DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER

First Quarter 2024 Issue 137

HURRICANE SEASON
JUST AHEAD

The Colorado State University Tropical Meteorology Project team predicts an "above-normal" 2024 Atlantic hurricane season with 23 named storms. Of those, researchers forecast eleven to become hurricanes and five to reach major hurricane strength (Saffir/Simpson Category 3-4-5) with sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or greater.

2024 ATLANTIC STORM NAMES

ALBERTO	HELENE	OSCAR
BERYL	ISAAC	PATTY
CHRIS	JOYCE	RAFAEL
DEBBY	KIRK	SARA
ERNESTO	LESLIE	TONY
FRANCINE	MILTON	VALERIE
GORDON	NADINE	WILLIAM

DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER

First Quarter 2024 Issue 137

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

So far in 2024 I've been experiencing an interesting transition to realism with a touch of pessimism on what the Statewide TSM&O program's choice of direction has been. Over the past three years, there have been enormous staffing changes in many of the Districts as the younger generation begins to take over the reins. Unfortunately, many of these "newbies" are either tech savvy but weak in the basics of traffic engineering, or vice versa. The challenge is for them to realize that they do not have to apply technology as a solution to every perceived problem, but instead they should dig into the basics of the issue to determine if it can be improved at a lower cost with faster response. I must thank Larry Hagen for opening my eyes to alternatives besides technology. During a discussion several years ago, he challenged me with the question, "But will technology be 100% reliable or will I encounter a blue screen?" Honestly, I could not come up with a proper response at that moment but after years of thought the answer would be, "No, it will not be 100% reliable. Instead, it's probably at 70 to 80%." The question we all need to ask at that point is, "Will this be good enough to address our issues?"

My transition began with our initial efforts in the deployment of Connected Vehicle technology. In simplistic form, the Department would install Roadside Units (RSU) that would interact with vehicles, pedestrians, transit, fire/rescue, and bicyclists. This could only be accomplished if the latter had an On-Board Unit (OBU) that interacts with the RSU. When the effort began, there was a pseudo federal standard that we followed using Dedicated Short-Range Communication devices (DSRC). Approximately three months after completing our deployment, the Department was directed by the Federal Government (FCC) to remove these DSRC units and replace them with Connected Vehicle to Everything devices (C-V2X). To make matters worse, we were also told to reduce the range of our bandwidth by nearly 60%, thereby sacrificing some of the safety features intended for use with the system.

These devices were intended to create an interaction between all modes of traffic; however, we've learned that we are far from this objective and will not honestly reach this goal for at least another 10 years. To get a clearer vision on the future of Connected Vehicles, we sent some of our consultants to a national symposium that was held in Michigan during the month of March. First and foremost were the discussions held about OBUs. Auto manufacturers were very hesitant about implementing such technology without a federal mandate, since this technology could drive up the cost of their vehicles by several thousand dollars. Likewise, the question arose of how to reach the vulnerable users because these units were big and heavy, thus it is impossible to reach this corner of the market. Hence, the safety aspect for vulnerable road users was still out of reach.

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

A new thought process by the industry is to use the vehicle entertainment system in conjunction with cloud-based connectivity to reach all users. The logic behind this will be the fact that most, if not all, vehicles have this capability embedded as a standard, hence little to no additional costs for the vehicle. Likewise, nearly 100% of all adults and an enormously large number of children/teens utilize Smart Phone applications as part of their everyday lives. The key driving factor is that cellular based communication systems that are currently on 5G networks will soon be enhanced to 6G, thus providing the bandwidth capabilities needed for such an effort.

My next slap in the face was the implementation of "smart" Wrong Way Driving Systems (WWDS). Initially, the investment for the deployment of these devices at the end of limited access exit ramps was projected to cost approximately $25,000 for each location. This cost increased to $250,000 per location during "the time of Covid", with a slight decrease to $200,000 over the past year. This system was intended to detect wrong way vehicles, then alert the RTMC and FHP. Besides the cost, the problem with this implementation is that by the time the alert is received from the WWDS, then decimated at the RTMC (more to come), and then sending law enforcement for response can take up to 5 minutes. Simple math will tell you that by the time a wrong way driver is detected they could be up to 5 or more miles along the limited access roadway, which is plenty of time for them to present undue harm to motorists.

