

# School is in Session



**BE PREPARED FOR DELAYS ON YOUR  
DAILY COMMUTE,  
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY,  
WATCH FOR CHILDREN!  
MORE ON SAFETY IN THE PROJECT  
MANAGER'S ARTICLE ON  
PAGE 5**



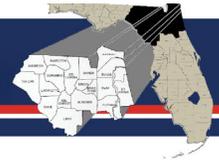
**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM  
MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS (TSM&O)  
PROGRAM MANAGER**

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 FHP Major Keith Gaston finally hung up his hat and gun belt as he retired from the Florida Highway Patrol after 30 plus years. He and I go way back to the early 90s during the onset of my career with FDOT. Our first encounter was at a Freeway Management team meeting that is now known as the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) team. Like me, he was new to the area and trying to find his footing on issues in Northeast Florida. The major concern at that time was the number of fatalities that were occurring along the Arlington Expressway. To preface the situation, the Freeway Management team met monthly to discuss topics related to limited access highways. For the situation on the Arlington Expressway, it seemed like the number of fatalities along this corridor was a recurring theme for over six months with no resolution at hand.

The problem along this corridor was that many of the residential neighborhoods were located on the south side of the road, while many of the business establishments were located on the north side. This section of roadway is approximately 3 miles in length with only 3 overpasses to get from the south side to the north side. The separation between these three overpasses is about 1/2 mile, hence many of the residents did not want to take this route when they could take a “bee-line” straight across this high-speed roadway. During this time, the number of pedestrian fatalities reached double-digits, but none worse than the one six months into my tenure, when a little old lady pushing a shopping cart across the Expressway was hit and killed while trying to get to the grocery store.

Keith and I had our fill at that point, so we felt desperate measures needed to be taken. Out of frustration with the team, I blurted out to Keith “doesn’t FHP have snipers?” He turned and with a queried look shook his head at this suggestion but realized it was time to really come up with a solution. During a sidebar, the thought was that we had to come up with a way to prevent the opportunity for pedestrians to have a desire to cross this dangerous high-speed corridor. That’s when we offered the suggestion of putting up a six-foot fence in the median to deter pedestrians from considering this path. This idea took hold and led to a plan that was executed expeditiously. Once completed, there was a significant reduction in pedestrian fatalities along the Arlington Expressway and the beginning of a long-lasting friendship between me and Keith.

Over the years of wildfires, hurricanes and major roadway events, our professional relationship continued to grow. This kept up even after I took a position in Central Office for a few years in the late 90s. When I returned to District Two in 2002 as the ITS Engineer, Keith was the first FHP Officer to welcome me back to the fold. There was a reason though for his initial greeting. My predecessor and Keith had discussed the concept of a joint RTMC that housed FHP with FDOT staff and Keith was ready to deliver. He was in the process of building the FHP Jacksonville Regional Communication Center (JRCC) on the State campus where the current RTMC resides. His plan was to provide enough space for both agencies, thereby fulfilling the quest of having one consolidated operations floor for incident management.



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

Prior to the JRCC, each agency was in separate facilities that had their own operations with about 1,000 square feet of space. In FDOT's TMC, the floor space for TMC operations was around 500 square feet. As Keith excitedly broke the news about the JRCC, he invited me to visit the almost complete facility so that I could see the space dedicated to our staff. When I arrived, the look on my face just about said it all as he walked me to the 80 square foot space allotted for our TMC operations staff. We both knew this would not work from a fully operational standpoint but understood that at least it was a jump start to joint operations. From that moment on we became fixated with proving the benefits of having both agencies on the same floor and began the journey that led us to what I feel is the operationally best Regional Transportation Management Center in Florida.

A few years later, this opportunity arose when the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO) approached us about the future needs of incident management in Northeast Florida. Without skipping a beat, Keith, Grady Carrick and I all agreed that the number one need was a bigger and better facility that not only housed our agencies, but others in the field of incident management. That led to the initial design of the first Regional Transportation Management Center that was intended to house FHP, FWC, FDOT, JSO, JFRD and JTA. For a couple of years, we worked with Department consultants on the design and completed 100% plans just prior to the floor giving out beneath us. The recession had just begun in early 2006 and agencies were

impacted by deep cuts in their budgets to keep our heads above water. At that point, you would have thought the dream would have ended, however Keith, Grady and I felt that our day would come.

At the turn of the recession, the NFTPO approached us again about the concept of building an RTMC. Unfortunately, the land where the initial facility was to be built had been transferred over to JTA for their new Operations facility. We knew at that point that time was of the essence, hence we met regularly to consider our options. After scoping several properties, Grady and Keith asked if the option of building on the State of Florida campus, right across from the JRCC had been considered. We met on site, combed the lay of the land, considered our needs and realized this was a golden opportunity since there were enormous cost-savings with this option. Why, do you ask?

Well, the land we chose already had the necessary retention ponds, perimeter security, utility availability and FHP tower system that would be required for their operations. Making the choice to build 500 feet away from the existing JRCC saved us approximately six-million dollars in construction costs and was really a "no-brainer" decision. Credit goes where credit is deserved and Keith is a key reason that we were able to get this project off the ground. Once the decision was made, he worked feverishly to help the Department in coordination efforts with the Department of Management Services (DMS), who were the



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

agent responsible for all construction on this campus. As we envisioned the design, Keith suggested that instead of the traditional RTMC floor plans like the ones recently completed in Districts One, Six and Seven, we look “outside the box” for a better solution.

Those facilities were set up with rows of workstations, whereby each row was dedicated to a particular agency. Even though this was an advancement due to the multi-agency nature of the floor, Keith felt we could do better, hence he proposed that we go with the “Quad” concept using Evans Consoles. This type of workstation setup was the traditional method used by many communication centers in law enforcement and he felt it would enhance operations. He went a step further by suggesting we intermingle FHP with FDOT staff in these quads so that incident response efforts could run smoother during roadway events. It seemed that everything he suggested took on a holistic approach to incident management and the things we imagined in the early and mid-90s.

Since I was not familiar in working with DMS there was a need for Keith to be the liaison during the effort. That group was a tough bunch to work with based on the restrictions and rules they required us to comply with while building a facility on their campus. Oftentimes, Keith would notice my frustration during meetings with DMS staff and step in as the intermediary to calm me down. I recall one such meeting where Keith felt the need to sit between me and their representative for fear that a physical altercation could occur. After the meeting, I acknowledged noticing what he’d done but said it could have

turned out to be a bad idea. When Keith asked why, I told him that his holster was positioned on my side and at times it was tempting to reach for the gun to let out my frustration (smiley face).

By the time we completed design and construction, Keith and I had reached our 22<sup>nd</sup> year of working together in Northeast Florida. What began as a business relationship blossomed into a partnership that will dearly be missed now that he’s gone. There are many other historical references I could make about our experiences over time, but I will leave you with a few final notes as an accolade of Major Keith Gaston’s efforts.

