



It could never be said that Donna Danson just talked the talk. The way she walked the walk got her the coveted Golden Shovel Award. I mean, who needs heavy equipment to clear a truck load of gravel from the Interstate when there's a shovel around





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

On March 31<sup>st</sup> Ms. Donna Danson will call it a career with the Department as she heads into the sunset by retiring from the ITS office. Many of you should be aware that Donna has spent twenty-four and one-half years working for FDOT with a majority of that time spent in the ITS program. She could be considered one of the “forefathers” of the State’s ITS program due to her nearly 20 year tenure with the team. Donna has had the opportunity to dabble in many aspects of the program, however her biggest contribution came when she took over the North Florida and Alachua County Traffic Incident Management teams. Prior to her arrival these programs were good but when she took over they became great! She built a TIM program that’s been envied by many other Districts for over ten years.

When I first joined the District Two program in 2002 one of the key areas I was familiar with was incident management due to my years in the Maintenance Office. Due to this prior knowledge I had the opportunity to work closely with Donna on ways to improve the Service Patrol program as well as the TIM team. She was always a good listener, even when some of my suggestions seemed weird, but eventually she began to see the method to my madness. As an example, when I arrived to ITS she was managing a low bid Service Patrol contractor who kept her on her toes each and every day. I suggested to her that we pay a visit to his office for a surprise audit that would put him on notice. Donna stared at me and said “can we do that?” In all honesty, I was not sure if we had the right to pull his records on demand, however it seemed to work based on the obvious performance improvement by this contractor.

I must admit that Donna’s shining moment came with the TIM teams. I’d been associated with the Duval County team since 2003 and it seemed like a rag tag bunch that showed up to the meetings based on a requirement. Prior to Donna these meetings were monotonous and it seemed like little to no progress was being made. When Donna took over the team her “rah, rah” attitude brought a spark to the group that led to a growing membership and participation. At times I knew she would get mad at me when I asked her to tone down her emotions at these meetings, however her approach seemed to work based on all the results. Efforts like the 90 minute roadway clearance agreement, RISC and the enhanced Service Patrol contract would have never occurred without this attitude that she brought to the meetings. It evolved into a “good cop” (Donna), “bad cop” (Me) routine at our bi-monthly get together where to spite me they would get on board with her suggestions. I hope that her replacement can continue this successful program since it is critical to the overall survival of the ITS program.

I guess this is a good time to discuss her attitude with one of the most memorable events of my ITS career. Several years ago, a dump truck that was fully loaded with rocks blew a tire while headed westbound on I-10. This caused the driver to lose control of the truck and then run smack dab into our DMS structure in the median. This collision ripped out the upright, thereby causing the DMS to come crashing to the ground in the eastbound lanes. The truck spilled its load of rocks all over the eastbound lanes for several hundred feet and led to the closure of this corridor. Fortunately, no



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

eastbound motorists were injured or killed, however the driver of the dump truck was killed in the accident.

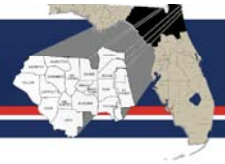
When we received word of this accident Donna and I grabbed our vests to head out to the site. Upon arrival we witnessed mass chaos due to the uniqueness of having this 4,200 pound sign in the middle of the road. On top of that you need to include the massive amounts of rock strewn from the inside lane to the outside shoulder for several hundred feet. After a few minutes Donna noticed that everyone was just standing around so she asked “what was the hold-up, don’t you remember the 90-minute rule?” She was told that all the on-site incident responders were told to wait for the tractor and forklift headed our way in the eastbound lanes. Unfortunately, this meant a long delay since this unit was stuck in traffic.

This plan was not acceptable to Donna and as the steam started spewing out of her ears the incident responders jumped into action. One FHP officer drove up stream, found a private firm with a forklift stuck in traffic and escorted him on the shoulder to the DMS. They quickly shoved this damaged sign onto the grass, however everything came to a screeching halt because they were now waiting for the FDOT Maintenance contractor to arrive so that the rocks could be cleared from the road. This sent Ms. Donna over the top as she paced around tossing rocks off the road bit by bit. She finally came to a stop and shouted for everyone to follow her lead. That stern look initiated the participation of 20 additional people and led to someone lending Donna a shovel to clear the road.

Obviously, such a major catastrophe hampered our effort to achieve that 90-minute goal but Donna’s actions definitely reduced the additional amount of time this corridor was impacted. It also showed our TIM partners that she was **SERIOUS** about this 90-minute timeline and she expected them to take the same approach. Donna’s actions spread like wildfire in the FDOT and she soon received the Golden Shovel from our District Traffic Operations Engineer that she has proudly displayed on the wall in her office until we relocated to the new building. I can only hope that her successor will have the same “go get them attitude” that Donna has brought to the program.