As for the "more to come", these WWDS are not infallible and actually generate more false positives than desired. Birds, insects, landscaping mowers, vehicles realigning lanes at the end of the ramp, wind, pedestrians, and bicyclists frequently activate an alert. Likewise, equipment issues often arise due to low power and communication, thereby sending a false-positive alert. I would estimate that over 98% of our alerts fall within the false-positive category, thereby impacting the effectiveness of the ramps. Of course, these issues are being addressed at the expense of an increase in maintenance costs. Currently, the WWDS are the highest expenditure on the books for maintaining our system. It is basically twice the cost of our Dynamic Message signs to maintain annually, costing around $5,000 per ramp per year.

Now to the basics, we did have a couple of locations where there were wrong way driving instances occurring. We determined that the cause of the wrong way driving problem was actually due to a lack of proper roadway marking and signing around the ramp. We coordinated with our roadway maintenance staff to add or improve these features (i.e. traffic engineering 101). Not to our surprise, the number of wrong way driving instances dropped to zero after the basics were used to address this issue. In comparison, the implementation of the wrong way driving system took approximately one year to

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

complete. The implementation of roadway markings and signing took one week. Thus, the "basics" won on this concern.

Ironically, I have a very intelligent group of young engineers who often bring up technological solutions for the future. Success has been achieved with truck parking, pedestrian counting, and rail crossing systems. These were low-cost, effective, and beneficial solutions that could be implemented quickly. Some of the other technologies they presented were very good, but thwarted by my underlying question of "how does it solve the problem?" These were more data driven approaches that could find out if there was a problem, but no method of helping with the solution. Likewise, most technology implementations come with the undue burden of downstream costs that would last into perpetuity (i.e. all require software licensures in the millions of dollars).

I leave you with the thought that technological solutions are not all bad. It's just that we must consider the basics before jumping from point A to point Z

Pete Vega, District 2
TSM&O Manager

FDOT TSM&O
Transportation Systems Management & Operations

NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS OPERATIONS MANAGER

2024 is in full swing and with a few months under our belt there has been some big news across the country and in the world. In the political world the presidential election is heating up. 2024 is filled with many up-and-coming changes. I am excited about all the future developments that we are currently testing. The hope is that some of these new systems will provide a better opportunity to detect issues or mitigate unsafe situations that come up on Florida roads. District 2 is leading the way in Truck Parking thanks to the assistance of our imbedded partners. The new iTPAS seems to be performing quite well and exceeding expectations. TIReS (Traffic Information & Reporting Software) is the name of the new software that we have been developing behind the scenes for some time now and we have always been referenced by the name of the company that was developing it. This name allows us to take some more ownership and present its capabilities. I want to thank JoAnna and the team for taking this challenge and making it the best possible solution for District 2. Although JoAnna has moved on to a bigger and better position with Central Office she is still involved with this software until we can find a replacement or put a pin on it for completion.

The dreaded H Season is around the corner. We cannot say the actual word, or the tropics may start heating up. In the words of Michael Scott from the office, "We are not superstitious just a little sticious". All the team members know their role and what we need to do when it comes time to get ready and

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NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS OPERATIONS MANAGER continued

hunker down. Make sure your families are ready and have a plan should issues arise. I will be out of pocket for about a month as I get pushed down to Texas for a National Guard Mission. I am confident the team will have the TMC running great as usual with little to no hiccups. We are almost at the halfway point of the year. Time to kick it in overdrive and finish the year strong.

Alejandro Varela, P.E.
FDOT District 2
ITS Operations Manager

NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS PROJECT MANAGER

They're ready 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year to answer emergency calls, so their hard work was recognized during National Telecommunicators Week – April 13th-18th, 2024.

