air conditioning, Starbucks coffee and first world countries that have functioning highway systems! My husband and I just returned from a trip to Jamaica where our journey took us high into the mountains. In our little rental car, we skirted potholes, herds of goats and motorcycles stacked 3 and 4 people deep.

Now, my husband Tim is a really good driver. He has chauffeured our family around a dozen or more foreign countries. While I’m usually sitting in the passenger seat spouting out unnecessary driving instructions (I think the Book of Proverbs refers to this as the “dripping faucet” syndrome), Tim has his hands at 10 and 2, desperately trying to acclimate himself to the new (and unfamiliar) rules of the road.

See, in Jamaica, you drive on the left side of the road, but the steering wheel is on the right side of the car. The roads are narrow, curved and often contain no clear markings or dividers whatsoever. So we’re driving along when all of a sudden a car coming from the opposite direction veers into our lane. Tim, to avoid hitting the car, jerks the wheel to the left and strikes a raised curb. BAM! Just like that, we blow a tire and bend the rim beyond repair. Where is a Road Ranger when you need one?



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MARKETING continued

But lo and behold, out of nowhere, 4 Jamaicans appear, ready and willing to lend a hand. Not 5 minutes later, they've expertly removed the damaged tire and hoisted the spare in place. They assured us they didn't want payment. No, no. No payment for their services. However, would we mind coming across the street to have a look at their little shops? Perhaps there would be something we might want to buy. And what souvenirs do the kind shop owners offer us? Ganja Brownies and Mushroom Cake! (at the special rate they usually reserve for locals) Gotta love those friendly Jamaicans. While we were extremely grateful for their services, we had to politely turn down their offer of "sweet treats."

You have no idea how many times I picked up my iPhone, staring wistfully at the 511 App on the screen, wishing I had access to reliable traffic information. We encountered accidents, road construction and lengthy traffic delays in Jamaica, but all we could do was sit there and wait for the dust to clear.

Tim and I really did have a good time. We met the nicest people and saw the most incredible sights! What an adventure. Jamaica is a poor but beautiful country, filled with amazingly genuine people. When we arrived back at the airport and jumped into Tim's Jeep, however, we gave thanks for two things: 1) cars equipped with steering wheels on the left and 2) access to 511!

Before leaving for Jamaica I had the pleasure of attending a Health and Safety Fair at Sea Star Line in the Deerwood Park area. At the event I spoke to almost 100 people, and of those, roughly one-third downloaded the 511 app. Next month, we'll head over to Fidelity National

Financial in the Riverside area. June and July are shaping up to be good travel months, so wherever you're headed make sure your trip begins with a call to 511. You can also visit www.FL511.com or download one of our free 511 Traffic Apps available for Apple and Android devices. Know Before You Go and Keep Moving! Now if we can just convince the Jamaicans to invest in their own Intelligent Transportation System.

Sherri Byrd
Marketing Manager



Always, fresh bananas for Sherri, not brownies!



SPOTLIGHT ON...JEREMY SPARLING

On August 4, 1981 a baby boy born in Palm Beach, FL was named Jeremy Sparling. Don't let the geographical location of my birth be misconstrued. As Marshal Mathers (Eminem) said "I'm straight out the trailer." meaning my family was living in a trailer park in Indian Town. I'm not even sure if that is a correct name for the town. If it is, that may be sad. No offense to others that are from this area. My mother said that she had me at Palm Beach Garden's hospital because she was not happy with the service during her first birth; she had my brother John at Martin County Hospital. It kind of made me laugh when she told me her reasoning. It's like mom, you're having a baby, you're not ordering a medium rare steak with extra onions on the side. My mom was always trying to do better for us. By delivering me into a more upscale environment she probably thought I would take on this persona and not settle for less later on in life. I am by no means at the end of my progression. However, I think it worked. I was the only one in my immediate family to graduate high school and the only one so far to graduate college with a bachelor's degree. These are definitely accomplishments to celebrate but by no means do I gloat. I feel that whether my parents and siblings have an education or not they are talented individuals that I have learned from tremendously.

