

## HURRICANE SEASON 2021

# KNOW YOUR ZONE BEFORE YOU'RE IN THE CONE!



## HURRICANE READINESS CHECKLIST



### **HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

- Cloth face coverings (for everyone ages 2 and above)
- 1 flashlight and batteries per person
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Liquid soap and hand sanitizer
- Tooth-brushing pads
- Water purification kit
- Whistle
- Extra batteries
- Fire extinguisher
- Two-week supply of prescription drugs
- Extra eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen

### **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**

- Cleanup supplies
- Backup phone battery
- Flat fixer for tires
- Work gloves
- Full tank of gas
- Appropriate closed for post-storm: hat, closed-toes shoes, dry socks, rain gear
- Animal care
- Cash
- Games and activities for kids

### **FOOD AND DRINK:**

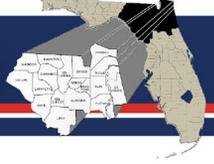
- 1 gal. of drinking water per day per person
- Non-potable water for hygienic use
- Propane gas for barbecue grill
- Two coolers for food and ice
- Manual can opener
- Nonperishable foods
- Plastic tableware and cups
- Plastic bags and plastic wrap
- Toilet paper and paper towels
- Wet wipes
- Fuel for folding stoves
- Pet food and extra water for your pet

### **FIRST-AID KIT INCLUDING:**

- Bandages
- Antiseptic
- Tape
- Compresses
- Pain relievers
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacids
- Medications for common illnesses
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items

### **INFANT NECESSITIES:**

- Infant medicine
- Diapers
- Baby formula
- Bottles
- Wipes



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

**885** (10/18/2023). Currently, that is the amount of days remaining until I reach my 30-year threshold for working with the Florida Department of Transportation. My approach on life is to “take it as it is”, so this is just a timeline for when I can make my decision on whether to retire, go on DROP or remain with the Department. Nothing in life is ever guaranteed, so as such, neither is this decision. However, I do have a little engine churning in my brain that is mapping out the time so that everyone in the TSM&O program is prepared when that moment arrives.

As such, I have spent a significant amount of time prepping the future leaders of the TSM&O program for the inevitable. This future includes Jose, Josh, Alex, Adam, and Evarist, since Dee Dee and Glenn’s opportunity to retire will be soon after mine. There may be others that come along the way; however, these are the few that I have been trying to nurture over the past two years. I have presented significant challenges to each with the hope that they would begin to think outside the box, since nothing is ever standard when you deal with technology. Over the next few paragraphs, I will share some of the things we have been trying to accomplish that I hope will cultivate their thought process long after I am gone.

For Jose, I am trying to take the benefits from his traffic signal background and mesh them with the applications involved in ITS and TSM&O. Each time we meet I try to push the envelope by asking “what if” when coming up with solutions. He just joined us in September of 2020, yet he has learned quickly that there are no limits

involved with technology. The key point I try to make with Jose involves the maintainability of the proposed solution. It is one thing to throw out a new gadget, but quite another to deal with the upkeep and performance. Oftentimes, I ask him to put on the “lawyer’s hat” when coming up with new ideas so that he understands there may be repercussions when we are wrong and do not maintain correctly. Basically, this means looking at the possible holes in the solution to see if they would stand up in court.

Josh is a unique talent who has a vast wealth of knowledge due to his previous career experiences. He is Glenn’s “right-hand man”, assisting us with the Traffic Signal program. He is also my in-house “go-to” guy for the most recent Connected Vehicle projects. Josh has a significant understanding of the internal workings of the computer hardware used with these types of deployments, so I often ask him to come up with ways to make it better. I have asked him to look at the Traffic Signal Maintenance program to determine how it can be refined, enhanced and streamlined to make it work for him, since he has inherited a program that has gotten long in the tooth over the past thirty years.

Alex is the key staff member that I am dependent upon to manage the daily operation of the ITS program. This includes the RTMC Operations/Facility, Road Rangers, RISC, ITS Maintenance, Express Lanes and Emergency Management. As the program evolves and matures, there is a need to begin measuring the performance of the program so that it can



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

be refined and improved over the coming years. The TSM&O continues to grow exponentially and as such he needs to develop a game plan to properly manage all the moving parts. Believe me when I say that this is a significant challenge, since we barely can breathe under our current environment, hence the goal for him to review the performance of daily operations and improve the process to keep up in the future.

Adam is an embedded GEC employee who helps our team keep up with the glut of new technology headed our way. He is our “go-to” guy for anything and everything involved with Connected Vehicle technology. I rely on him to oversee many project activities, as well as to keep the rest of the team informed. He is currently involved in an I-10 pilot project that examines the use of Connected Vehicle technology in daily RTMC and Road Ranger operations. This project involves roadway devices communicating directly with the Road Rangers via On Board Units and the RTMC via fiber optic cable. The hope is that in a scenario like a Road Ranger assisting with an incident, the Connected Vehicle devices will notify motorists via cell phone apps of downstream events. These devices would also share this information with the RTMC and automatically activate upstream DMS with messaging that alerts motorists without cell phone apps. If he can pull this off, advanced notification of incidents can be significantly enhanced as we improve the safety of TIM responders and motorists.

Adam has also been tasked with examining new technologies that would improve the safety of

vulnerable road users (i.e., pedestrians and bicyclists), enhanced Wrong Way Driving detection and gathering data on rail crossing closures. He is examining the use of LIDAR, microwave detection systems, video analytics and Edge devices, in combination, to generate the best solution to address these issues. Once a determination has been made on the best combined product, he will examine how this information can be cross-pollinated with the Connected Vehicle knowledge he has acquired.

Also, once Adam realized the potential challenges with the current truck parking magnetometer detection system, he took it upon himself to research other solutions that may be a viable option. His legwork presented us with a product that uses stand-alone video analytics to perform the same counting tasks as the magnetometers. The benefit is that if we need to go to “Plan B”, the implementation time is significantly reduced to ½ day per rest area, with no loss in accuracy and at a very affordable price. Thus, he has taken my guidance to another level by beginning to think outside the box without any nudging on my end.

Evarist is one of the most intelligent individuals I have worked with in my career. Because of this, I have challenged him with examining all the analytics software on the market for traffic signal performance. Based on his examination, we will determine which product is the best for monitoring system performance and malfunctions. Some of the analytical tools he has looked at include



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

Miovision, TranSync and DERQ. Based on his findings, we have decided to try out the Miovision tools due to the successful testing of their system against loop detection.

Evarist has also been assigned the task of developing the advanced wrong way driving notification system that will be implemented this summer along I-95. This system will work in conjunction with the wrong way driving detection systems currently being installed throughout Jacksonville at various exit ramps. The goal is to not only detect a wrong way driver entering the interstate, but to also notify upstream motorists of the pending danger by use of advanced static warning signs with flashing beacons. The goal is to give vulnerable motorists a fighting chance to avoid a head on collision by providing ample notification that will allow them to prepare for evasive maneuvers.