As everyone knows, I am usually all business when it comes to the program, but Donna and I shared our personal moments as well. One of the things I learned was that she is a survivor who will do anything and everything for the benefit of her family and kids. Prior to her FDOT career Donna worked in the private industry while teaching piano lessons in the evening to make ends meet. For several years it was up to Donna to raise her kids alone as a single parent, yet these kids never went without during their adolescent years. Coming from a similar upbringing I know this was a rough experience for her but she’s never complained about any of it and it shows with the upstanding children (and grandchildren) she has raised.

I have to admit that it’s going to suck once she is gone since every April 1<sup>st</sup> was our best opportunity to “prank” Donna. You see, this is her birthday so she never knew what to expect since sometimes we were naughty



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

and occasionally we were nice. It sort of got funny when we'd pull the same prank from a few years back and she'd still fall for it even when we thought she'd figure it out. I guess from now on we will just have to sneak over to her house to celebrate the occasion while trying to pull off a "door-bell ditch" along the way.

We plan to host a retirement party for Donna on March 15<sup>th</sup> at noon in the new building. If you are interested in joining us please contact me for the details. I can assure you that it's going to be a joyous and cheerful day as we wish Donna the best on her retirement.

On another note we have just brought Matt Harbert on-board as our ITS Maintenance PM. Matt has a number of years of experience in the ITS industry so this was a key pick-up for our program. The growth of our deployment has been astronomical so he will have a heavy burden to keep up with but I have the utmost confidence that he can handle it. His previous ITS experience was with Transcore, Miller Electric and Metric Engineering which are three of the best firms working in Florida's ITS industry. I just hope we don't do anything stupid to lose this valuable asset we've just acquired.

As 2016 moves along I can see the fruits of our labor paying off. The new facility has tremendously improved communication and incident response while assisting in finding the flaws with our previous operational approach. Now that Matt's here we have also placed a focus on the problem areas and equipment that hinder our daily performance. Josh has really grown into his position thereby now being on his

own when handling daily operations and maintenance. I can only pray that we find a replacement for Donna that can keep this program humming at full throttle.

**Pete Vega, District 2  
TSM&O Manager**

**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS  
ENGINEER**

As is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Matt Harbert as the new ITS Maintenance Manager.

As many of you all know, this position has been vacant for months after Kevin Jackson accepted a new position as the ITS Construction Liaison. We hobbled along those months but were able to get through, mostly due to Kevin's graciousness in continuing to support maintenance functions while performing his new duties. Since we were shorthanded, we were mostly reactive to a lot of the field issues facing our infrastructure.

What may be most exciting about Matt's employment here is his intimate experience with ITS, including District 2's (we stole him from our consultant). He has years of experience, including with Florida Turnpike Enterprise. As a result of this, he has started his time here with a sprint. This guy has really been gunning for the holeshot! We



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

have been developing a fairly lengthy list of “rainy day” maintenance tasks the past few months. Many of these are small special projects that benefit the strength and integrity of our infrastructure, as well as the City of Jacksonville’s and others’. Matt has already begun working with our maintenance contractor to get many of these tasks done.



If you see Matt around, give him a warm welcome (not to ITS, because he’s been here for a while, but to his new position). He has certainly already proven himself to be a hard worker and a team player. I will have to step it up as well to make sure he doesn’t completely outshine me! I am excited to see the results of having him in this new position and having ITS maintenance firing on all cylinders after months of being understaffed. In the coming issues, I will be able to brag about all of the projects done by our ITS maintenance guys as they become completed. Stay tuned!

**Josh Reichert**  
**ITS/TMC Program Manager**

**NORTH FLORIDA TPO**

The North Florida TPO staff has not let-up one bit on the ITS program since the move to the new building. They were one of the Champions in the City of Jacksonville’s application for the Smart Cities Challenge grant. This grant would award \$40 million in Federal funds to go along with a \$10 million donation from Paul Allen to one municipality that best displays the goals for the future of our transportation system. This effort lands right into our sweet spot with all the investment the Department and NFTPO has made along the North Florida roadway system. The upgraded traffic signal controllers, improved communication networks and ITS deployments are a plus. Top that with the massive Bluetooth deployment and we have most of the pieces in place to garner exponential benefits from these funds.

Our competition is pretty tough with Orlando also applying for these funds. The one advantage we have is that our partnerships cannot be matched anywhere in the State of Florida. We are the envy of all and have become the “model” that many other municipalities are trying to duplicate. The only thing that really sets us back would be everyone’s perception of our vision. We did it right by handling the deployment incrementally instead of dumping a ton of money into risky ventures. What we have works and now it’s time to get the word out so that we have a realistic chance to beat out cities like Orlando, Portland, Phoenix and San Antonio.

I have spoken to Jeff and even if we do not get the opportunity we will still keep pushing forward with our efforts in North Florida. One step is the



**NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued**

NFTPO's participation in the "Trends in Transportation" Power Breakfast being held March 1<sup>st</sup> and hosted by the Jacksonville Business Journal. This event will not involve Powerpoint or formal presentations but instead shall be moderated by Jeff as a true panel discussion. The panel will include Dr. Lily Elefteriadou (UF), Steve Grossman (JAA), Gregory Kreuger (HNTB) and myself as we conduct a Smart Cities conversation. Each of us will have an opportunity to offer opening comments about our areas of expertise and the types of projects or initiatives that we are currently working on in the Smart Cities space. After that the remaining discussion will be unscripted with the hope that we will get a multitude of questions from the audience.