Because of his dedication and ability to see the big picture, he took the lead in convincing JSO and JFRD to consider the option of putting staff with us in the facility. He also negotiated with FWC to buy into this move, even though they would have personnel working adjacent to our staff who were unsworn officers. At this moment, the only agency not in the fold is JFRD, but this was no fault due to Keith’s effort. Instead, just before the move that agency had a change in leadership that thereby slowed the move into the RTMC. My best guess is that by 2022, we should have at least two workstations filled with JFRD staff.



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

To end, I will provide one basic benefit of having all these agencies under one roof (thanks to Keith). Prior to moving into the RTMC, the average time to fully coordinate an incident response plan involving all agencies took about 15 minutes because most communication was handled via the phone. When we finally moved into the new RTMC, I began to time this process from the moment a 911 call was received by FHP until the moment coordination efforts were completed for incident response. The time taken (or saved)? Well now, instead of the traditional 15 minutes to handle this task, it takes only 90 seconds on average. A time savings of over 13 minutes!!!! I just wonder how many lives have been saved over the past 5 years due to the foresight of Major Gaston. May God bless him and keep him healthy for 50 more years!

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

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

I am finally back from my military assignment overseas. I am glad to be stateside and back into my position as the ITS Operations Manager. I want to give a big shout out to my team for holding down the fort in my absence and I look forward to another prosperous year with the Department.

I had the luxury of being one of the few people who was allowed to go outside the wire on this deployment because of the strict travel requirements associated with the pandemic. I was able to see a variety of traffic systems across many countries, and in the more affluent nations the one thing I noticed was the amount of big brother security monitoring that is in place. The roadways

are covered with cameras, so no one is speeding or taking a red light without acquiring a traffic citation. An individual wouldn't even know because it would capture the tag and then be mailed to the associated address of the tag.

The bigger and more overarching topic was the tracker app that was required on your phone. Fortunately, as a US military member we were exempt from downloading the app due to security reasons but to enter any sort of establishment or proceed anywhere you had to show proof of this phone app in addition to wearing a mask. The app is essentially their form of contact tracing. If somebody were to test positive, they could determine and notify all people who were in close contact.

I will not go into the politics of the pandemic or this tracking app, but it alludes to the fact that we are attached to our phones. How many times have you ever left an area without your phone or felt "weird" if you left it at home? I am not denying the usefulness of these devices and in some cases they make tasks and life simpler. Smart phones and their respective applications are a trend that continue to grow at an astronomical pace to the point that many autonomous and connected vehicle companies are rolling out proprietary apps for everything from controlling the vehicle to informing the driver of hazards ahead. The goal would be to have all the cars talking to each other, but since most people are attached to their phones, what if there was an inherent application between various platforms that could inform drivers? Think of it as a DMS notification in real time and respective to your



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

location on your phone. Google already in some cases will tell you of an issue even if google maps is not open. Ideally, the phone can “learn” your habits and when a TMC pushes out a notification, the phone would instantly notify you that your commute has a traffic accident and should take an alternate route. This just requires a person with a phone, not a new car or special platform in your vehicle.

The future is in the smart phone because ready or not that trend is going to cellular as 5g is fully rolled out.

**Alejandro Varela, P.E.  
FDOT D2  
ITS Operations Manager**

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

**Back to School Bus Safety**

I know every one of us has a special child in our life – son, daughter, grandchild, niece, nephew or friend who started school within the last next couple of weeks.

I thought it would be helpful to remind everyone the rules of the road for motorists when approaching school busses. Everyone keep your eyes open and watch out for our precious future leaders.

Florida school buses carry precious cargo – our children. Motorists should always be alert and drive with caution around school buses and in school zones where children may be present like schools, bus stops, school buses and school parking lots.

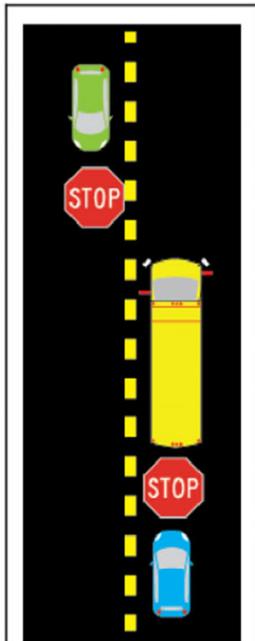
**Tips for Motorists**

Be alert and watch for children especially near schools, bus stops, school buses and in school parking lots.

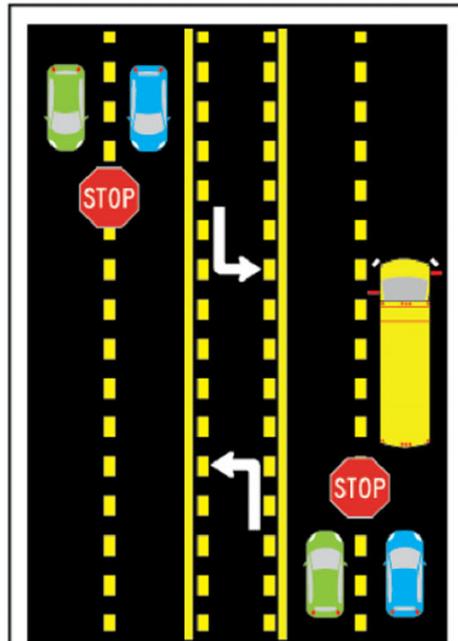
- Children on bicycles can be unpredictable and can make sudden changes in direction. Be especially careful when children are present in school zones and residential areas.
- Pay extra attention to lower speed limits in school zones.
- Watch for and obey signals from school crossing guards.
- Only drive or park in authorized areas to drop off or pick up children at school.
- Motorists are required to stop when approaching a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing and STOP arms extended. (See the different situations in the diagram on the following page)



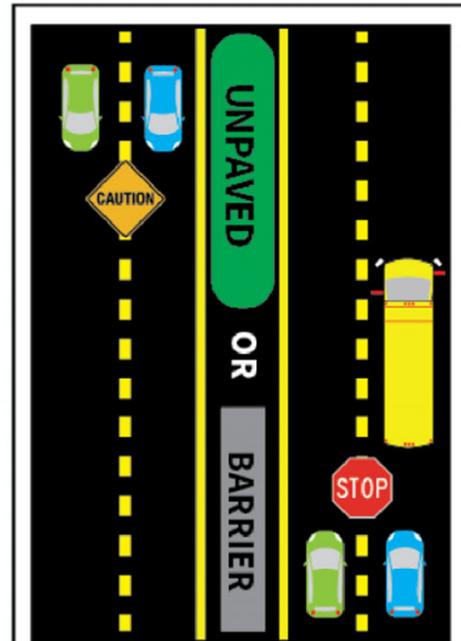
**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2  
ITS PROJECT MANAGER continued**



**TWO LANE**  
Vehicles traveling in both directions MUST stop.



**MULTI-LANE PAVED ACROSS**  
Vehicles traveling in both directions MUST stop.



**DIVIDED HIGHWAY**  
Unpaved space 5 ft+/raised median/physical barrier.  
Vehicles behind bus MUST stop.  
Vehicles traveling in the opposite direction must proceed with caution.