One of my mentors through life was my brother John. I'm not going to say that he was always the best influence but you take the good with the bad. One of the major things my brother taught me, was how to stay confident and keep my composure. This was an attribute I always admired in him. This stayed with me when I enlisted into the ARMY. I'll tell you confidence and composure is something one might hope for when you have what seems to be a pool of blood thirsty sharks (Drill Sergeants) screaming



and telling you to run in 10 different directions. Do pushups, pack your bag that I just kindly unpacked for you by dumping onto the floor, drink water. You have 15 seconds go. This was the beginning of a long relationship I would have with the United States ARMY. So I went off to the ARMY pretty much right after high school and was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003 – December 2003. People ask me how it was over there. My answer. Hot! Here is a fun fact. During the night it is freezing! Even though it wasn't the greatest vacation I ever had I would not have done it any differently. In fact the Military in general was an experience that I would not take back. I feel it added to the core values that I received from my family. Ok, so I will not leave this off without at least one cool story. My platoon was on QRF (Quick Reaction Force) for the Battalion. This entailed pulling guard for 24 hours, about 6 hours on and off and being prepared if any attacks were to happen. Our shift had ended and we were about to load up on the trucks to go back to our AO (Area of Operation). There was a lull. The trucks were not moving and I see what some



SPOTLIGHT ON... JEREMY SPARLING

continued

would call Delta Force; we call them OGA (Other Government Agencies). They were conversing with our upper chain of command. It turned out we had a tip that Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay were hiding out in Mosul. This was the area we were in charge of "policing" if you will. Being the highly motivated individuals we were, we went to try and persuade them to come out and surrender. That did not go so well. Unfortunately, there was a shootout and Uday and Qusay, among a few others, did not make it. Truth be told, everything was good until someone inside their barricaded building shot the dog of the OGA members. Then all hell broke loose. The good news was we suffered minor casualties. I saw Mr. Delta Force take a shot to the leg and bandage it up with a bandana. I know, straight out of the movies right? Then he proceeded to tell my commander he "ain't gettin on no damn bird." So my commander called off the Medical evacuation he had called in about a min prior. So that was my ARMY story.

After the military I decided that I wanted to pursue an education outside of being a highly motivated combat machine. Even though employers usually love ex-military personnel they can't do much with a resume that explains how you can field strip a M4 and reassemble it in under a minute. This motivated me to get some higher education. I ended up with an Associate's degree in Networking Systems and a Bachelor's in Information Systems Security from ITT Technical Institute. I really enjoyed college due to a constant atmosphere of learning and applying new techniques to my field. I don't know how many times I heard "You must master

your craft". So this has been my mission ever since. At the same time I was going to college I was also working for a Telephony and IT Infrastructure Company (LCS services). This helped tremendously in multiple ways. College helped me learn new techniques for work and work gave me real world experience that I applied at school. I liked school so much that I went back to become an instructor at ITT Tech. That was an adventure. I will tell you I definitely have a new perspective when it comes to teachers dealing with students and their issues. I still enjoyed it and I love teaching others. However, when you are teaching 20 to 30 students at a time it can be challenging. Now that I had confidence and composure from my brother, multiple core values from the military, education from college, and experience from Teaching and LCS services; opportunity was knocking on my door.

In February, 2014 my best friend told me about an opening at Metric Engineering. Over the course of 10 years my friend had shared stories and experiences while he was with Metric Engineering. I was confident that this would be the right move for me. On April 7, 2014 I was hired as an ITS Network Specialist. Believe it or not, I love my job and I love what I do. When I heard about the job my first thought was; roadways with network equipment? I was doubtful there would be any challenging situations for me. Be careful what you wish for. I get challenged in so many different ways with every network that I get involved with. Not one has been the same. Not only are networks and their configurations challenging, but there's also planning, coordinating, reviewing,



SPOTLIGHT ON... JEREMY SPARLING

continued

research and development, etc. The list goes on. ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) is a new and exciting field to be in. My position was created from an initiative that Pete Vega (TSM&O Program Manager) created. Pete gave me a vision of what he wanted the FDOT D2 system and the coalition of local agency's systems to be. I was excited. After being with Metric Engineering and working closely with FDOT D2 for over a year I soon realized this portion of the industry was going to be whatever we chose to make it. We may not control every variable and outcome but we have the ambition to create powerful, secure, and robust systems that will serve the future of our roadways. A personal mission of my own is not to settle and be content with average networking systems just because they seem to be operational. To a person that is not familiar with networking they could easily be content because one plugs everything up and communication is established. To a seasoned network professional multiple aspects such as scalability, redundancy, security, and monitoring has to come into play. Without this thought process networks can easily come back to haunt you. There is a plethora of procedures and protocols and we have to choose the best ones that will accommodate each individual system. The future of ITS is somewhat vague with new technologies such as connected vehicles on the horizon. Whatever the future offers us we must have the drive to be ready for it.