The special week is a time when we honor our operators and dispatchers at the RTMC. Of course, we centered our festivities around food with Hamburgers and Hot Dogs on Monday, Taco Tuesday, Bar B Que on Wednesday, Subs on Thursday and ended the week with an Ice cream social on Friday. We had dress down theme days for the week– Pajama Day, Camo Day, Sports Team Day, Character Day, and Hawaiian Day. Everyone enjoyed being able to express themselves by dressing up.

I want to express my personal thanks to all the volunteers that did the organizing, cooking, donating of food or anything else. Without you our week could not have been possible.

These individuals deal with stressful situations daily and keep on going. I can tell you telecommunicators, whether FHP, FDOT or FWC, possess many hidden superpowers which include maintaining calm in the face of chaos, being able to multi-task while under great pressure of an emergency, typing faster than the speed of light, actively listening to hear what is going on and finding out all the information needed to relay to response teams, super strength to pick ourselves back up for crazy calls and to lift co-workers up when they are having a bad day, and having focused determination even in the face of uncertainty and chaos.

Dee Dee Crews
Project Manager
District 2 ITS Operations

NORTH FLORIDA TPO

The North Florida TPO recently lost a key member of our team with the retirement of Milton Locklear at the beginning of 2024. I've known Milton for nearly 25 years, so I realize the significance of his departure. Not only was he great at what he did but also one of the nicest individuals/coworkers I'd ever met. When I discussed his retirement with Director Sheffield, we both realized that there was only one Milton and his role would be irreplaceable. Jeff put deep thought into how he would fill this vacant position and decided to go with an individual who worked at the City of Jacksonville Planning Office.

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NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued

This past month, Thalia Fuste was hired to join the NFTPO. It appears that she is a young and energetic individual who will fit in well with his team. My hope is that the TSM&O program can provide her with the support needed to help all our constituents within Northeast Florida. The running discussion is that she is a bicyclist who may pedal over to our office on occasion. That would be a first since we've had bike racks for over 8 years and yet to have a bicycle parked in this space! The selling point Jeff made is that we have showers in the facility in case she needs to freshen up on those hot summer days. Hope that's enough of a selling point for us to get at least one user of that bike rack.

As for other activities with the NFTPO, we've been working with Clark Letter on the deployment of a Bluetooth system within the JaxPort Blount Island facility. This has been an ongoing discussion for over 10 years, with the objective being to provide them with traffic movements on property. The port's challenge is that they have large freight moving on property that are not the most responsive to getting around a constricted roadway system. The objective is to get a feel for how trucks move on property, how long it takes them to get off property and the length of time in between. The key element is to determine traffic patterns, time on property, and flow, with the goal of optimizing the efficiency of freight on property.

It's a pretty basic effort that can provide a lot of benefit to JaxPort, thereby leading to beneficial information as they consider the expansion of their operations. We are not done yet, since not only can we track activities within the property, but we can also track the movement of this freight once they leave. Our system will ping them as they enter the property, track freight as it picks up or drops off a load, and then determine what routes they take along our Northeast Florida roadway system. Such a tool will benefit the Department's Freight Coordinator as he tries to determine what routes could be enhanced to assist freight. Win-win for everyone!

Pete Vega, District 2
TSM&O Manager

SMART NORTH FLORIDA

ITS CONSTRUCTION

The ITS Group is coordinating with yet another large Roadway Widening Project in the Jacksonville area. The latest widening project is on I-95 from Emerson Street to Atlantic Boulevard. This is a Design-Build contract, which will require relocation of both ITS Infrastructure and one of our Dynamic Message Signs (DMS). The Design-Build team held an early coordination meeting with the ITS Group and showed us their proposed design for early work for Maintenance of Communications (MOC) to keep the ITS fiber communications backbone operational while the majority of the work and relocations is completed. The ITS Group had several comments that the designer took into account

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ITS CONSTRUCTION continued

prior to submitting their formal 90% Maintenance of Communications design plans, which have been reviewed in the FDOT ERC System and the Designer is working on addressing comments. The Design-Build Team has been proactive with their coordination and has requested and received documents detailing the layout of the existing infrastructure as well as the network topology and IP scheme.