- All drivers moving in either direction on a two-way street must stop for a school bus displaying a stop signal and must remain stopped until the road is clear of children AND the school bus stop arm is withdrawn. (see diagram, TWO-LANE)
- On a highway divided by a paved median, all drivers moving in either direction must stop for a school bus displaying a stop signal and must remain stopped until the road is clear of children AND the school bus stop arm is withdrawn. (see diagram, MULTI-LANE)
- The only time traffic approaching an oncoming school bus does not need to stop, is if there is a raised barrier such as a concrete divider or at least five feet of unpaved space separating the lanes of traffic. (see diagram, DIVIDED HIGHWAY)
- On a highway divided by a raised barrier or an unpaved median at least 5 feet wide, drivers moving in the opposite direction do not have to stop for the bus (painted lines or pavement markings are not considered barriers).



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

- However, these motorists should slow down and watch for students loading or unloading from the bus. (see diagram, DIVIDED HIGHWAY)

Penalties for passing stopped school bus include:

- Moving violation subject to citation;
- Requirement to complete a basic Driver Improvement Course upon conviction;
- Four points on your driver license; and
- Minimum fine of \$165, if you pass on the side where children enter and exit, you will receive a minimum fine of \$265.

On July 1, 2017, the Cameron Mayhew Act took effect in Florida, which increases the minimum penalty for drivers who illegally pass a stopped school bus, resulting in the injury or death of another person. Cameron Mayhew was killed by a motorist that failed to stop as he was walking to his stopped school bus in 2016.

Penalties for passing a stopped school bus that causes or results in the serious bodily injury or the death of another person include:

- Serving 120 community service hours in a trauma center or hospital;
- Participating in a victim’s impact panel session, or if such a panel does not exist, attending a FLHSMV approved driver improvement course;
- Six points on your driver license;
- Suspension of license for a minimum of one year; and \$1,500 fine.

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

**NORTH FLORIDA TPO**

Over the past several months, there has been a bit of adjustment at the North Florida TPO due to staffing changes. I have worked closely with the same group since 2002 and drew comfort in the consistency of their team. Marci, Denise, Milton, Wanda, Elizabeth, Angela, and Jeff have worked closely with me since the “good old days” when they were housed at their old facility on Prudential Drive. Then Jennifer joined the team a few years ago and fit like an old glove (comfortable, reliable, and dependable). A few months ago, I was surprised when I heard the news that Wanda had decided to retire to spend more time with her family. The news shouldn’t have come as a surprise since we’d covered 19 years from the moment we first met. Just hurts a little to say good-bye.

As I adjust, it was comforting to know that the NFTPO is bringing in a professional acquaintance to fill their needs. Mr. Clark Letter was hired by the NFTPO and begins his “hopefully” long journey with them on September 1<sup>st</sup>. I initially met Clark while he was at UF working in the TTI office. We crossed paths on a few occasions as he did research for the Department. That’s when I first became accustomed to his dry wit and intelligence level that puts him in the upper echelon of Mensa. A few years ago, Clark decided to dip his toes into the private industry by joining HNTB and began his next career path in Jacksonville.

I was fortunate in that Clark’s main task was to assist HNTB with the existing TSM&O consultant contract I had with their team. During this time, Clark took on several assignments and with each task never let me down with his final product. It did take some time to adjust to dealing with his dry wit more frequently, but over



**NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued**

time he grew on me like moss on a stone. His most recent task was to help me with the UF AID project I was assigned for the City of Gainesville. Once he got rolling, there was no stopping his efforts to provide me with the support that was needed. So, I guess it was a double-edged sword to lose him from the contract, only to gain his value with the NFTPO.

Keep in mind that I'm familiar with several MPOs and TPOs throughout the State but am always impressed with the lean and productive make-up of the NFTPO. This group oftentimes runs circles around the competition when it comes to productivity and value. The hope is that Clark can help them continue to keep that edge which makes them the envy of many other planning organizations. If not, he'd better be ready for the "Wrath of Jeff" and be willing to adjust to meet all expectations.

As I'd mentioned in the last newsletter, I am also winding down my career. 778 days and counting until I reach the moment of decision on whether to retire or continue the journey. Right behind (or ahead of me) are Marci and Denise. My hope is the path we leave behind allows our successors smooth sailing "to infinity and beyond!" (Think that's a Toy Story line, isn't it?)

So, my best wishes to Clark Letter as he takes the next step in his professional career and my hope that he fits in well with the rest of our "family." If not, we will definitely let him know. You can count on that!

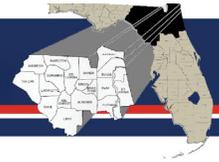
**Pete Vega, District 2  
TSM&O Manager**

**ITS MAINTENANCE**

For those traveling recently to the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Conference (SASHTO), a stop by the Florida Welcome Center or one of our rest areas brought a couple of new things to look at. The first thing you may have noticed on the drive in would be that the signs associated with our Truck Parking Availability System (TPAS) are on and indirectly operational. The second is that FDOT incorporated newly installed monitors into its outreach efforts to traveling motorists.

For the installation of the new monitors, thanks go out to our partners in TCD for making this a priority getting the proof-of-concept version up and displaying messages to the public. For the final stage of this project the vision is to have individually tailored messages for each location driven by our PIO team. Our Welcome Center will have Welcome to Florida messaging and may include overall highlights of the state. Our rest areas will also have local messaging for each area. For example, St. Augustine can give a historical overview and information of the area significant to Florida and/or FDOT i.e., Bridge of Lions. In addition to local information all locations will get a variety of safety messaging and if necessary, hurricane evacuation messaging.

Though many of us have seen and felt the challenges that have come with the installation of the TPAS system, we were able to use part of that infrastructure to serve the stated goal of the system. By partnering with another company, "VADE," not only was FDOT able to give real time parking updates to our commercial drivers on the road but we were



**ITS MAINTENANCE continued**

also able to support an upstart company in the ITS industry helping to ensure a competitive and growing community of contractors for the future. This solution involves standalone solar-powered/LTE-connected cameras that periodically take photos, upload them to their cloud analytics platform, and determine parking space availability. Historical metrics such as turnover and occupancy are available through a real-time API, with a focus on managing street parking data for cities and urban centers. However, this solution could be translated to a large-scale truck parking application with a little tweaking and unconventional usage of existing infrastructure.

After several iterations of demo evaluations, we accelerated the deployment of 75 VADE devices mounted on light poles and “temporary” wood poles at 12 rest areas and 2 welcome centers around the district. While we are still becoming acclimated to the third-party technology and simplifying the troubleshooting process, the data coming in is very promising and improving with each passing day. If our first deployment proves successful, we have plans to transition to a more permanent solution using wireless security cameras like we are using in other applications at the rest areas and elsewhere. This way, more robust data can come from Department-owned hardwired cameras at higher intervals, and we can reduce costs by completing a one-time equipment installation while limiting our term contract with VADE to include analytics services only.

Finally, I would like to thank Joshua Wood and Adam Storm for contributing to this quarter’s newsletter.