If you are interested in attending the event will be held Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> from 7:30am to 9:30am at the Deerwood Country Club in Jacksonville with a fee of \$40 per plate. Please contact me for further information if you would like more details.

Now that we are all in the same building the ideas, concepts and plan of action are occurring on a daily basis to the point that I've actually got to make notes to remember. I always thought that I had the memory capabilities of an elephant but I now think that it's time to upgrade the hard drive in my brain with all the ideas we've come up with over the past few months. I have all the confidence in the world that the North Florida ITS Coalition team members can pull this off so it's not a question of how but when. So, if you think we've gone pretty far to this point **WAIT UNTIL CHRISTMAS** when we really blow your mind!

**Pete Vega, District 2  
TSM&O Manager**

**CONSTRUCTION**

Construction of the Phase 9 project has been completed and the project is now being integrated and tested. Personnel are working daily to get all of the device sites along I-295 and the arterial roadways throughout the project limits to communicate with each other and ultimately back to the RTMC. Motorists began to see test messages on the DMS signs on February 13<sup>th</sup> and will continue to see these messages until the signs are able to be controlled by RTMC operators. This project will allow RTMC personnel to view the entire corridor of I-295 between Atlantic Boulevard and the southern I-95/I-295 Interchange as well as portions of the adjacent arterial roadways. DMS signs on the interstate and ADMS signs on the major arterial roads will allow RTMC operators to post traffic and congestion information for people who are on I-295 or about to enter I-295 from the arterial roadway. Integration and Testing is projected to be completed by Mid-March.

The I-95 St. Johns County ITS Device Installation Project has been installing conduit drops and DMS foundations throughout the month. This project will use the recently installed fiber optic cable backbone along I-95 to communicate back to the RTMC. CCTV cameras, Vehicle Detectors, and DMS will be installed throughout the project limits from the CR 210 Rest Area south to the Flagler County line. This project is projected to be completed early next year.

Construction is ahead of schedule on the 87 mile ITS fiber optic cable project on I-75 which spans from SR 24 in Gainesville, north to the Florida/Georgia state line. Crews are over 90% completed with trenching in conduit and have continued installing conduit via directional boring. Bridge conduit and pull box



**CONSTRUCTION continued**

Installation\_began this month. The bridge conduit installation should be completed in March while the installation of pull boxes will continue for several months. This project is scheduled to be completed early next year.

**Kevin Jackson**  
**ITS Construction Liaison**

**MAINTENANCE**

Since we are still not seeing daily thunderstorms, the maintenance crews have not had to repair many ITS devices and have continued to replace the older analog CCTV cameras with new digital CCTV cameras. Besides camera replacements, crews have been doing preventive maintenance at all of the device sites to clean out the cabinets, remove ants and other pests, tighten connections and make sure that the air filters are clean. Preventive maintenance plays a big role in extending the life of electronic components and we always use this time of year to make sure everything is right throughout the system.

On the ITS Maintenance personnel side of things, a new ITS Maintenance Manager was hired this month and started work on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Matt Harbert has taken over the reins of the ITS Maintenance section and is settling into his new position. Matt has over 13 years of experience in ITS, including positions as an ITS Maintenance Specialist with Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, Assistant Project Manager with Miller Electric, and ITS Specialist with Metric Engineering. Matt also brings a wealth of knowledge from his previous experience with residential home construction and

his time as an Electrician. During his time with Metric Engineering, Matt has worked as a consultant for FDOT District Two ITS and in that time has obtained a wealth of knowledge about the District’s ITS system and devices. We look forward to his knowledge and guidance as we continue to build out the ITS system to become one of the largest ITS deployments in the State.

**Craig Carnes**  
**Metric Engineering**

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

It has been unusually cold here in District 2 and I can say that I am looking forward to spring, especially since the wise groundhog predicted that spring is going to come early this year. We have been dipping into the low 30’s on some nights and having a fair share of rain.... Yes. Rain. This must be the El Nino effect that we have heard so much about. As usual, the performance measures data reflects the strange occurrences here in District 2.