Besides Metric and FDOT D2, I have another full time job, my family. My wife Lisa and I have two girls and a boy Taylor, Tiffany, and Ryan. Every day it seems that they are growing like weeds. I constantly reminisce to a time when they were much younger. Taylor will be driving with a permit next year, Tiffany will be going to middle

school, and Ryan, even though he is still young, will go to a school without the assistance of his sister for the first time. Life does not stop after work. Everyone needs their attention whether it is taking kids to practices, doing homework, or cooking dinner for them. This is not to mention the chatting my wife requires, which I will not even act like I am a pro at. Especially because this chat time seems to fall during my decompression session with the TV. That's the technical term for zoning out. Even though I have my part in all of this, my wife is excellent at juggling these activities and makes my world a little smoother. When I'm not partaking in these family events I like to slip out and go fishing or hunting. I enjoy a lot of different activities this world has to offer but I truly enjoy fishing and hunting. This past year and a half has been a huge change for my family and me moving from Georgia. I feel we are all adapting to the change and it has been a good one. I have always longed for the day that I could say I love where I live, work, and play. As a direct reflection of our new life my family and I are thankful for all that we have here.

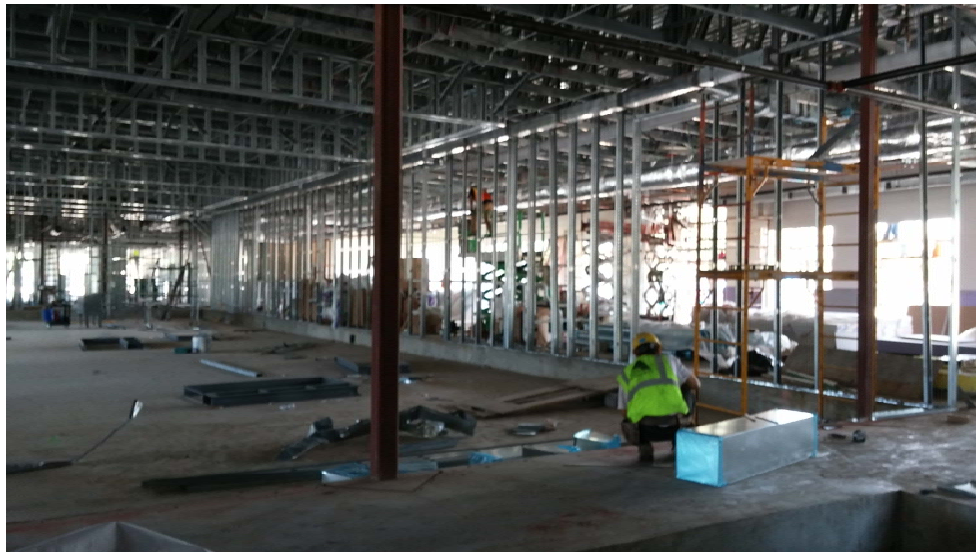




Photo Gallery- RTMC Progress



The beginning



Above, June 19, 2015; below June 18, 2015





**Traffic Incident Management
2015 Meeting Schedule**

First Coast TIM Team

FDOT Urban Office Training Center
2198 Edison Avenue, Jacksonville
904.360.5400

July 21, 2015

September 15, 2015 November 17, 2015

Alachua/Bradford TIM Team

FDOT Gainesville Operations Office
5301 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville
352.381.4300

August 12, 2015

October 14, 2015 December 9, 2015

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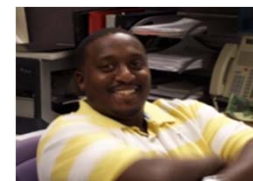
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