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

**OPERATIONS**

For many, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July was great, with the 3-day weekend, but at the RTMC we were planning for Hurricane Elsa. Thankfully it ended up being a “dry run” (pun intended), but we upped our coverage for overnight shifts Tuesday-Thursday, just in case. Elsa allowed us the opportunity to go through all of our protocols, which are updated annually, to make sure we didn’t need to tweek any of the procedures. Thankfully, other than a lot of rain and the inevitable falling trees, all went as designed. A big shout out to my Staff for stepping up to fill shifts for our additional staffing needs...just in case Elsa changed course or intensified.

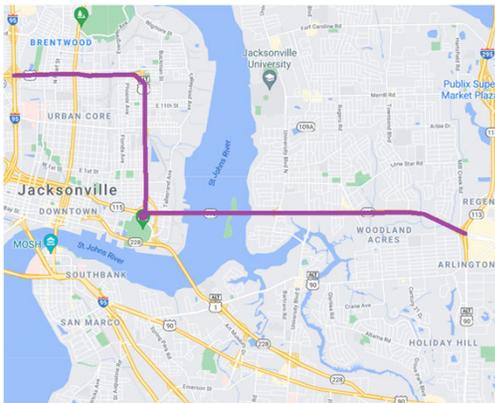
According to the AAA Foundation, wrong way drivers, in the years 2010-2018, accounted for 226 fatal crashes and 310 deaths in Florida. That’s an average of 34.4 deaths per year. FDOT is in the process of installing devices that will detect a wrong way driver entering interstates, will activate flashing lights on the ramp to notify the driver and will almost immediately send an alert to our Statewide SunGuide® software. SunGuide® will automatically program messages on Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) warning motorists of the wrong way driver. The RTMC has begun testing these devices to see what type of lag there is from detection to SunGuide® receiving the alert. Testing recently on the ramps from Norwood Avenue and Lem Turner Road to I-95 showed the time from detection to receipt by SunGuide® to be, on average, three seconds, which is great news. The sooner the RTMC can get the word out, either by the flashing lights on the ramp letting a driver know they are going the wrong way, or by automatically posting DMS warnings (while notifying law enforcement) the better the chance to lower the fatality rates.



**OPERATIONS continued**

In case you were wondering, the testing was not done by having our personnel drive the wrong way on the ramps. With appropriate safety lights and precautions, we backed up the ramp on the shoulder to trigger the devices, which it should be noted, is no small feat.

In other good news, we have added an additional Road Ranger route. This route (see picture below) runs between MLK Parkway at I-95 over the Mathews Bridge and out to Southside Boulevard. The hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 6:30am-10:30am and 2:30pm-6:30pm. Since this route began it has been averaging 40 events per week.



In the months of June through August we had seven RISC (Rapid Incident Scene Clearance) events. The RTMC Staff worked a total of 11,828 events with 4,688 utilizing DMS. Of those events, 2,768 were crashes. There was a total of 7,593 Road Ranger events.

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

**Jason Evans  
Metric Engineering  
RTMC Manager**

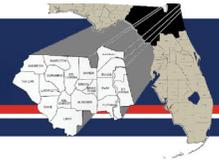
**FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team's latest bi-monthly meeting was held virtually on July 20, 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 the nighttime detours on I-95 SB and I-95 NB will continue for the construction of ramp T. Tim also mentioned that the Fuller Warren is also still under construction. He was then followed by Mr. Hampton Ray for the Construction Project Updates who reported that the finger joint rehabilitation at the Buckman Bridge was successful. Hampton mentioned that there will be no significant upcoming traffic changes but there will be an overnight closure on I-10 from First Coast Expressway at SR 23 to US 301.

The group then discussed the ITS Update/ITS Projects/511/TMC Updates which were provided by Mr. Craig Carnes and Mr. Derrick Odom. Mr. Craig Carnes mentioned several projects which included a couple of big projects in the Jacksonville area that include ITS such as the TPAS project which is still ongoing. FDOT is currently working to get final testing performed on that project. Craig mentioned that there were some issues with the vendor that provided pucks that are used to put in the truck parking spaces. FDOT is working to warranty that project and get things completed to ensure a quality project.

Additionally, there is the Buckman Bridge project to install ITS cabinets that pull out and rotate to go over the shoulder of the roadway



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

instead of over the water. The East beltway Express Lanes are expected to be completed around the end of October. This entails FDOT performing MVDS testing prior to that opening to ensure that the detectors are accurately reporting statistics.

Mr. Derrick Odom then jumped in and mentioned that the live camera streaming videos are now available through the website only at [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com). Derrick also mentioned that the RTMC has been preparing for Hurricane Season and has the ability to put events like flooding on state roads into 511.

The next First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled to be held on September 21, 2021 at 10:00 A.M. virtually via gotomeeting. If you are unable to attend, please feel free to send the link to someone else who could represent your agency. We look forward to your participation!

**ALACHUA BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

*Note: There have been two Alachua-Bradford TIM Meetings since the last newsletters. Both are listed below.*

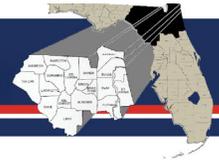
**Meeting 1**

The Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting held its bi-monthly meeting virtually on **June 9, 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 continuously reduce incident scene clearance times to deter

congestion and improve safety; and cooperation and communication between TIM members when out on the roadways to make everyone safer.

The TEAM then proceeded with the Emergency Operations Update given by Ms. Carrie Stanbridge. Ms. Stanbridge informed the group that District 2 has made an offer to an individual for the emergency management position previously held by Ed Ward. She also notified the group that the ESU (Emergency Shoulder Use) concept plans and standard operating procedures have been reviewed and will be sent out with the operating procedures soon. Extensive work has been done to the Rest Areas including updates, touchless features, cleanliness, etc. Generators have also been added and tested. District 2 is in the process of performing surveys to the ditches and roadways for over-hanging and leaning trees. The recent rain has helped identify some of the spots that need attention.

Mr. Craig Carnes and Mr. Jason Evans then jumped right into the ITS/511/TMC updates where they informed the group that the Truck Parking Availability System (TPAS) project is currently on hold. Once this project is complete it will be accessible on the FL 511 website. There have been DMS and CCTVs installed for this project. District 2 completed the installation of generator backups at all Master Hubs. This will keep the main statewide network up and running in the event of any future storms. Testing was done on the devices such as the



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

DMS to make sure they would receive the temporary power from these generators. The 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). They informed the group that live camera streaming videos are now available through the website as well.

The TEAM then dove into the Hurricane Season Updates which was provided by the RTMC Staff. The group reviewed some general Event Management plans (i.e. RISC, RISC Lite, D2 Road Rangers, ESU, Signals, Mobility Share for Wind/Water Sensor Access, etc.). Mrs. Dee Dee Crews also encouraged the asset maintenance contractors to share their plans during hurricane evacuations.

**Meeting 2**

The Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting held its latest bi-monthly meeting virtually on **August 11, 2021** at 10:00 A.M. The TIM meeting kicked off by Mrs. Dee Dee Crews reminding all TIM partners that the purpose of our TIM Team meeting is to continuously reduce incident scene clearance times to deter congestion and improve safety; and cooperation and communication between TIM members when out on the roadways to make everyone safer.