Evarist was provided with tools used on other projects in District Two. Among them was the use of the WebRelay tool used on the Paines Prairie project that automatically triggers a response when the wrong way driving threshold is met (i.e. activation of the sensors). He has provided a preliminary design that spans 10 miles upstream in order to capture as large of an audience as possible. You may think this is extreme, however a wrong way driver moving at 60 MPH can cover a lot of ground before law enforcement can respond.

As you can see, I am working hard on getting the next generation ready to take over the reigns of the District Two TSM&O program once I decide to call it a day. I am fortunate enough to

still be young enough, healthy and enamored by the program. The key thing that will determine the day of my departure will be the morning I wake up, smell the coffee and tell myself "okay, you've had enough."

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

**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2  
ITS OPERATIONS MANAGER**

Alex was scheduled to return on June 14<sup>th</sup>, however he has been notified that he will get an extension of two weeks of military duty for Covid related leave, therefore his pending return is now June 28<sup>th</sup>. I am not telling a lie when I say that his absence has had an impact on our program. Each day, week and month has been overwhelming on our staff due to the growth of the program, so having him gone since early September put an enormous challenge on the rest of the team.

There is one thing that stood out during this time that should be mentioned and applauded. Even with the Covid situation, each and every staff member committed to making it work throughout the challenges. Keep in mind that many had the option of teleworking from home full-time if they so desired. Likewise, some could have called it a day and collected unemployment that was well above the amount of money we pay. Yet, every single person stepped up to the plate and hit a home run over the past year to make this program a success.



**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS OPERATIONS MANAGER continued**

Think I am kidding? A few weeks ago, I had to execute a contract for janitorial services at the RTMC. We use a temp service that provides two individuals to our facility, Stephanie and Don. When I saw their hourly rate of pay I nearly had tears in my eyes. At the start of the Covid crisis, these individuals could have mailed it in and sat at home, thereby making \$4 an hour more. Instead, they showed up every day, helped the RTMC comply with CDC protocol for a sanitary work environment and went the extra mile with a smile on their face. Every single person at the RTMC has commented on how great a job they've done, yet many do not know the financial sacrifice they decided to make to be part of the team.

The same holds true for many of the RTMC operators. It has been a struggle to fill vacancies as some left for career advancement and school, so the need to have the remainder step it up to fill the scheduling gaps was imperative. Kudos to Jason Evans and his team for making it work throughout the last year. My only hope is that as things return to normal there will be an influx of candidates who want to join the team. In the meantime, those that have remained are willing to pick up the extra hours, no matter if it's a double shift at night or on the weekends. Sure, they could have also mailed it in and made the same amount of money through the additional unemployment funds, but they decided to help us make it through these troubling times.

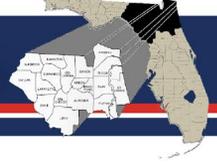
I was fortunate enough to get the vaccine earlier this year but still try to follow as many of the CDC guidelines as possible. Unfortunately, my brother ran into a bit of bad luck and caught

Covid a few months ago through his wife. After several days in the hospital, he was able to return home but is still struggling to breathe. I do not wish this ailment on anyone, but after seeing what he went through firsthand I now understand the urgency that the CDC and Federal Government had while dealing with this pandemic.

So, if you ever come to visit the RTMC soon, please keep in mind what I've just shared. Make eye contact, smile and please say "thank-you" to these individuals who put their personal well-being on hold for the better of the traveling public. Our program **WOULD NOT** have survived were it not for the willingness of each and every one of these folks. Let's just hope that this is a one-time generational event that we will not encounter for years to come and we can just worry about staffing once the hurricanes come barreling through Florida.

**Pete Vega on behalf of  
Alejandro Varela, P.E.  
FDOT D2  
ITS Operations Manager**





**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2  
ITS PROJECT MANAGER**

**SLOW DOWN. MOVE OVER. BE SAFE.**

These six words remind us all that the lives of motorists and responders depend on effective actions by drivers and the highway heroes to save the lives of complete strangers.

Every minute of every day, emergency responders across the state of Florida work tirelessly to help save lives at the scene of traffic incidents. Every year hundreds of emergency responders representing Fire/Rescue, Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Services, Road Rangers, Asset Maintenance Companies, Towing and Transportation agencies are struck and either injured or killed while responding to incidents throughout the United States. This type of secondary crash intensifies the impact to communities, individuals, and the economy. We read about these tragedies caused by distracted driving, vehicle malfunction and other variables almost every day and the emergency response community stand to lose the most.

Unfortunately, we had a road ranger operator involved in an incident back in March of this year. He was picking up his cones from a crash and a motorist took an evasive move and swerved from the right lane to the emergency shoulder to avoid hitting another vehicle. When the motorist swerved to the emergency lane our road ranger operator was right in his path and was hit. By some miracle, he was not killed but he will be out of work for 3 to 6 months. He received spinal fractures along with a large gash on his forehead and had to

stay in the hospital overnight. He is recovering well and said he is ready to come back to work when he is back to good health. According to the FHP officer on scene, the road ranger was clearing up the scene and doing everything by all the correct procedures and was at least 5 feet off the edge line. He was very lucky because this situation could have been tragic. When I received the call, my heart dropped, and I could only think of what we needed to do next and who we needed to contact. The next 24 hours proved to be a waiting game as we held our collective breaths waiting for updates from the road ranger supervisor and owner regarding his condition. Finally, at around 10pm I received the call that he was going to be ok, but that he would need more testing the following day. The next day we found out he had spinal fractures and would be out for 3 to 6 months, but he was in good spirits and was going home that day. Prayers had been answered.

As Traffic Incident Management program participants and responders, we are faced daily with dangers on the roadway and in our local communities. Together we can use well-rehearsed procedures and coordination to get equipment to the right location faster, protect motorists and responders and restore traffic to normal flow quickly. Traffic incidents are the single greatest cause of unexpected delay.

Time spent in traffic jams due to traffic congestion and incidents costs businesses billions of dollars in lost productivity. The time lost in no way compares to the value of headache and time spent when you or a loved one is involved in a serious traffic crash. When



## NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS PROJECT MANAGER continued

lives are at stake, time is never more precious. Every minute counts when emergency responders are trying to get to the crash scene and then to the hospital, to deliver lifesaving help to people injured in a crash.

These “**Heroes of the Highway**” cannot do it alone – we need everyone’s help in spreading the word. Motorists need to know and abide by safe, quick clearance laws and policies that require drivers to slow down and move over. Drivers need to be informed to move their vehicles out of lanes of traffic, to a shoulder or safe location, if they are involved in an incident, where their vehicle is drivable and there are no injuries. We need to make sure that our loved ones, responders, and motorists alike, make it home safe each and every day.