Last week, the Designer submitted 60% ITS Design Plans, which will be reviewed over the next two weeks and comments will be input in the FDOT ERC System for them to address prior to the 90% submittal. We will continue to work closely with the design team through the completion of the Released for Construction (RFC) plans to try to avoid any potential conflicts between the existing and future ITS infrastructure and devices and any other components of the roadway construction. As indicated in previous newsletters, coordination does not end after design, because the ITS Group is involved throughout construction for review of ITS related submittals and any issues that may arise during the duration of the contract.

On roadway construction jobs, it seems that the bulldozers, excavators and other large equipment have some sort of “ITS infrastructure magnet” that is attracted to the ITS fiber and power conduits and ultimately causes damage to one or both of them. Luckily, with I-295 looping around Jacksonville and the layout of many of the other roadways in and around Jacksonville, the IT network team has been able to build in redundancy throughout our network paths for instances where the fiber optic communications is interrupted due to damage. So, in areas within the I-295 loop we are able to continue communicating to a large portion of the network with only the devices at the damaged sites normally being impacted. Unfortunately, we are not so lucky outside of the I-295 loop on I-95, I-10 and I-75 on the western side of the District where there are no other large deployments of ITS devices and infrastructure to give us this luxury of redundant paths. So, the ITS group has a redundant path leased through a third-party provider that connects from Jacksonville to Gainesville. In cases where the ITS communications link is cut outside of Jacksonville, this connection and our fiber connections to the FDOT District Five ITS Network serve as our redundant links to keep our ITS devices available to support our efforts to monitor the roadways and provide traffic information to motorists.

Craig Carnes, V.P.
Metric Engineering

ITS MAINTENANCE

Maintenance has been busy the last quarter working on multiple projects and I am happy to say that the grounding project has been completed. This work will help keep our devices safe from lightning storms and other electrical interference that can cause the devices to burn out. We will conduct this process every 5- 7 years to help our devices maintain a longer life cycle.

The next project is installing power service and fiber optic cable to all Wrong Way Driver Devices that currently have cellular and solar connections. So far all bore shots have been

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ITS MAINTENANCE continued

completed, and TCD will now run the cables to each device location. Once this is completed, we will be able to access the Wrong Way Driver Devices through Sunguide and it will be able to send out alerts to the RTMC operators and other FDOT personnel.

Finally, The Moveable Bridge Project is almost complete. All hardware and monitors have been installed except for the CPUs. Once the CPUs arrive, TCD can install them in the bridge tenders and configure the FLIR cameras to the CPU so bridge personnel can begin detecting pedestrians on the walkway before opening the bridge.

I would like to thank everyone who plays a vital role in the ITS maintenance program. Without my team we would not have accomplished everything we have done in the previous quarters, including keeping our device uptime at **98 percent**!

See you next quarter!

Jose Morales
FDOT District 2
ITS Maintenance Manager

OPERATIONS

I begin this month's article with some good news and some sad news. Amanda Nichols, one of our great Supervisors, has resigned to move on to a new adventure. Some of you may not be aware, but Amanda has worked for all of our primary Agencies at the RTMC over the years, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) and most recently, the RTMC (Regional Transportation Management Center). We will miss her, but the good news is that we'll still be working with her as she joins the staff of First Coast Road Rangers (no, not as a driver). More good news, after interviewing three incredible candidates from within the RTMC Metric Staff, Gracie Cranford was chosen to move into the vacated Supervisor position. Penny, Derrick and I said this was the most difficult decision we've ever had with choosing only one person! Congratulations to Gracie as she's already hit the ground running!