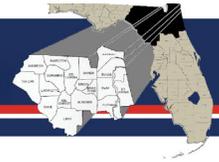
The TEAM then proceeded with the Emergency Operations Update given by Ms. Carrie Stanbridge. Ms. Stanbridge introduced Ms. Amber Brock as the new Emergency Management Coordination Officer who will be providing the Emergency Operations Updates moving forward. Carrie provided the 2021

Atlantic Hurricane Season outlook predictions, including 15-21 named storms; 7-10 hurricanes and 3-5 major hurricanes. There continues to be a tremendous amount of rainfall throughout the District. For a period of time, US-19 and SR-51 were underwater. The EOC continues to monitor these areas.

Mr. Craig Carnes noted that the ITS maintenance group is working on installing the informational display monitors at Rest Areas throughout the District. Cameras will also be installed so that the content displayed can be monitored. The TPAS (Truck Parking Availability System) project is coming to a close. Craig noted there are still issues, but the issues are with the product. As the project is accepted, work will continue with the manufacturer to make sure that everything under warranty is replaced and upgraded as needed.

Jason Evans also noted that the data has been live for the last week, so almost all the signs that are approaching the weigh stations and rest areas have accurate information for the amount of available parking spaces. This information is also accessible on the FL 511 website. The FL 511 app is still undergoing updates to make it more user friendly, more hands free, and with more voice activation/prompts to keep driver's attention on the roadway and not on their phones while they are driving.

Mrs. Dee Dee Crews went over a few of the incidents on the incident list and encouraged the Team to talk about them. The Team discussed the incident on July 7<sup>th</sup> on US 301 between Davis St. and W. Weldon St. All lanes were blocked for 3 hours due to



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

flooding. Carrie asked if anything could be done to prevent this in the future. The drains there cannot hold the large amount of water. Jesse Sutton said they can look into this and see if anything can be done.

The next Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled to be held virtually via gotomeeting on **October 13, 2021** at 10:00 A.M. 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 participate, please feel free to forward the meeting to 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:**

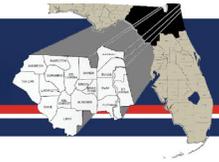
*The Florida Department of Transportation District Two's Traffic Incident Management Teams through partnering efforts strive to continuously reduce incident scene clearance times to deter congestion and improve safety. The Teams' objective is to exceed the Open Roads Policy thus ensuring mobility, economic 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.*



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



**ROAD RANGER UPDATE**

Our Road Rangers deserve to be bragged upon for a few minutes. They continuously demonstrate how essential they are to our incident management TEAM and they are heavily utilized throughout the District. This 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 4,373 events per month from May 1, 2021 through July 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 one on one time with FDOT staff and their peers to learn from each other. Our Rangers work extremely hard and are highly exposed out on our interstates. We strive to keep them, as well as the motoring public, alive and safe while traveling.

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 three months (May 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021), the roadway clearance duration has

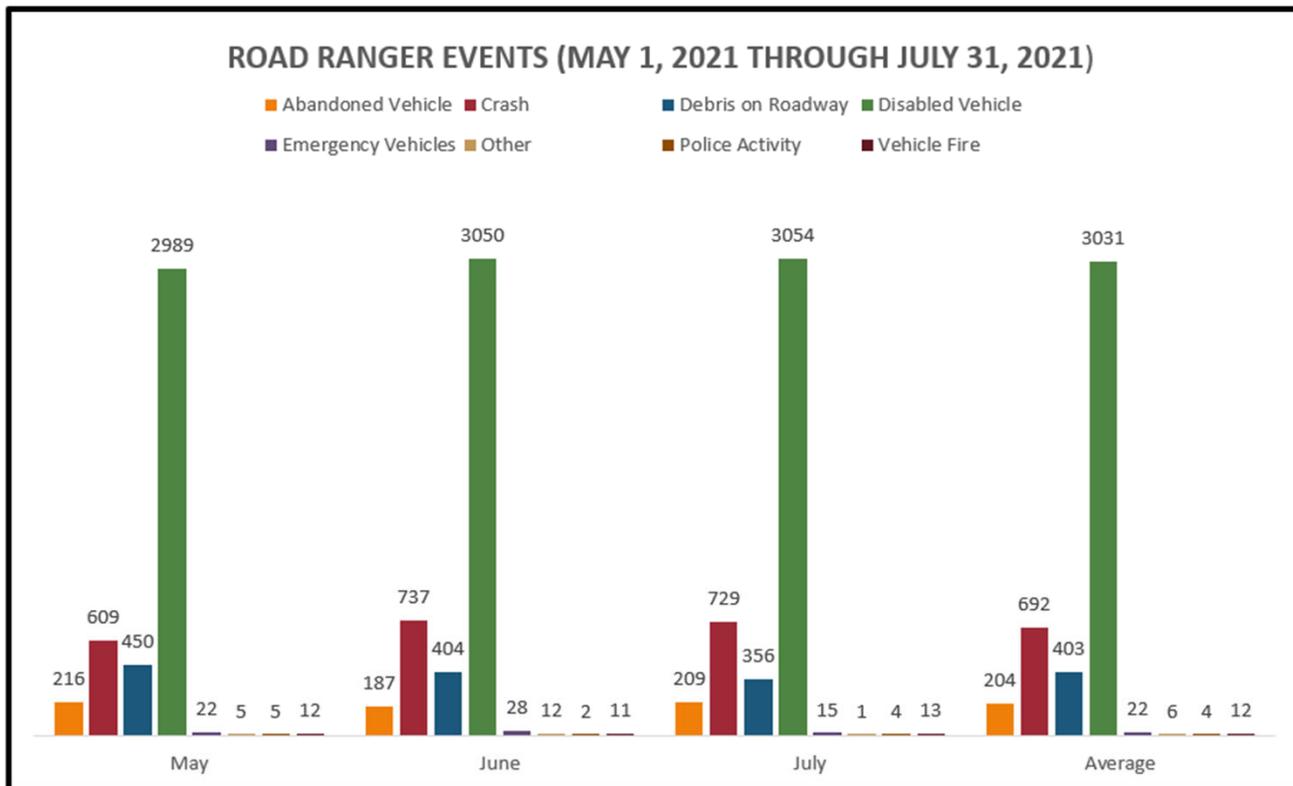
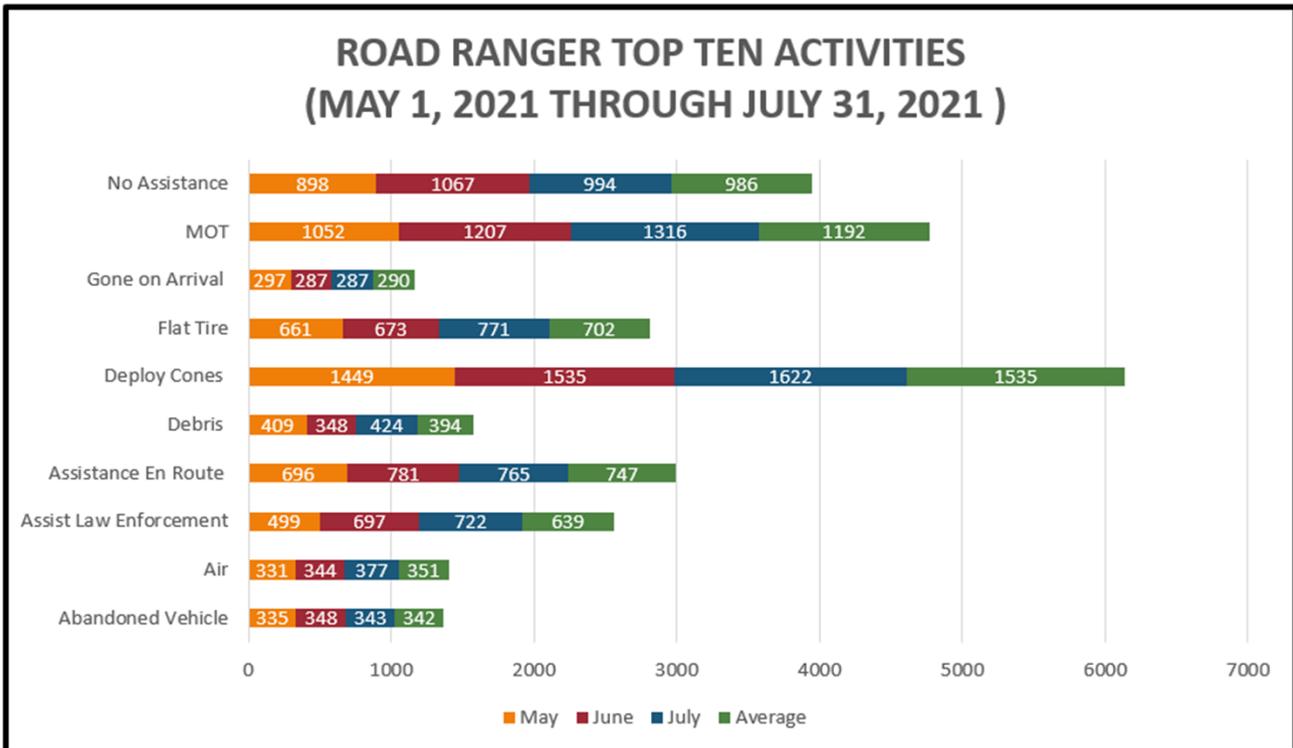
averaged about 51.9 minutes, the incident clearance duration averaged approximately 78.1 minutes and the open roads duration averaged approximately 45.4 minutes.