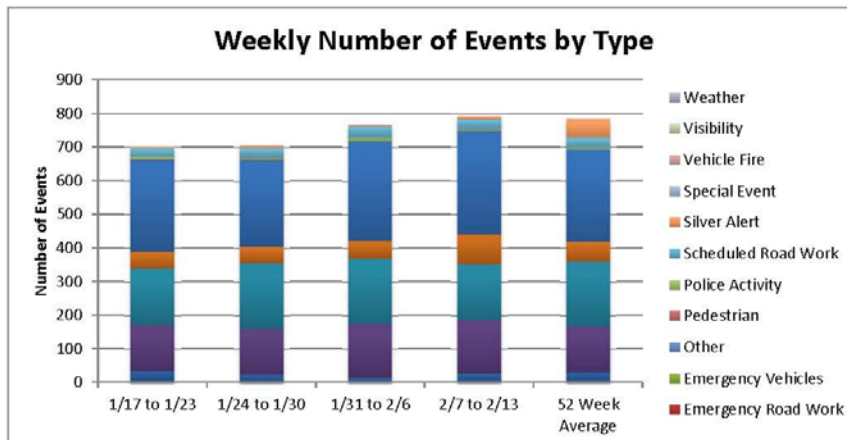
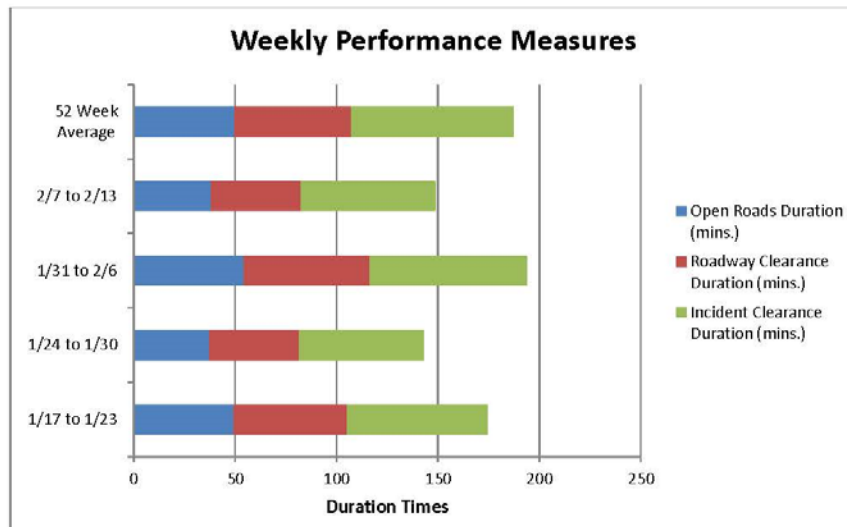
The past several weeks show that there have been 150 crashes in District 2 so far in the month of February compared to 155 crashes around this same time last month; this number equates to a 3.3 percent decrease in crashes. We also had a 15 percent increase in disabled vehicles on the roadways and a 63 percent increase in debris on our roadways. The data shows that both the cold weather and construction have had an effect on the number of Road Ranger events.



**PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued**

The Road Rangers have responded to 1,000 events and based on the trends, are expected to reach a significantly larger number by the end of the month. We can also see that District 2 has been doing well on their Open Roads Duration expectations. The average Open Roads duration for the past month was approximately 50 minutes, which is well under the 90-minute goal. With that in mind, our Roadway Clearance Duration and our Incident Clearance Duration are also meeting the standard requirements.

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



**Sherrell Lall  
Metric Engineering**





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

The Florida Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) created the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program as a tool to support Florida’s Open Roads Policy and established a 90-minute goal for clearance of motor vehicle incidents on Florida’s roadways. The goal of RISC is to quickly secure and restore highway facilities for public use and is a major component of Florida’s traffic incident management strategy. Our RISC program comprises nine counties and covers major incidents along our interstates. RISC has not been activated, so far, in the month of February.

**ROAD RANGER UPDATE**

The First Coast Road Rangers are an essential part of our Traffic Incident Management team here in District 2. They provide free services such as gas and water to the motoring public to assist them in their times of need. Our Road Rangers have proven themselves repeatedly and without them, we would not do such a great job.

The Road Rangers held their monthly safety meeting on Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 11:30 A.M. at the North Florida Regional Transportation Management Center (NFRMTC), 980 N. Jefferson St. During their meeting, they had the opportunity to come together and discuss several incidents as a group so that they can learn from one another. In the scenarios discussed, they also reviewed the best approaches to each situation so that the Road Rangers can assist the motorists and be safe at the same time.

The Rangers also went over the importance of the Safe Tow program and how it is beneficial to District 2. The Safe Tow program is designed to safely transport motorists who are in an unsafe location to the nearest, safest location to get them out of harm’s way. Cody Parham also stressed to the Rangers that taking the time to do things right is essential to the operations of the crew.