Hurricane Season is coming June 1st, and the RTMC is ready. We have a very long checklist which includes reviewing our hurricane/major event plans including:

- Staff Availability broken out into three time frames, Pre-Storm Preparations (24-72 hours prior to anticipate storm arrival); Imminent/Actual Storm (24 hours out and will remain at RTMC until the storm conditions have passed) and Post Storm (relieve Staff as soon as storm has passed and it is safe to travel to RTMC)
- Master Hub Generator and Satellite phone checks
- When the storm path is projected to reach our area, we purchase perishable food supplies to see to it our employees are well fed (non-perishable are purchased by May 1st)
- Going through many checklists to confirm all procedures, reviews, etc. are complete
- See the photo gallery for some of the many other items we complete so we are ready!

OPERATIONS continued

Kudos to our AMAZING, talented Network Staff! Tanesha Sibley, Robert Lacy, Mohamed Moustafa and David Rolfe have worked some very long hours since the beginning of the year with planning, acquisition of equipment and then beginning the upgrade of our Network with only minimal periods of down time. They're getting close to crossing the finish line. I won't say much more about how talented they are or other companies may try to "poach" the best in the State!

Each month we choose an Employee of the Month which is based on accuracy of work, willingness to fill open positions and just being an all around Team Player. This is another tough choice as we have a great staff. So far, for 2024, the following folks were honored:

January-Shelby Mullins

February-Ramona Tolen

March-Gracie Cranford

April-Erin Moore

Speaking of Operations Staff, over the last year we have hired a number of new operators as we expand our operations. We've got a great crew who have a "go-get-um" attitude, learn quickly and are successfully completing their modules in record time. The only thing that slows them down Is the Supervisors being able to carve out time from their other duties to be able to do the training as quickly as the operators want it.

Finally, as is the nature of technology, there are times that public facing information websites have issues. I'm very proud to say that our District 2 Staff is very often the first to identify the issues and to put in a "help desk ticket" to the Consultant responsible. All of our checklists benefit District 2 and the entire State!

From January 1st through March 31st, 2024 the District 2 RTMC had six RISC (Rapid Incident Scene Clearance) events. The RTMC Staff worked a total of 16,696 events with 9,020 utilizing DMS. Of those events, 3,079 were crashes. Road Rangers were dispatched to a total of 11,666 events.

Connect. Know. Go!

What are you waiting for?
Use FL511!

Jason Evans
Metric Engineering
RTMC Manager

FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team's latest bimonthly meeting was held in-person on **March 19th, 2024**, at 10:00 A.M. Facilitating effective communication among all TIM agency partners is crucial for FDOT to enhance incident scene clearance times, alleviate congestion, and improve safety on interstates within District 2. These meetings play a vital role in establishing an open line of communication to achieve these objectives.

The meeting started off with the construction project update provided by Sara Pleasants, who advised that there will be continued detours and road closures at the I-95/I-295 northern interchange, and traffic shifts can be expected as construction is completed over the next few months. There is also an upcoming Emerson Expressway resurfacing project, where work on the SB lanes is scheduled to begin on April 5th and will be completed within two weeks. Work on the NB lanes will begin on April 19th and will be completed within two weeks.

The Emergency Operations Update was provided by Carrie Stanbridge, who stated that Hurricane Idalia cleanup has finally concluded. Richard Bame then provided the Maintenance Operations Update, where he advised that the southern most St. Johns County Rest Areas underwent drain cleaning for both the sinks and the toilets where work was completed in steps to not reduce any capabilities of the rest area for travelers.