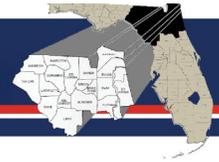
The charts on the following page show all event types that the Road Rangers have responded to from May 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021 along with some of the main activities performed when responding to these events. The Road Rangers primarily responded to crashes, debris events and disabled vehicles as 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 16.6% crashes, 68.8% disabled vehicles, 10.5% debris events and 4.2% abandoned vehicles. We also saw a slight increase in the number of Road Ranger responding events over the past several months when compared to last quarter.





**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 RISC Contractor is responsible for responding to the incident within 60 minutes of the request to activation request. Once on scene, the commanding official on scene will provide the RISC vendor with a Notice to Proceed in which the vendor will have 90 minutes to open the travel lanes for traffic. The RISC contract ensures a vendor is 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 and assisting motorists with a smooth traveling experience.

From June 1st-August 10th, District 2 has utilized RISC four times in Columbia, 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 June 1, 2021 through August 10, 2021.

Date	Time	Location	Description
6/23/2021	8:04:12 PM	Columbia on I-75 Northbound, At MM 430	Fatal wrong-way crash involving two cars and a tractor-trailer
7/22/2021	10:19:37 AM	St. Johns on I-95 Southbound, At International Golf Pkwy	Semi vs. Semi and one car with northbound and southbound lanes blocked. Both southbound semis landed in the median, one on its side, and at least one vehicle fell from a car-hauler the second rig was pulling.
8/2/2021	11:07:56 AM	St. Johns on I-95 Northbound, Beyond MM 319	Box truck overturned with 2 left lanes blocked
8/5/2021	9:22:02 AM	Duval on I-10 Eastbound, At US-301	Overturned semi in a construction zone blocking all lanes. The semi was hauling sod which was thrown all over the roadway.

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

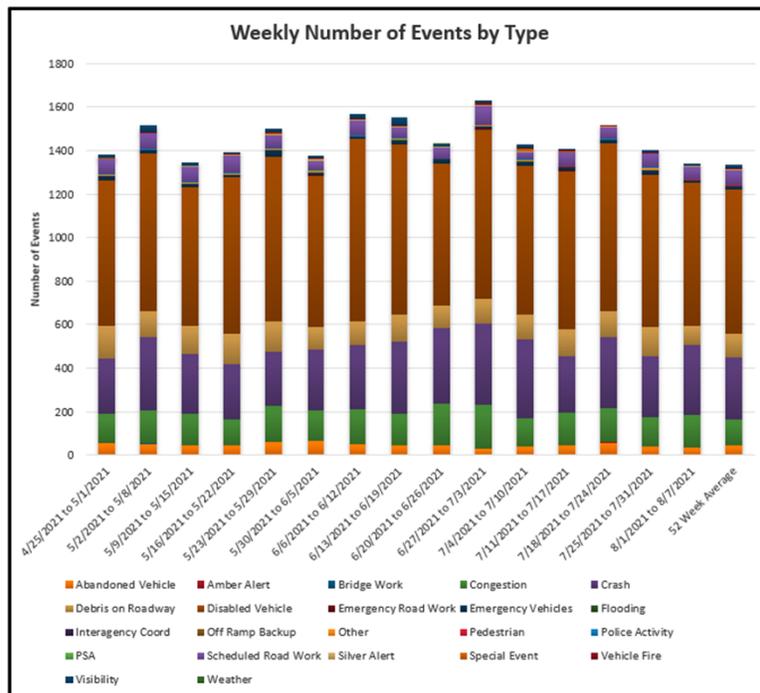


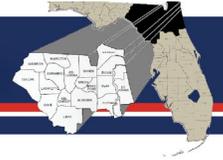
**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Glorious Summer. Here in Florida we are definitely grateful for the outdoor fun in the sun. Especially during this time of getting back into the groove of our “new normal”. Along with that Florida sun also comes the Florida heat and our Road Rangers have been continuously providing services to our motorists despite sweltering heat of 90 degrees and above.