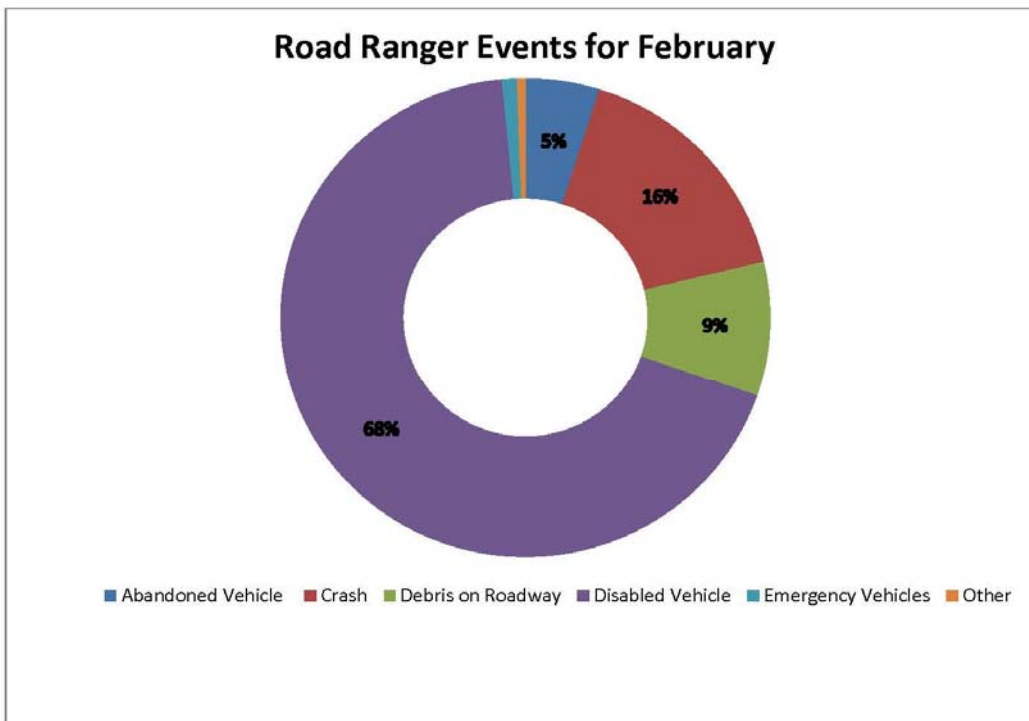
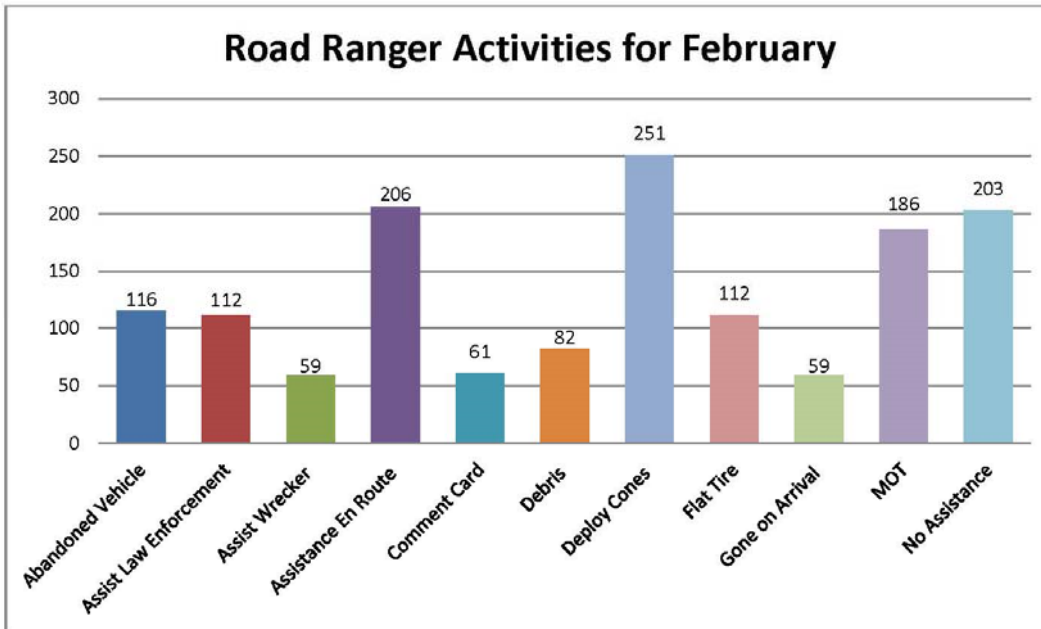


The charts on the following page show that the Road Rangers have been very busy so far during the month of February. They have responded to close to 2,000 events and activities. Our Road Rangers continue to show their dedication by working extremely hard to keep our roadways clear and congestion free. They have helped motorists with numerous activities, which include close to 650 disabled vehicles, 150 crashes and approximately 83 debris events.

Continued on following page



**ROAD RANGER UPDATE continued**





**ALACHUA BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting held its bi-monthly meeting on **February 10, 2016** at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office – 5301 N.E. 39th Ave., Gainesville at 10:00 A.M.

Ms. Donna Danson welcomed everyone to the meeting and of course got sentimental, as this will be the last time she will be hosting the Alachua-Bradford TIM Team Meeting. The TEAM members then kicked it into high gear as they discussed matters at hand starting with the Emergency Operations Update by Ed Ward. Ed explained to the group that currently there is an El Nino effect occurring in Florida, which is evident by the cooler temperatures.