Craig Carnes then provided the ITS Projects update, where he advised that there are several ongoing projects throughout the District 2 region, and the RTMC works in close coordination with any and all projects to ensure the Fiber Optic Cable infrastructure is not damaged at any point in the construction process. He advised the Buckman Bridge ATMS project is still ongoing, as there have been issues with the mounting of the cabinets over the water. A solution is ongoing. The following projects were also highlighted: the I-10 widening project has been going smoothly with no recent fiber cuts or power outages, there are two new MLK Parkway projects to address the issues of trucks hitting the bridge, and the new I-95 widening project from Emerson to Atlantic where the existing Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) will need to be removed, so the RTMC is working to get a temporary DMS installed. He then highlighted a few key points from the new SMART St. Augustine project. This project is currently in the PD&E phase and is a high paced project which received federal funds via the RAISE Grant. This project will look at parking alternatives, enhance the Visit St. Augustine smartphone application, implement audible pedestrian countdowns, install mobility hubs which will provide EV charging stations, and include the installation of ADMS, parking signs, and flood sensors. It will mainly focus on downtown St. Augustine, with a December 2026 completion date. Craig concluded by stating the moveable bridge project is approximately 50% completed. Upon completion, bridge tenders for the six moveable bridges in the region will be able to monitor pedestrian traffic as the bridges rise and lower.

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FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE continued

Jason Evans then provided the 511/TMC update, where he informed the team that the FL511 app is continuing to improve, and they are in the early stages of testing expansion for Connected Vehicle and Emergency Vehicle applications for the app. The pilot project is currently ongoing in District 5 with the hope of being expanded throughout the State. The RTMC is also working with a company called TRAINFO which will provide railroad crossing notifications to motorists to allow time for detours if necessary.

Jason Evans concluded the meeting by advising that Hurricane Season is quickly approaching and the RTMC is taking precautions to ensure their supplies are ready and documentation is up to date.

The next First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled to be held in-person on **May 21st, 2024**, 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 bimonthly meeting in person on **Wednesday, February 14th, 2024**, at 10:00 AM. The TIM meeting kicked off with a reminder of the primary objective of our TIM Team meeting, which is to continuously reduce incident scene clearance times to alleviate congestion and enhance safety. The meeting also emphasized the significance of cooperation and communication among TIM members while operating on the roadways to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

The meeting then proceeded with the Emergency Operations Update and the Maintenance Operations Update, both given by Lola Butler, who began by stating that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was still responding to the impacts from Hurricane Idalia. Both the EOC and Maintenance met to discuss lessons learned from this storm. She concluded by advising maintenance is working with Dr. Daniels at the University of Florida to expand the butterfly program exhibit. The Wildflower Program along US-19 is also being expanded.

Jason Evans then jumped right into the ITS/511/TMC updates, where he informed the group that the RTMC is looking to enhance CCTV camera coverage for the major ramps in Alachua County, which could include installing new poles and new ITS equipment. He continued by stating the FL511 app is continuing to improve, and they are in the early stages of testing expansion for Connected Vehicle and Emergency Vehicle applications for the app. He concluded by stating there is a new truck parking program that has been established at the RTMC called ITPAS, which stands for Intelligent Truck Parking Availability System. The RTMC installed fixed cameras at truck parking locations and are using software

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ALACHUA BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE continued

at the RTMC to determine whether the parking spaces are occupied or not. The system is currently working at approximately a 95% accuracy rate and is in the process of getting rolled out in other Districts as well.

The next Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled to be held in-person on **Wednesday, June 12th, 2024,** 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 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 *or Arianna Franklin at arianna.franklin@metriceng.com or* 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 continue 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 you can send them to Dee Dee Crews at DeeDee.Crews@dot.state.fl.us.

TEAM MISSION:
To identify, prioritize, develop, implement, operate, maintain, and update TSM&O program strategies and measure their effectiveness for improved safety and mobility. The delivery rate of fatality-free and congestion-free transportation systems supporting the FDOT vision and Florida Transportation Plan goals

TEAM VISION:
To increase the delivery rate of fatality-free and congestion-free transportation systems supporting the FDOT vision and Florida Transportation Plan goals.