**Dee Dee Crews  
Project Manager  
District 2 ITS Operations**

### NORTH FLORIDA TPO

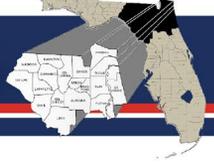
The NFTPO has always been a champion of technology and great supporter of the RTMC. As such, the willingness to provide their consultant to assist with a Federal *Build Grant* application left me at a loss for words. The City of St. Augustine is a small municipality that is recognized as one of the oldest cities in America. As such, the 20,000 or so residents encounter several million tourists (6 I believe) each year. The challenge for this older city is that the roadways are very narrow, with limited parking during the influx of vehicles during tourist season. Pair that with thousands of pedestrians and bicyclists and it can turn into a recipe for disaster on many days.

The City of St. Augustine understood these challenges and approached our team with a concept for development of a Smart Parking system. It would allow them to better manage the conflicts between cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, trolley cars and horse drawn carriages by collecting data and telling folks where the best possibility to find a parking spot would be located. This was the idea at the onset of the effort and the NFTPO provided the consultant to draft up the application.

As the effort progressed, the consultant soon learned we would have to beef up the project’s application to have a competitive edge. So, we added Connected Vehicle technology for vulnerable road users, flood detection systems to deal with high tide issues in the downtown area, Wi-Fi for the under-served in the community, advanced phone apps to assist with mobility and EV charging stations to handle the transition from petrol vehicles to electric cars.

I was very appreciative of the NFTPO support since much of the technology being proposed is beyond my team’s knowledge. Mr. Terry Shaw was the consultant who led the effort to build this application package and he has done a fantastic job of putting “paint to the canvas” that will make us more competitive against other municipalities throughout the nation. At times, I reviewed some of the material and quietly whispered “what the hell!” After speaking with Terry, I absorbed the full concept of the plan which led me to totally agree with everything in print. Part of my responsibility was to discuss with our

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**NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued**

Work Program the means to find the State and local match of 20% to compete for these Federal funds.

So, I took what we had and spoke with our TSM&O group in Tallahassee, hoping that they would be willing to assist with the project's financial needs. To my surprise they ate it up and asked for some additional features within the project. They went so far as to say if we did not win support from the Federal Government on this *Build Grant* application then FDOT would provide the funding to do part of the deployment. This was music to my ears because for the past 25 years I felt that something had to be done to better manage the various modes of transportation within this small community. At least now we have a chance to address some of the issues.

So, thanks again to the NFTPO for stepping up to assist the Northeast Florida region. And thank you Mr. Shaw for piecing together a masterpiece of work that has convinced many in FDOT to fully support the vision, no matter what the cost.

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

**North Florida**  
Transportation Planning Organization  
PLAN • FUND • MOBILIZE

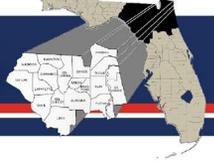


**ITS MAINTENANCE**

Now that Hurricane season is upon us, there are many preparations taking place for ITS. TCD has finished installing the permanent generators at most of our Master Hubs. Kudos to TCD for getting this project accomplished quickly. TCD has tested and filled up all the permanent generators with diesel fuel and came up with a SOP for checking out all wind sensors for this hurricane season. This is my first Hurricane season with FDOT, and I am a little bit anxious and nervous at the same time. It will be good to see how FDOT handles these types of weather emergencies.

Now, let us dive into what TCD will be doing in this upcoming quarter. TCD will be tackling multiple projects, and the first one is installing monitors on all rest areas located within District 2. We have recently gone out to investigate these areas to find where we can place the monitors for better viewing. The installation of these monitors will help keep the public informed on traffic conditions on all of D2's highways.

It is tree trimming season, which means that TCD will be out and about trimming trees that are obstructing our CCTV cameras. They will keep contact with RTMC personnel to verify the obstruction has been removed. For the cameras along SR202(JTB), TCD and I will be troubleshooting these units at night. The purpose of this is so we can isolate which unit is causing the cameras to go down and then make the necessary modifications or repairs.



**ITS MAINTENANCE continued**

On June 14, 2021, TCD will be installing a CCTV camera at the entrance of Huguenot Park. The purpose of this installation is to monitor traffic conditions on SR 105 and the park entrance.

Finally, TCD has updated the RTMC and installed WI-FI access points in the building for better Wi-Fi connection. Thanks to TCD and Jason Summerfield for assisting with the setup.

**Jose Morales**  
**FDOT District 2**  
**ITS Maintenance Manager**

**OPERATIONS**

Well, we're into the second week of Hurricane Season, and have already had one named storm, though it was nowhere near us. Meteorologists are currently watching an area in the Caribbean, but don't expect it to possibly develop for about a week. All that being said, the RTMC has been ready for weeks in the event of a storm coming our way. With all of our years of dealing with storms, floods, fires, fog, we're ready! Just take a look at our completed pre-hurricane checklist!

- ✓ Email Operations/ITS Staff and see who would possibly be available for PRE, IMMINENT and/or POST Storm RTMC coverage
  - ✓ Make sure Staff have an Emergency Preparedness Plan for their home/ family/ pets
- ✓ Check air mattresses to ensure they work properly and pump is in working condition
- ✓ Check flashlights and batteries

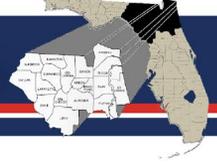
- ✓ Check and restock non-perishable food/water supply
- ✓ Visit Duval County EOC and ensure that all Management Staff have access
- ✓ Verify access to WebEOC
- ✓ Review various H Contracts with FDOT Personnel
- ✓ Check Satellite phones
- ✓ Master Hub Generator Test at each site
- ✓ Update Emergency Contact list for staff
- ✓ Thorough device check of Wind and Water Level devices. Coordinate issues with Central Office

We moved over to our Fiber Connection which took us from 50mbps to 1000mbps, with the wi-fi going up to over 300mbps. It is much more stable and solved the wi-fi dropping issues on the Road Ranger Zello phones. Thanks to TCD and Jose!

In the months of March through May we had four RISC (Rapid Incident Scene Clearance) events. The RTMC Staff worked a total of 18,939 events with 7,126 utilizing DMS. Of those events, 3,713 were crashes. There was a total of 13,114 Road Ranger events.

Remember, Know Before You Go, use **FL511!**

**Jason Evans**  
**Metric Engineering**  
**RTMC Manager**



**FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team’s latest bi-monthly meeting was held virtually on **May 18, 2021** at 10:00 A.M. These meetings are important for FDOT to facilitate an open line of communication between all TIM agency partners to assist with the reduction of incident scene clearance times, deter congestion and improve safety on our interstates here in District 2.