The TEAM then transitioned into the ITS/511 Update given by Josh Reichert. Josh informed the group that due to recent fog issues the DMS on I-75 and US-441 has been frequently used and is working well. He also noted that the installation of fiber occurring on I-75 from SR 24 to the Georgia line is ahead of schedule, which means good news for the Alachua-Bradford area.

Josh informed the group that 511 is in the process of completely redoing the 511 system and travelers will be able to start seeing these changes by next summer.

If anyone is interested in the SHRP2 Incident Management Training Course, please contact Craig Carnes at [ccarnes@metriceng.com](mailto:ccarnes@metriceng.com) or Misha Gonzales at [melder@metriceng.com](mailto:melder@metriceng.com) /904-260-1567. Craig is available to work with any agencies' schedule; including nights and weekends to make sure the course is available for groups of ten or more trainees.

The next Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled for

**April 13, 2016** at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office – 5301 N.E. 39th Ave., Gainesville at 10:00 A.M. Please mark your calendars to attend this meeting. Your presence helps the TEAM come together and learn from one another.

**FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The next First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting will be held **March 15, 2016** at the North Florida Regional Transportation Management Center (NFRMTC), 980 N. Jefferson St at 10:00 A.M. We look forward to seeing everyone there!

**FDOT 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.*

**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**



## OPERATIONS

January was a busy start to the year for the Transportation Management Center (TMC). The month covered a nice blend of what the future holds for ITS, we tackled the refining of some old procedures, participated in training on existing technologies and started ventures into new coverage areas. It was an exciting way to kick off 2016 as everyone felt rejuvenated after the end of 2015 break.

On January 14<sup>th</sup> a follow up webinar took place with Central Office and other Districts about the Real-Time System Management Information Program (RTSMIP) and the Routes of Significance (RoS). RTSMIP was included in Section 1201 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

This was established in 2010 with a 4 year period to have real-time monitoring and sharing of data on Interstates (which FDOT already had) and a six year period to have it established on Significant Roadways (Arterials in Urban Areas). That November 2016 date is approaching but the work has already started. We identified our Routes working with local agencies and looked at combined resources to best cover those new arterial roadways. Providing travel times and information on lane blocking events, construction and significant weather will help improve roadway safety, alleviate congestion and inform motorists which creates options. The benefits of having a seamless Interstate and Arterial Roadway System coverage area will be exciting to monitor in the years to come.

On January 25<sup>th</sup> Josh Reichert and I traveled down to St. Augustine to discuss coordination

with the Asset Maintenance Contractor and the FDOT Maintenance Office. While we wait for the fiber job in St. Johns County to finish and the ITS deployment to begin our main goal is getting the most accurate information to the AM Contractor to expedite clearance. The TMC runs into issues with motorists not knowing exactly where they are calling from, the Law Enforcement not communicating back in real-time and sometimes not at all. Trying to work around these issues the TMC has been working with FHP to make sure the maintenance needs checklist is being answered and thought about from the ground up. I-95 through St. Johns is a tough stretch of roadway so whatever the TMC can do to make that safer is much needed. Accuracy and timeliness for road blockage, MOT requests, damage to the facility, debris and injury notifications are critical to their success as well as how that stretch of roadway performs.

Looking to the future, FDOT hosted a Northeast Florida Transportation Forum on January 27<sup>th</sup> to go over the Future of Managed Lanes. This was a wonderful opportunity to get the latest on these types of projects and the various processes in place. Current and upcoming projects were discussed in depth. Topics covered planning, financing, policies, making it multimodal, operating and maintaining the Managed Lanes, all of which provided great insight with what other departments were dealing with when it comes to Managed Lanes. Dealing with Operations we are usually one of the last involved though a significant investment needs to be made on a recurring basis to ensure all of that commitment is being utilized to its fullest with Operations and Maintenance.



**OPERATIONS continued**

January was a busy month on the real-time operation side of things as well as with training. We did Operator training on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> to go over the Paynes Prairie ITS deployment and the state of the program. Also on the 19<sup>th</sup> TrafficCast was in town to do follow up training on BlueTOAD. With technologies changing, coverage areas expanding and upgrades to existing infrastructure ongoing, continuing education is important. With the past, present and future on our minds January totals were high in the TMC. Over 3,000 events were worked with 30% of them being crashes and the Road Rangers assisting on more than half of those total events. An astounding 1,400 events had some type of lane blockage. 2016 looks to be a busy year so remember...**Know Before You Go and Use 511!**

**Ryan Crist**  
RTMC Manager

**MARKETING**

I recently came across an old African proverb that basically says, "To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together." This past month we were able to join forces with several law enforcement agencies, transportation officials and planning experts at the Statewide Community Traffic Safety Team Coalition meeting in Gainesville. While most of the attendees had at least heard of 511, some were unfamiliar with the system. Still, there were others who only had a vague working knowledge of 511 and were surprised to find out we had apps available for both Apple and Android products. Equipping our First Responders with this additional resource gave us immense joy, and we also know that somewhere down the road, there will perhaps be a domino effect as motorists begin to reap the

benefits as well. In an emergency situation for instance, where every second counts, response times could potentially be minimized, resulting in lifesaving medical intervention as well as quicker roadway clearance times. 511 is proud to be partnering with First Responders and Traffic Safety Officials across the State of Florida! A big shout out to Andrea Atran, Deedee Johnson and Holly Walker for allowing us to set up our 511 booth at the event.