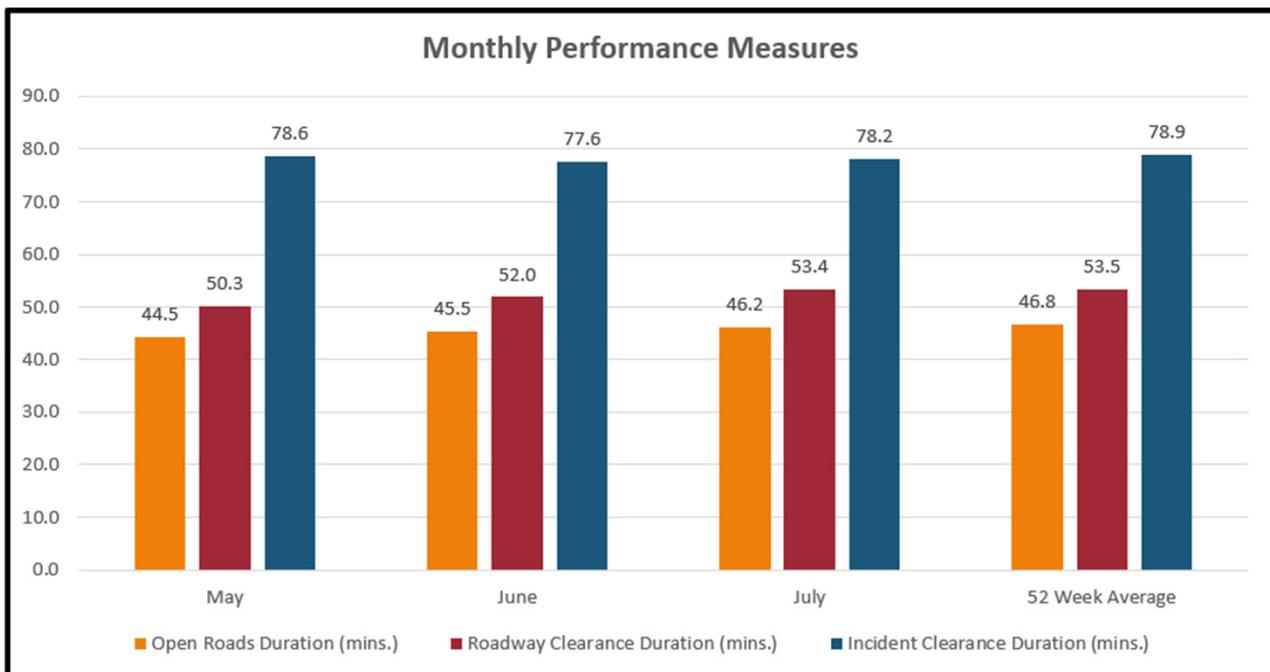
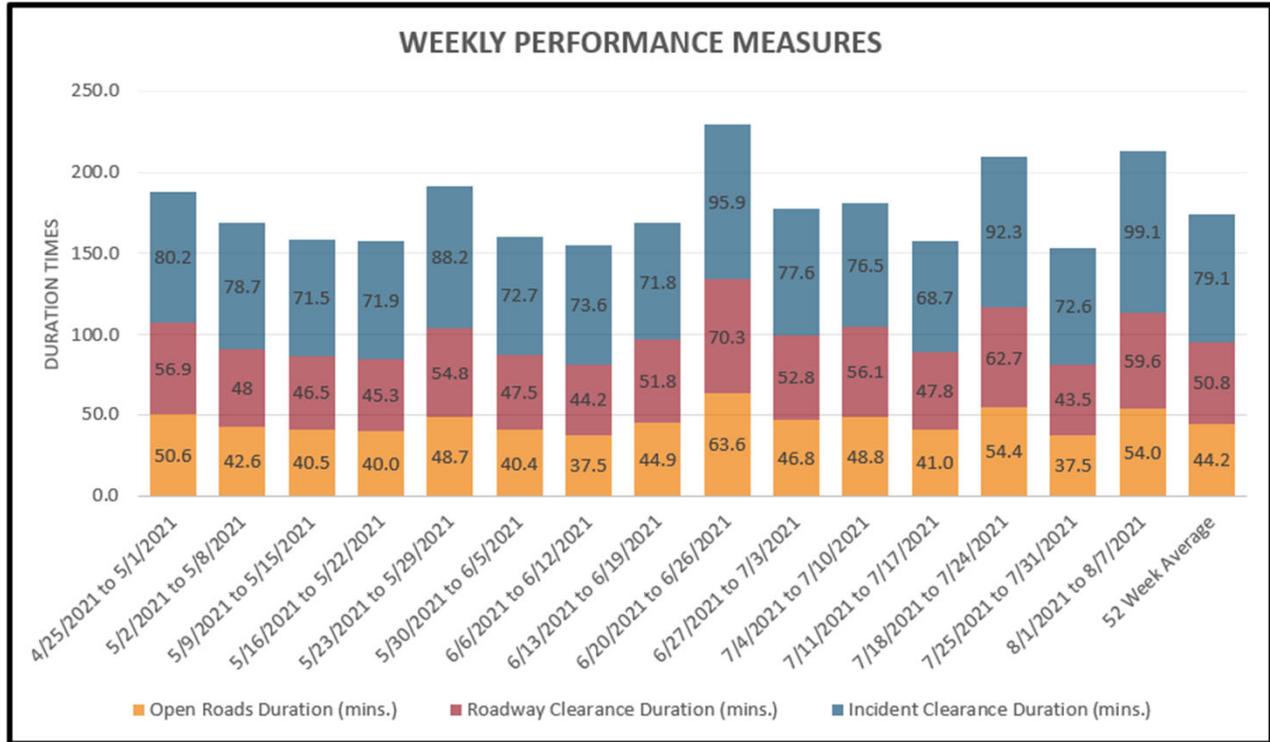
From the charts following, we can see that the Road Rangers responded to an average of close to 304 crashes per week here in District 2 between May 1, 2021 through August 7, 2021. This number represents the average number of total crashes that the Road Rangers have assisted with and is higher than the 52-week average of 285 crashes which accounts for an increase of 6%. Congestion and disabled vehicle events have also increased by 22% and 8% respectively, when compared to the 52-week average. These numbers are also up from the last quarter as many of our residents and visitors are making their way back to the sunshine state.

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 below. District 2 has averaged approximately 45.4 minutes for our Open Roads Duration time, 51.9 minutes for our Roadway Clearance duration time and 78.1 minutes for our Incident Clearance duration time which is overall close to our yearly average of 46.8 minutes for the Open Roads Duration time, 53.5 minutes for Roadway Clearance Duration and 78.9 minutes for Incident Clearance Duration.





**PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued**





**MARKETING**

Domestic versus international travel remains the top choice for U.S. citizens across the board, while marketing trends also show that vacationers are opting for *longer* trips to help make up for lost time. Grand Canyon National Park still holds the top spot as America’s number one travel destination, but Orlando’s theme parks don’t seem to be trailing far behind. According to data just released from VISIT FLORIDA, Orange County hotels pulled in their highest tax revenues this June since travel restrictions were initially put into place in March of 2020. I believe Mickey’s ears might have perked up at that.

Here on the home front, we’re noticing a trend as well. More sporting events, fairs, concerts, festivals and on-site job fairs are filling in previously empty spots on our calendars! We haven’t attended the Tri-Base Military Job Fair since March 4, 2020 (just before the pandemic began), but now, not only have they announced the event will be returning this September, but that the *venue* will be getting an upgrade as well. So many vendors have requested booth space that the event is being moved from the Morocco Shrine Auditorium to the University of North Florida’s Adam W. Herbert University Center. Participation is being capped at 110 vendors, and those spots are filling up quickly!