The TEAM started off with the I-10/I-95 Project provided by Mr. Tim Heath where he mentioned that ramp X is expected to open next week, this ramp goes from I-95 Southbound to I-10 Westbound (Exit 351A). Ramp P is also expected to open next week which goes from Forest St. to I-10 Westbound. The last ramp, ramp S (the Exit 351B ramp) may be closed for re-striping but only for a short term. He was then followed by Ms. Bianca Speights for the Construction Project Updates where she mentioned that there are scheduled detours within the area occurring throughout the month of May.

The group then discussed the ITS Update/ITS Projects/511/TMC Updates which were provided by Mr. Craig Carnes and Mr. Jason Evans. Mr. Craig Carnes mentioned several projects which included ongoing coordination regarding ITS for the Fuller Warren Bridge pedestrian walkway and the I-10 Widening Project which is ongoing and final plans have been submitted for Segments 1 & 2. There are some concerns regarding accessibility and maintainability at some of the device sites, so work is being done

with the Engineer of Record for those possible issues. Craig also mentioned that the Truck Parking Availability System (TPAS) Project is moving forward again with a new contractor taking over. The Buckman Bridge ATMS project is also ongoing. This project consists of installing small DMS (Dynamic Message Signs) above the lanes for lane control to alert drivers as to if the lanes are open or closed. The East Beltway Express Lanes project is progressing. The MVDS will need to be tested for accuracy and to make sure they are operational before the lanes open. A 50 car test run will be done just like it was done for the West Beltway Express Lanes before they opened. Mr. Jason Evans mentioned that the TPAS information will also be posted to the FL 511 website (once the system is active). This information will help truckers plan their routes and determine parking availability before they get to the locations. It is official, FL 511 IVR (phone option) is no longer available. FL 511 is still available through the cellphone app and the website [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com). Live camera streaming videos are now available through the website as well. Jason also mentioned that the RTMC has been preparing for Hurricane Season and that the first Wrong Way Driving system is in place on the Lem Turner exit ramps. The plan is to have several new Wrong Way Driving deployments at different ramps around Jacksonville. These systems detect when a vehicle is going the wrong way on the ramp and sends an alert to the TMC and FHP.



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

The Emergency Operations Update was provided by Ms. Carrie Stanbridge where she stated that Ed Ward’s position was advertised but has not been filled at this time.

Ms. Stanbridge then went right into the update and informed the group that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is reviewing the Emergency Shoulder Use (ESU) shoulder signs to make sure they work and that the shoulders are in optimum condition. She also mentioned that there is an ongoing exercise to verify that there is vertical clearance along the tree lines and to clean up any dead trees that may have fallen in extreme winds. One particular location being focused on is the Osceola National Forest on I-10, especially the inside lanes. Ms. Stanbridge also mentioned that the new rest area generators are being serviced to make sure everything is up and running in case of an emergency. Work will also begin to upgrade the rest areas with touchless features on the sinks, etc.

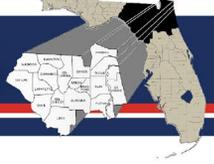
The EOC is also working on a heavy equipment list across the District to make sure their staff knows where all the different kinds of equipment are located since not all Districts and field offices have the same things. 16 pull-behind generators were purchased out of Tallahassee by the Emergency Management Office and transported to District 2. They will be serviced and deployed throughout the state.

The next First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on **July 20, 2021** at 10:00 A.M. If you are unable to attend, please feel free to send someone else who could represent your agency. We look forward to seeing you there!

**.ALACHUA BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting held its latest bi-monthly meeting virtually on **April 14, 2021** at 10:00 A.M. The TIM meeting kicked off by reminding all TIM partners that the purpose of our TIM Team meeting is to improve Communications, Coordination, Cooperation and Collaboration between all TIM agency partners, as well as to improve safety and congestion on the highways.

The TEAM then proceeded with the Emergency Operations Update given by Ms. Carrie Stanbridge. Ms. Stanbridge informed the group that District 2 has installed generators at all rest areas. This project was an initiative which started last year. All 142 generators have been tested and will be used for traffic signals. She also mentioned that the Emergency Operations Center is currently working through our emergency shoulder use plans for I-95 and I-75. This entails particular attention be given to the existing shoulder conditions, design conditions, vertical clearances, and active construction projects.



## **TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE continued**

Mr. Craig Carnes and Mr. Jason Evans then provided the ITS/511/TMC updates where they informed the group that the Truck Parking Availability System (TPAS) project is well behind schedule due to the contractor going out of business. A new contractor has been secured for the project. Once this project is complete it will be accessible on the FL 511 website. There have been DMS and CCTVs installed for this project.

Mrs. Dee Dee Crews also gave an update on the Road Rangers where she reviewed assisted events statistics for the Road Ranger Assists in Alachua County. Dee Dee also mentioned that a Road Ranger was hit by a vehicle in Jacksonville while picking up his cones after attending to a crash. He will recover but he does have some spinal fractures which will take him out for approximately three to six months.

The next Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on August 11, 2021 at 10:00 A.M. but we ask that you please keep in touch with the TEAM due to the uncertainty presented at this time. If any changes are made, prior to the next meeting, we will send out an email notification to all of our TIM partners.

If you are unable to attend, please feel free to send someone else who could represent your agency. We thank you for your participation.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *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 Elder at [melder@metriceng.com](mailto:melder@metriceng.com) 904-260-1567.*

Craig is available to work with any agency's schedule; including nights and weekends to make sure the course is available for groups of ten or more trainees.

We are currently in the process of updating the TIM Team meeting process and strongly encourage all TIM members to send in suggestions for agency topics to be discussed during the meeting. All ideas are welcome and can be emailed to Dee Dee Crews at [DeeDee.Crews@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:DeeDee.Crews@dot.state.fl.us).

### **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 percent each year.*





## **ROAD RANGER UPDATE**

The District 2 Road Rangers continue to prove how essential they are to our incident management TEAM as they are heavily utilized throughout the District and currently operate seventeen routes. The Road Ranger Program plays a key role in incident management by assisting motorists and local agency partners. They are an essential part of the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team and provide real-time information to the Traffic Management Center (TMC) regarding accidents, congestion, disabled vehicles and road debris. The Road Rangers assisted with an average of approximately 3,740 events per month from February 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021.

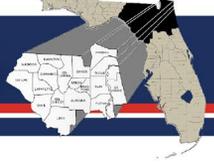
Each month our Rangers attend a mandatory Safety Training where safe practices are continuously echoed through presentation and instruction. These meetings are held in both Jacksonville and Gainesville to ensure that this training has resonated with all our Road Rangers across the board. It is critical for these meetings to occur for the TEAM to have that face time with each Road Ranger to promote comradery and to stress the importance of safety to the Rangers, even if that means that reminding them that by them being aware of their surroundings can mean the difference between life and death. Our Rangers work extremely hard and are highly exposed out on our interstates. Our main goal is to keep everyone alive and safe.