Next stop, the I-95 Florida Welcome Center. It had been a couple of months since we last visited our friends at the state line, but with the checkered flag getting ready to drop at the Daytona 500 on February 21<sup>st</sup>, we knew it was high time we paid our friends a visit. We spent a couple of hours talking to race fans and Disney aficionados alike, and with the mild temps we've had this winter, who wouldn't want



**MARKETING**

to visit Florida? We then spent a little time converting those race fans and theme park fans to...511 fans! A win – win for everyone! All told, I'd say it was a very productive (and fun) outreach.



In the coming weeks, 511 will be well represented at several key area events. For starters, our information will be available at the Trends in Transportation Power Breakfast, March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Deerwood Country Club. If you're attending the event, please feel free to stop by the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization booth to pick up some of our 511 literature. Also, keep your eyes to the sky Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> as our 511 banner will be flying high over the Amelia Island Concours d' Elegance and the Gate River Run. And if you're heading down to the Gainesville Raceway March 17-20<sup>th</sup> for Gatornationals, our 511 information will be getting a little bit of Social Media attention as raceway officials push our up-to-the-minute traffic reports out to race fans via Facebook and Twitter.

It's our hope too, that wherever you're headed, you'll travel with us. "Know before You Go!" Call 5-1-1, visit [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com) or download one of our free 511 Traffic Apps available for Apple and Android. When it comes to the most up-to-date traffic information, we've got you covered!

**Sherri Byrd  
Marketing Manager**

**SPOTLIGHT ON...DONNA DANSON**

**Say it isn't so?!?!?! We know the rumors are true. You're officially retiring. But that doesn't mean we have to like it. Sigh. That being said, let's get to the nitty gritty.**

**First, how long have you been with FDOT?**

*I started with FDOT on October 9, 1991.*

**Sort of paint a timeline for us, if you will, of the various positions you've held while working at FDOT.**

*Until 1991 I was a happy, stay-at-home wife and mother of my five (5) precious children. At this time I worked from home running a piano studio and remained fulfilled with my student teaching and my chance to raise my children and be a good mom and wife. My life took an unexpected turn of events that caused me to take a job outside my home and provide solely for my children. I am ashamed to admit this, but I became angry and started questioning God, wondering why he would allow my and my children's lives to be changed. It wasn't long before I came to my senses and realized how wrong I was to question what was happening in my life. My dear friend, Martin Cole, knew I was looking for a job and that I had a background in math and engineering so he suggested I apply at FDOT. I started working for the FDOT D2 Maintenance Department as a permits inspector where I covered Clay County. I was happy at this job and worked and learned so much working with great people like the late Arnold Morris and Dan Cobb, Carol Wright, Cynthia Snelling-Perry and Joe Kyle. After a couple years, I advanced to Traffic Operations as an Engineer Technician where Jim Scott was my Manager, Richard Coffman was my supervisor, and my "co-hort" for justifying traffic signal lights, additional lanes, sidewalks, etc., for Richard and Mary Altman (retired) was Jennifer Graham*



**SPOTLIGHT ON...DONNA DANSON**

*(Brown-Savage). I learned a lot and gained many strong friendships while there. In 1997, I applied for and was awarded the first District 2 position as Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Engineer under the leadership of Marc Bounds. While I am no longer the only ITS personnel I have also been under the leadership of Walt Zebroski and now Jerry Ausher, Peter Vega and Josh Reichert. Starting from manually inputting messages on 8 changeable message signs (now dynamic message signs) and managing 10 cameras on one computer in my office using a DOS operating system, to managing operations in our new North Florida Regional Transportation Management Center (NFRPMC), The Road Ranger Service Patrol, the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) Contractors and the First Coast and Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management (TIM) teams, I HAVE WITNESSED MUCH CHANGE and to say I learned a lot is just not sufficient. I am so blessed to have seen and been a part of the growth of ITS, the Road Rangers, the RISC, the RTMC, and the TIM teams. Working with Jerry Ausher, Peter Vega, Josh Reichert, John Kell (retired), Kevin Jackson, Glenn English and Matt Harbert along with all the Metric Engineering and NFTPPO personnel, the (RISC) Contractors, the First Coast and Alachua-Bradford TIM Team members and the Road Ranger Service Patrol personnel, I feel I have been in one of the most exciting areas of the Department.*

**What’s the most challenging project you’ve worked on during your time with FDOT?**

*Since I had the good fortune of being at the beginning of the projects I am retiring from, many challenges were faced and handled. I always had positive and intelligent resources - Manager Peter Vega and Supervisor Joshua Reichert – to go to for advice and guidance.*