TIM TEAM MEETING SCHEDULES

First Coast TIM Team
Regional Transportation Management Center
980 N. Jefferson St., Jacksonville, FL
904.903.2000
10:00am-12:00pm
May 21, 2024 **July 16, 2024**
September 17, 2024 **November 19,2024**

Alachua/Bradford TIM Team
FDOT Gainesville Operations Office
5301 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL
352.381.4300
10:00am-11:30am
June 12, 2024
August 14, 2024 **October 9, 2024**
December 11, 2024

Dee Dee Crews
Project Manager
District 2 ITS Operations

ROAD RANGER UPDATE

As key contributors to the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team, the District 2 Road Rangers play a pivotal role in promptly communicating updates to the Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC) regarding incidents such as crashes, traffic disruptions, disabled vehicles, and road debris. The Road Ranger Program remains a crucial element of incident management, extending valuable assistance to drivers and collaborating closely with local agency partners. Their steadfast commitment ensures the smooth flow of traffic and enhances overall road safety in District 2. The Road Rangers operate eighteen routes in District 2, with seven of these routes providing 24/7 coverage across the District. All trucks in the District 2 Road Ranger fleet run on propane, marking the District 2 Road Rangers as the sole Green Fleet in the State of Florida.

During the first quarter of 2024, the District 2 Road Rangers provided assistance to an average of 3,715 events per month, with an average of 3.63 activities performed at each event. These activities include anything from providing air and directions to motorists, performing minor emergency repairs, to providing short-term maintenance of traffic. More information regarding these activities can be found in the Road Ranger Top Ten Actives chart.

Every month, Road Rangers participate in a compulsory Safety Training session, where a consistent emphasis is placed on promoting safe practices through presentations and instructions. To ensure comprehensive training coverage, these meetings are conducted in both Jacksonville and Gainesville, ensuring that all Road Rangers benefit from the knowledge shared. These meetings serve as crucial opportunities for the team to engage directly with FDOT staff and their fellow Road Rangers, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Given the challenging nature of their work and the high exposure on our interstates, it is of utmost importance to prioritize the well-being and safety of our Road Rangers and the motoring public alike during their travels.

The subsequent charts depict the range of event types to which the Road Rangers responded between January 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024, along with some key activities performed during these responses. Their primary focus was on addressing crashes, roadway debris events, disabled vehicles, and abandoned vehicles. The data indicates that the Road Rangers responded to an average of 15.8% crashes, 70.9% disabled vehicles, 6.4% debris events, and 6.9% abandoned vehicles. Overall, there was a slight decrease in the number of events with Road Ranger response, when compared to Quarter 4 of 2023.