The Road Rangers assist with such events as providing fuel, assisting with tire changes, minor emergency repairs and providing short

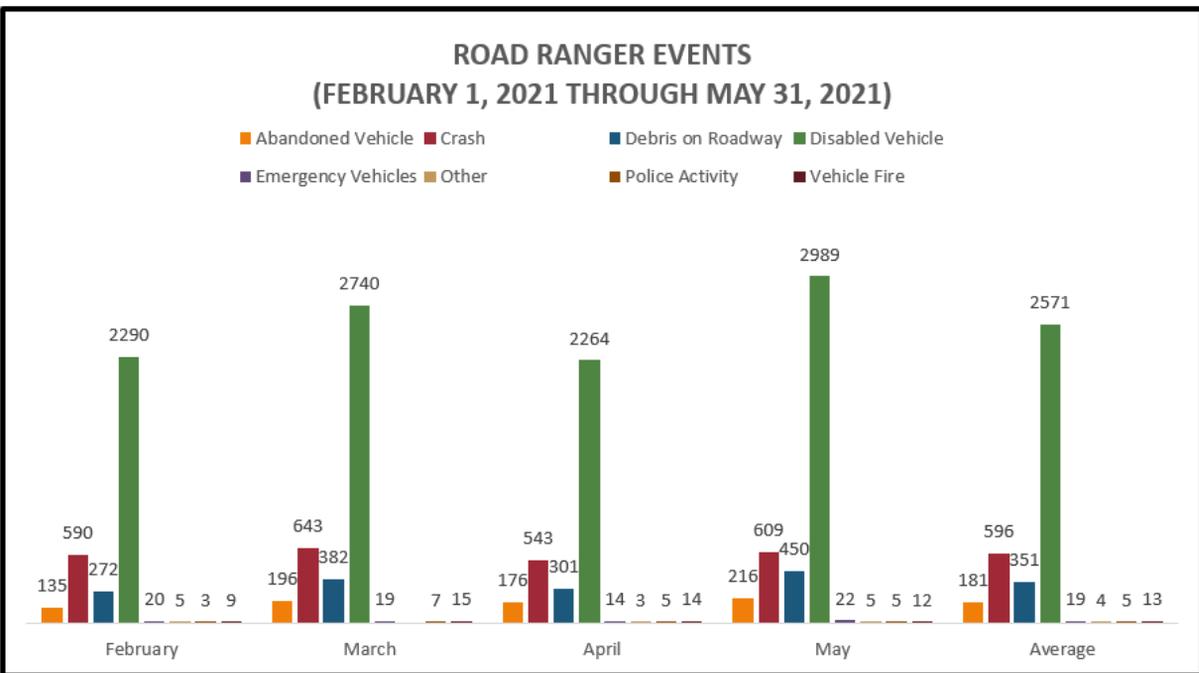
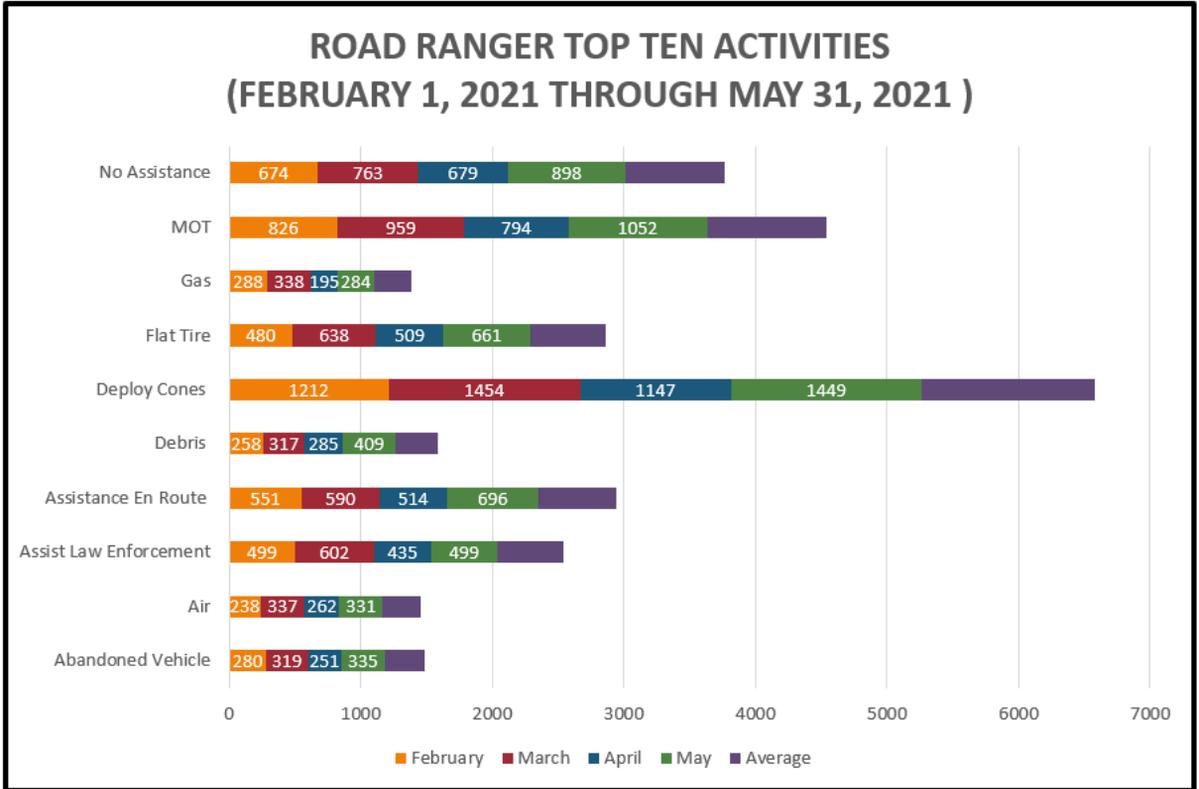
term maintenance of traffic. During the past four months (February 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021), the roadway clearance duration has averaged about 50.4 minutes, the incident clearance duration averaged approximately 79.3 minutes and the open roads duration averaged approximately 44.2 minutes.

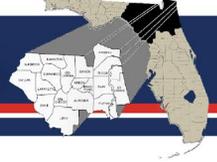
The following charts show all event types that the Road Rangers have responded to from February 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021 along with some of the main activities performed when responding to these events. The Road Rangers primarily responded to crashes, debris events and disabled vehicles as their main events. Their activities predominantly involved providing MOT, assisting motorists with flat tires, clearing debris and assisting local law enforcement. As we can see the Road Rangers primarily responded to an average of 15.9% crashes, 68.7% disabled vehicles, 9.4% debris events and 4.8% abandoned vehicles. We also saw a slight decrease in the number of Road Ranger responding events during the last two weeks of March compared to previous weeks which aligns with spring break time periods.





**ROAD RANGER UPDATE continued**





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

The Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program supports the Florida’s Open Roads Policy goal of safely clearing major highway incidents and truck crashes within 90 minutes or less. The program is based on incentive and requires specialized equipment and trained operators to quickly remove wreckage from the roadway, where major crashes close most lanes or cause significant travel delays.