**The most rewarding?**

*Most important, I like feeling like I am making a difference – that I am helping someone. I consider all my assignments as rewarding. In each and every position and assignment I have learned so very much – not only facts and techniques – but I have grown in my personal and emotional knowledge. The reward of meeting and learning from all the many people I have met and worked with is truly at the top.*

**What happens to the Road Rangers now, in your absence?**

*District 2’s Road Ranger Service Patrol is a strong program with excellent owners (contractors), Greg Gaylord and Marshall Adkison and very professional Operators, so I know they will not miss a beat! My supervisor, Joshua Reichert, will continue to oversee this program until this program is handed over to a new Project Manager.*

*While I know the program will continue to be the greatest, I have to express my personal feelings about this program. Since I was lucky enough to actually “start” the first D2 Road Ranger Service Patrol under the leadership of Jim Hannigan, I have very personal feelings – guess it’s the “Mom” in me! All of the Road Ranger personnel are very close to my heart. The Department will never know how strong I feel as this is a very powerful tool that helps make the Department great.*

**What is your biggest “take away” from your years at FDOT?**

*I would have to say my biggest take away is the growth I have gained under the leadership I received. I realized the purpose for my life changing in 1991 – I had a lot of growing to do. I learned to be more assertive, to question, to understand, to professionally display my enthusiasm, and how to deal with people. Sometimes it hurt but this job has made me a stronger woman!*



**SPOTLIGHT ON...DONNA DANSON**  
**continued**

**What's the most significant change you've witnessed to date, as far as Transportation is concerned?**

*Now this makes me feel incredibly old as remember, I was at the beginning of several programs. When I started with FDOT we had no ITS, no TMC, no 511, no Road Ranger Service Patrol or RISC contracts, no Traffic Incident Management Teams AND we were still "killing trees" and doing paper files as no one had a computer and very few people had cell phones— we started going to computers and some electronic files a couple years after I was here and eventually did away with our vehicle radios to contact the FDOT dispatch for communication. When I look at our NFRTMC and the vehicles we deal with on our interstates, I think I could write a book on the changes I have witnessed with FDOT.*

**How do you plan to spend all of your free time, now that you won't be slapping at the alarm clock every morning?**

*Free time....not sure I know what that is. Seriously, I am hoping to catch up on duties around my home and spend more time with my family – especially the grandchildren (12 – 1 great-grand). I am hoping to travel and see parts of America. I have worked since the age of 10 years old when my father decided to be a chicken/egg farmer so this will really be the first time in my life I haven't had a job and someone depending on me. I plan to stay busy but take time to mediate, study and relax. I do not want to quit learning and growing. I want to always have the knowledge that I am doing something to help someone.*

*BTW: I can supply my resume in case anyone is interested.*

**Do you have any inspirational quotes you'd like to leave us with? Or perhaps some words of advice?**

*I would like to tell everyone to model themselves after the BUMBLEBEE:*

*The Laws of physics prove that because of the size and weight of its body portioned to the size of its wings, it is physically impossible for the bumblebee to fly – however it flies very well. Nobody told the bumblebee! Like I tell my grandchildren..... "CAN'T" is a bad word, you "CAN" do it.*

**And finally, what will you miss the most as you turn off your lights and close your office door for the final time?**

*There are not enough words to express what I will miss most as I truly love my job, the people I work with and the people who have patiently assisted me in my growth at FDOT. I do not want to leave! This world is changing so fast technology-wise and there is always something new to learn and something more to do to make our highways safer and more efficient. I will miss the continued professional growth I have received from all the leaders I have worked for.*

*One thing I know, even though I really don't want to leave, I will not again question God like I did when my life changed in 1991. I realize there truly was a purpose in the first change as I have received positive growth, learned so much, and have developed into a much stronger woman! I have been blessed by meeting, working with and learning from such great and intelligent people. I want to thank everyone I have worked with from the bottom of my heart.*

*I can't wait to see what this change will bring!*

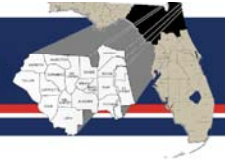
*Editor's Note: Donna will be greatly missed, but see the following page for what might be part of the next chapter in her life, along with bringing back her beloved chickens!*



**SPOTLIGHT ON...DONNA DANSON**  
**continued**



**Above: Could Annie the goat be Donna's newest adventure?**



Traffic Incident Management 2016 Meeting Schedule

First Coast TIM Team
FDOT Urban Office Training Center
2198 Edison Avenue, Jacksonville
904.360.5400
March 15, 2016
May 17, 2016 July 19 2016
September 20, 2016 November 17, 2016

Alachua/Bradford TIM Team
FDOT Gainesville Operations Office
5301 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville
352.381.4300
April 12, 2016
June 8, 2016 August 10, 2016
October 12, 2016 December 14, 2016

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