Our marketing team will also be attending Keiser University’s Student Health Fair in October, so exciting things are on the horizon. It feels good opening up the marketing calendar and seeing not only virtual events, but in-person events as well! Other exciting city-wide events to keep an eye out for include the WWE Smackdown and World’s Ultimate Strongman and Core Sports Fight Night in September, followed by the Jacksonville Jazz Festival in October. And if you’re a skateboarding fan, or perhaps your kids

are, you don’t want to miss the SLS Super Crown World Championship at Riverfront Plaza (formerly the Jacksonville Landing) November 13 and 14<sup>th</sup>.

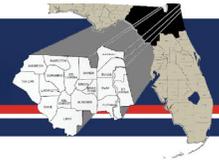
Keep in mind the 2021 hurricane season runs through November 30<sup>th</sup>. If you haven’t stocked up on hurricane supplies yet, remember to include FL511 in your arsenal of resources. FL511 provides vital information on road closures, evacuation routes and more! Toolkits, resources, images, public service announcements and other vital traffic information can be found in the FL511 Newsroom by logging onto [Home - FL511 Newsroom](#). And for additional information on how our city prepares for potential storms, including relevant information regarding evacuation zones, you can visit [JaxReady - Home](#), where you can also download the City of Jacksonville’s 2021-2022 Preparedness Guide.

Even when we’re not facing potential storms, we’ve got you covered with daily up-to-the-minute traffic information for your drive both to school and the office. FDOT encourages all motorists to use [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...JOANNA HAND**  
**ITS ENGINEERING SPECIALIST IV**

**Tell us a little about your upbringing. Where were you born/raised?**

I was raised by a strong single mother with seven other siblings. I am the third oldest and have two older brothers. My family is very close. I was born in Oklahoma, spent 14 years in Pennsylvania, then moved to Florida right before High school. After graduating High school, I spent eight years in Batavia Illinois, before moving back to good ole Lake City Florida, to be closer to my family.



*JoAnna, Mom and Siblings*

**Where did you attend college?**

I went to the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois in Chicago. My degree was in Computer Science and Mathematics.

**What defining moment steered you toward a career in Transportation?**

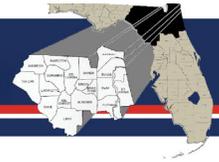
There was no defining moment that steered me towards a degree in Transportation. Prior to working for the FDOT, I was not even aware of this agency. I received many job opportunities my last semester in school, however, due to family needs I made the decision to move back to Florida to be closer to my family. I needed a job that was close to home and found a job posting a few miles from my house, at FDOT. I applied, got the position and Wala, started my career in Transportation.

**What positions did you hold before joining FDOT?**

Prior to working at FDOT I had government internships throughout school. Throughout school I worked two years as a Correctional Officer over nights while going to school during the day. I worked over four years at Walmart in Accounting and Management in HR and on the floor. My last six years of college I was a single mom working 30 to 40 hours during the weekends while going to school full time during the week. Right before working for FDOT, I worked for a company doing accounting for small to medium businesses with 300 plus clients.

**In your current role as Intelligent Transportation Systems Engineering Specialist IV, what are your primary job responsibilities?**

My primary job responsibilities currently include finding ways to utilize technology to automate tasks and increase efficiencies through internal software development. I am also working on understanding all the data we are currently collecting, then translating that data into useful information. This involves gathering large amounts of raw data/complex data sets, then interpreting and transforming that data into actionable information for others. Translate data into easy-to-understand information, and visually represent it through various data analytics tools. Understanding data and identifying the quality of that data. I work with software companies to build or enhance transportation related software. Another component of my job relates to data and network security, finding weaknesses and identifying strategies, methods and solutions.



**SPOTLIGHT ON...JOANNA HAND**  
**ITS ENGINEERING SPECIALIST IV**  
**continued**

**How long have you been with FDOT?**

I have been with FDOT for going on eight years. While working for FDOT I have had many opportunities to move up and learn many things. I have worked in the Bridge Department, Work Program, Safety Engineering Office, MCORES and now TSM&O/ITS. I have experience working on pretty much every phase of a project from initial concept to project completion. I have managed the Resurfacing, Safety and Emergency programs for funding and project development. Managed Safety Design and Construction Push-Button Contracts as well as many others. Coordinated and worked with many local officials and other stakeholders on department projects as well. I have been given the opportunity to learn a lot about Transportation throughout my time at FDOT. I enjoy learning and must always be growing.

**Any cutting-edge projects you're currently working on?**

There are many projects that I am working on or have in mind that involve leveraging existing technologies to create or enhance new tools. Ones I believe would provide enhancements to our office as well as the department. I am passionate about making useful tools and resources. I love to be intellectually challenged and my brain is full of ideas. 😊

**If you could learn one new professional skill, what would it be?**

There are so many new skills I want to learn. How do I narrow it down to one. 😊 My highest strengths are in understanding and interpreting complex data, recognizing trends, identifying efficiencies, planning, strategic thinking, creative solutions and out of the box problem solving. As such, I want to learn new skills that enable me to do these things better.

**What advice would you give to your younger self?**

Just be honest with yourself and know that God created you with your own unique skills, gifts, and strengths for a reason. Not every situation requires your skills but that is ok because there are situations where who you are is exactly what is needed. Do not be afraid to stand alone, search out and find situations and things that utilize, need, and grow the strength you have. Understand that many may not understand but that is ok because, there are those out there who do and no matter what, you are who you are, and who you are is needed. Grow your skills and strengths in confidence because there is a purpose for them, as there is for each of us.

**Worst day on the job? Or a foot-in-mouth moment? (not necessarily this job)**

My truly worst day on the job does not deserve consideration here. Aside from that I do not know that I can think of a "worst" day on the job. I am sure there are plenty of foot-in -mouth moments that I have on a weekly basis, yet none are jumping out at me, nor would I probably do them justice in attempting to explain them here in writing. 😜

**Best lunch spot close to work? And favorite dish to order?**

I am not sure that I have a "best" lunch spot close to work. I enjoy going to a few places here in town (which are all close to work) depending on what I am in the mood for at the time. I enjoy Firehouse and like to order their turkey bacon, loaded with everything. I love spicy foods and veggies!

**Your favorite way to stay caffeinated?**

Teas



**SPOTLIGHT ON...JOANNA HAND**  
**ITS ENGINEERING SPECIALIST IV**  
**continued**

**The zombie apocalypse is coming, what two items do you grab from your house before running?**

Two of our survival backpacks. I thought about getting a rifle too but then I would need bullets and that is two things. Plus, I am not sure that a rifle is going to do anything to stop a Zombie, so I have better chances focusing on survival gear, and just hope I am able to keep from becoming a zombie! 😊

**What emoji best describes you?**

The thinking emoji probably best describes me because I am always thinking...



But the emoji I probably use the most is this one.



**When you're not at work, where would we find you?**

With my family just hanging out, playing games, reading a book, or doing some type of outdoor adventure.



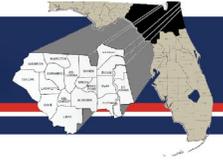
*Hubby and the boys*



*Mom & (Left) Oldest Daughter; (Right) Youngest Daughter*



*JoAnna and her husband*



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  
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  
October 13, 2021 December 8, 2021

**FDOT DISTRICT 2 ITS STAFF**



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