The RISC program is operationally managed at the District level. The RISC Contractor has the responsibility to respond to the incident within 60 minutes of the request to activation request. Once on scene and provided a Notice to Proceed by the lead official on scene, the vendor will have 90 minutes to open the travel lanes for traffic. The RISC contract requires the vendor to be available 24 hours a day/7 days a week to respond to major incidents. This program has been proven to be extremely valuable and essential to roadway clearance times especially during peak travel time periods.

Over the past three months, District 2 has utilized RISC four times primarily in Duval and St. Johns counties. This program is extremely valuable and essential to roadway clearance times especially during peak travel time periods. Below you will find the details of the RISC event located here in District 2 from March 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021.

Date	Time	Location	Description
3/13/2021	3:14:53 AM	Duval on I-295 E Southbound, Before MM 50	Fatal wrong-way crash involving two cars and a tractor-trailer
5/13/2021	12:44:13 PM	Duval on I-295 W Northbound, Before between MM 29/Dunn Ave	Crash involving semi hauling pork resulting in semi hanging over the wall near the overpass. The crash originally only had the right lane blocked. FHP blocked all lanes to divert traffic off the interstate.
5/24/2021	9:57:59 AM	St. Johns on I-95 Northbound, At CR-210	Crash involving truck hauling granite, dump truck and van. The truck hauling granite and van <u>over turned</u> . Granite debris <u>was all</u> over the roadway. Dump truck had heavy front end damage
5/29/2021	12:26:07 AM	St. Johns on I-95 Southbound, At MM 320	Jack Knifed Semi vs. other vehicles.

**Dee Dee Crews  
District 2 ITS Operations  
Project Manager**

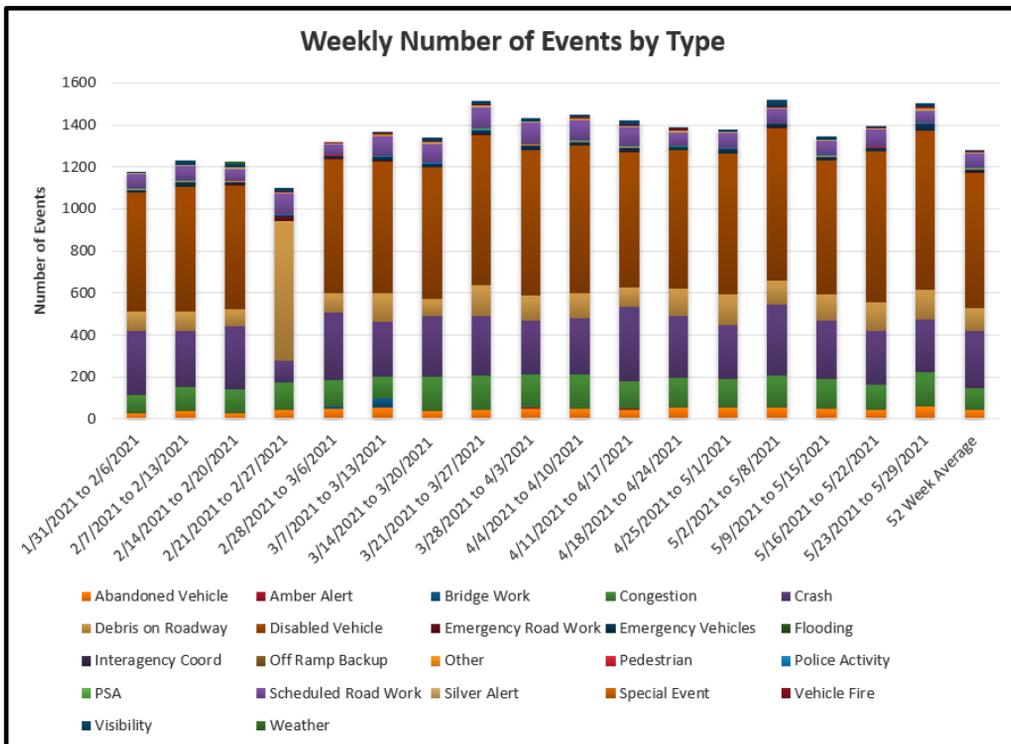


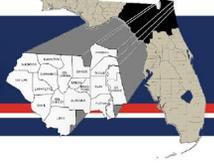
## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Summer is here once again and, oh, the pollen and allergies are back! Well at least for people in my household. This brings forth a reminder of this time last year and how devastating the effects of COVID-19 were becoming. I am thankful for just allergies this year and nothing more. Our Road Rangers have been out on the forefront providing services to our motorists and we have definitely seen a change in travel between then and now.

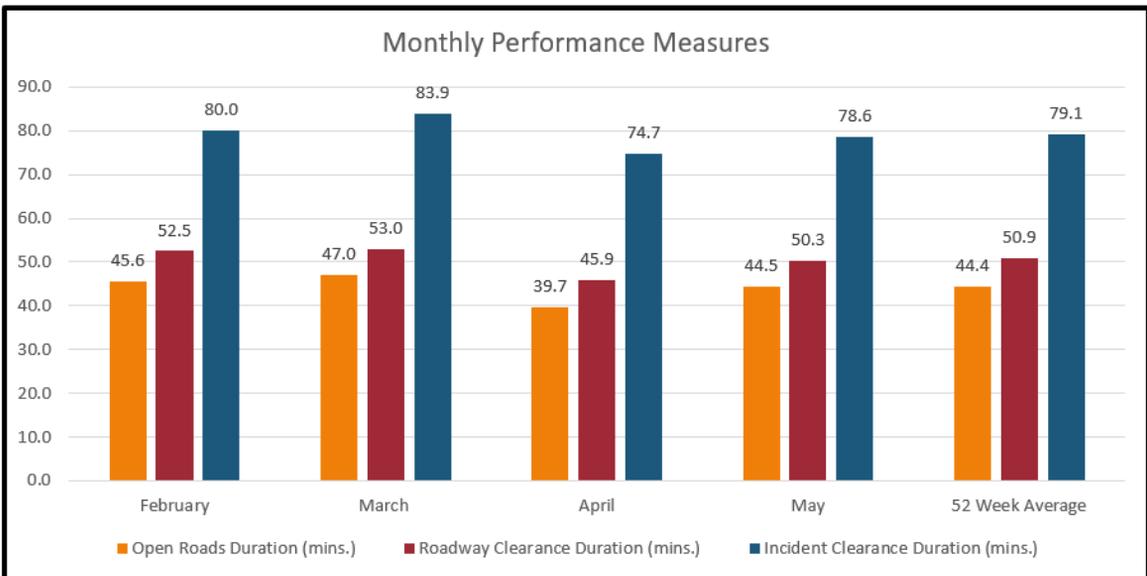
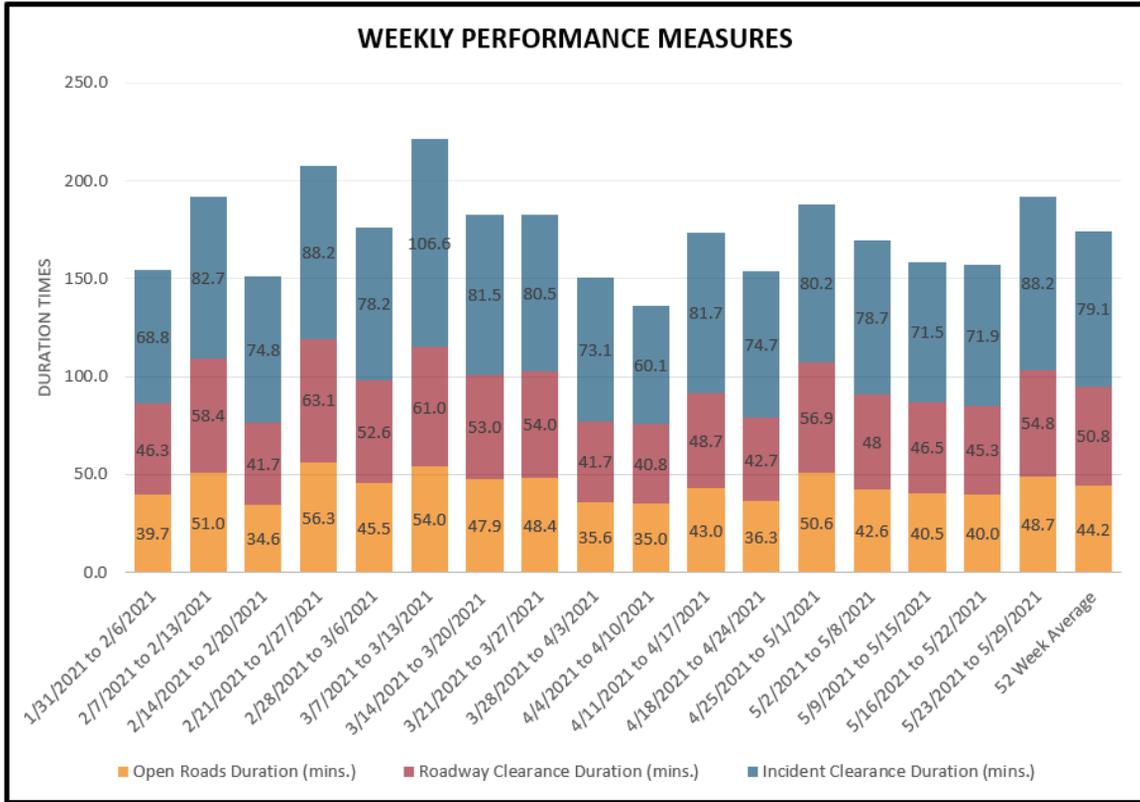
From the charts following, we can see that the Road Rangers responded to an average of close to 276 crashes per week here in District 2 between February 1 and May 31, 2021. This number represents the average number of total crashes that the Road Rangers have assisted with and is higher than the 52-week average of 271 crashes which accounts for an increase of 2%. Congestion and disabled vehicle events have also increased by 29% and 1% respectively, when compared to the 52-week average.

The average clearance duration times for the past four months have stayed well under the goal duration times as we can see in the charts following. District 2 has averaged approximately 44.2 minutes for our Open Roads Duration time, 50.4 minutes for our Roadway Clearance duration time and 79.3 minutes for our Incident Clearance duration time which is overall slightly lower than our yearly average of 44.4 minutes for the Open Roads Duration time, 50.9 minutes for Roadway Clearance Duration and 79.1 minutes for Incident Clearance Duration.





**PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued**





**MARKETING**

A new day has dawned. The transition to digital is complete. FL511 has evolved solely to digital platforms as the phone’s Interactive Voice Response system has fully transitioned to the mobile app. And just in time for the 2021 hurricane season, new features have been added including live video streaming, map legend enhancements and a voice interactive feature available for existing FL511 platforms.

The live streaming video feature on [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com) allows passengers to view current driving conditions on all interstates, toll roads and other major Florida thoroughfares. Users can now select the camera they want to view, click the “Show Video” button, and see full live streaming images on their preferred routes. These enhancements not only serve to keep FL511 ahead of the digital curve, they also provide potential life-saving benefits to motorists. By knowing where crashes, congestion and construction are ahead of time, motorists can make informed decisions by choosing alternative routes to avoid the potential for secondary crashes and costly delays.

The FL511 mobile app has the added benefit of providing directions and travel times to any destination in Florida (yes, theme parks included!) along with real-time traffic information on incidents, congestion, construction, closures on interstates, toll roads and other major highways.

Another highlight of this past quarter included a marketing event that was held on-site (not virtually) at Keiser University on Jacksonville’s southside. It felt SO good to be able to talk to motorists in person. There’s so much to be said for face-to-face interaction, that is, if you ignored

the masks that were concealing the lower halves of our faces. But still! Senior level administrators at Keiser did an amazing job keeping vendor tables appropriately spaced, participants socially-distanced and room capacity limited. Here’s hoping our calendar is filled with more on-site events in the months to come.

Now we’ll talk about the elephant in the room. Hurricane season. The 2021 hurricane season started June 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through November 30<sup>th</sup>. For those of us who grew up in Florida, two things stand out in our summer “boot camp” training. The stingray shuffle and hurricane prep. While you’re stocking up on hurricane supplies, remember to include FL511 in your arsenal of resources. FL 511 provides vital information on road closures, evacuation routes and more!

On a positive note, the days are getting longer and many of us have our sights set on summer travel. So if you’re planning that much needed family vacation, we’ve got you covered with up-to-the minute traffic information. FDOT encourages all motorists to use [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com) or download one of the free FL511 Mobile Apps available for Apple and Android devices. FL511 is also available on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

**Connect. Know. Go!**

What are you waiting for?

**Sherri Byrd  
Metric Engineering  
Marketing Manager**



**SPOTLIGHT ON...RACHEL PANKIW**  
**RTMC SUPERVISOR**

**It's been a while since we last talked to you. Job promotion. Name change. And for the record, how DO you pronounce your new last name?**

It's been almost 5 years since the last spotlight interview; my, how time flies! While 2020 was a crazy year for everyone, it was a big year for me! My husband, Michael, and I bought our first house in June. We relocated from the Southside of Jax all the way across town to the Argyle Forest/Oakleaf area. We have had fun getting to learn a new side of town and all the things it has to offer. After that, Michael and I got married on August 8<sup>th</sup>. My new last name is Pankiw. It's pronounced like 'thank-you' but with a 'P' instead of the 'th'. And lastly, on September 1<sup>st</sup> I started my new position as RTMC Supervisor. I've been in my new position for a few months now and have been loving it.

**Tell us a little about your previous role with Metric Engineering/FDOT as well as your new job title and responsibilities.**

Previously, I was an operator with Metric. I dispatched Road Rangers to events and posted for congestion. I was an operator for 8 years. I am now a supervisor at the RTMC. I have been in this position now since September 1<sup>st</sup>. I oversee the operators and keep an eye on day-to-day activities. I also assist with training new hires.

**Talk about your upbringing – where were you born/raised?**

I was born and raised in Jacksonville, FL. I lived in Tallahassee for 4 years while I was in school at FSU. After school, I moved back to Jacksonville and have been here ever since.

**You've been a familiar face around the Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC) for quite a while now, but what is something we don't know about you that might surprise us?**

I've been here for a long time. I'm not sure there's much left that isn't known about me! I love to bake (mostly cakes/cake pops/cupcakes). I also love going camping (I love tent camping, but I'll do a good cabin every now and then).

**Your least favorite words to hear shouted across the RTMC floor?**

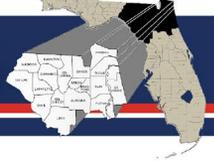
My least favorite words to hear are probably either "RISC" or "All lanes blocked". Usually both of those phrases mean large events that are going to be there a while and will have big impacts on traffic.

**Has this job changed your driving habits, given all the incidents you've witnessed on the roadways?**

I wouldn't say that working here has changed my driving habits. I have always been a cautious driver and pay attention to what's going on around me. That probably came from having 2 parents that worked for FDOT and all of the safety campaign messages through the years!

**There used to be this saying, "Rachel Tuesday," what does that mean?!?!?**

Oh boy! When I was an operator, I was the Road Ranger dispatcher on Tuesdays. "Rachel Tuesdays" came about because anything and everything that could happen, would.



**SPOTLIGHT ON...RACHEL PANKIW**  
**RTMC SUPERVISOR continued**

One Rachel Tuesday I had I-10 EB at I-295 in Jacksonville blocked with a crash involving a tanker semi. After FHP arrived, they advised that the chemical ID tag that was on the tanker was supposed to be some sort of explosive material. We had to call Hazmat out to help at the scene. I mean, this was a big deal, and we were making plans for the interstate to be closed for a while because of this. After Hazmat got on scene, it was determined that someone read the ID tag wrong and it wasn't an explosive material, it was laundry detergent! Talk about a big sigh of relief!



*Even as a Supervisor, there are still those "Rachel Days"*

**When you're road trippin', interstates or back roads?**

I like taking back roads if I have time. I know that interstates get you to your destination faster, but there are more things to see on the back roads!

**Favorite lunch spot close to work? (and the dish you typically order!)**

One of my favorite places that is close to work is First Watch. I like to order the Sweet Honey Pecan salad. If you're ever at First Watch, I recommend trying it!

**You got married during the pandemic. What was that like? How many changes did you have to make to your previous itinerary to pull off the more intimate gathering?**

I never could have imagined getting married during a global pandemic! Michael and I were originally supposed to get married on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. We tried so hard to keep our original date, but with everything being under strict guidelines, we had to move our date back to August. Thankfully, all our vendors were understanding (since they were affected, too) and worked with us to change dates. We had to coordinate with our venue, florist, photographer, DJ, hair stylist, and make-up artist. Our guest count ended up being less than half of what it was originally supposed to be. We got married in Clay county and even though they didn't have a mask mandate, we still offered masks to our guests in case they didn't have one and wanted one. We also made sure there was plenty of hand sanitizer available. Our venue coordinator made sure that there were extra chairs for the ceremony so that parties could space out. And, instead of the buffet service we had planned, the venue provided servers to make plates as guests went through the line. The one good thing that came out of all of the rearranging was that we hired a videographer to film the ceremony and reception and he also live

**SPOTLIGHT ON...RACHEL PANKIW**  
**RTMC SUPERVISOR continued**

streamed both so that our friends and family that weren't able to make it could still be a part of the day's festivities. At the end of the day, we still had people that cared about us and supported us there to celebrate. And because a lot of places were closed when we got married, we weren't able to take our honeymoon. We are planning on doing that later this year in August as a honeymoon/anniversary trip!

He loves trying new foods and exploring new places to eat (especially the local hole-in-the-wall places). He's also really into cars and motors. When he and a buddy were in college, they bought a 1973 Mustang together and worked on it to restore the engine and get it running again. He is all the time going to car shows and pointing them out when we are driving together.



*We've tried to get the "real" story on this... whether Michael's exploring a new place to eat or whether this was an attempted get-away just before the wedding!*

**And, of course, we want to know all about your husband. Please feel free to embellish!**

Michael is originally from Silver Spring, Maryland (just North of Washington, DC). He moved to Florida for law school and has been here for about ten years now. Michael is a huge foodie.

**You've just been given 6 hours of uninterrupted freedom, what would you do with it?**

6 hours! I would love to spend that time catching up on reading. I love diving into a good book. I haven't had much time lately to read but I really want to get back into it. Some of my favorite authors are Mary Higgins Clark, Emily Giffin and Nicholas Sparks.



**PHOTO GALLERY**



*Our First Responders on the scene of a full closure of I-95 SB near MLK to rescue this little Yorkie! Mission accomplished and the roadway was re-opened!*



*Sherri was finally able to attend the first ON-SITE event since COVID to promote 511! Thank you, Keiser!*



*Throw back decade! The Florida-Georgia game, way back in time with some familiar faces, Kamal Munawar (center), Ryan Crist (left) and Jason Summerfield (right)*

**PHOTO GALLERY 2**



*You don't often see the Main St. Bridge up for the Mayport Ferry to pass through, but Miller Norton at the Duval EOC caught this shot through the window as the Ferry headed back to Mayport from maintenance.*



*Back in March, with permission from FDOT, we did a COVID-responsible pizza lunch for all of our employees to celebrate that times were improving from this difficult past year. Erin Moore was our properly masked and gloved food server and everyone enjoyed the treat!*



Traffic Incident Management  
2021 Meeting Schedule

**First Coast TIM Team**

Regional Transportation Management Center  
980 N. Jefferson St., Jacksonville, FL  
904.903.2000  
10:00am-12:00pm  
July 20, 2021      September 21, 2021  
November 16, 2021

**Alachua/Bradford TIM Team**

FDOT Gainesville Operations Office  
5301 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Gainesville, FL  
352.381.4300  
10:00am-11:30am  
August 11, 2021      October 13, 2021  
December 8, 2021

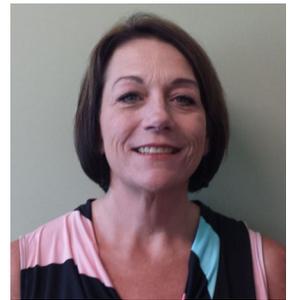
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