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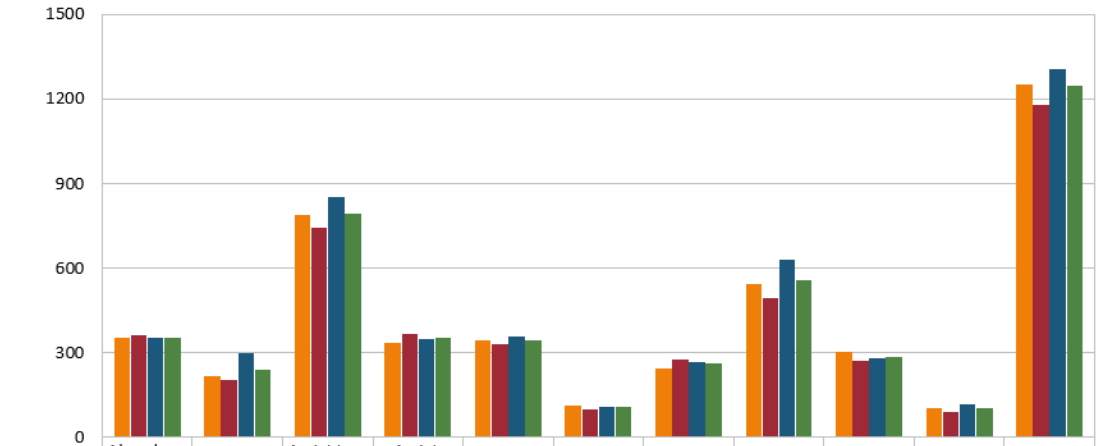
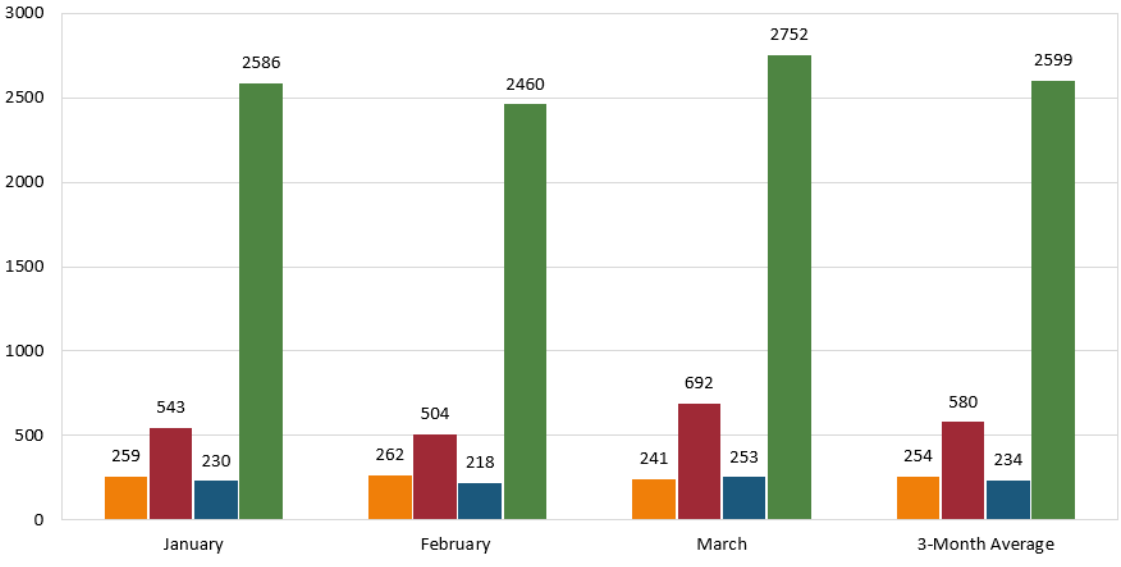
ROAD RANGER UPDATE continued

ROAD RANGER TOP TEN ACTIVITIES
(JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2024)



	Abandoned Vehicle	Air	Assist Law Enf.	Assist Wrecker	Debris	Directions	Event Info	Flat Tire	Gas	Jump	MOT
January	351	216	790	336	343	111	245	546	301	105	1251
February	361	205	742	368	329	101	276	494	272	91	1181
March	351	297	854	350	358	107	266	631	279	116	1307
Average	354	239	795	351	343	106	262	557	284	104	1246

ROAD RANGER EVENTS
(JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2024)



RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE

The Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program represents an incentive-based approach that corresponds with the Open Roads Policy in Florida, which aims to swiftly clear major highway incidents and truck incidents in 90 minutes or less. Under this program, the RISC Contractor takes on the responsibility of responding to the incident within 60 minutes of receiving the activation request.

Typically, an officer on the scene of the incident will call the RTMC and request a RISC activation. Crash parameters are then put into software where approval is either given or denied. On rare occasions, the TMC manager can override the software if it denies a RISC activation that is needed. Once the RISC activation is approved, the RISC vendor at the top of the rotation is notified and given the opportunity to accept or decline the event. Once the vendor has accepted and is on scene, they are provided with a Notice to Proceed by the lead official on scene. The contractor then has a maximum of 90 minutes to reopen the travel lanes for traffic. If the required equipment arrives within 60 minutes and the towing company successfully clears the travel lanes within 90 minutes, the RISC Contractor becomes eligible for a bonus. The vendor is also required to call in certain timestamps into the TMC to be eligible for their bonuses, including arrival time, departure time, and all travel lanes cleared time.

Often, RISC activations encompass substantial commercial vehicle accidents, such as loaded tractor-trailers, which require RISC Contractors to have specialized equipment readily available at all times for efficient response. If this extra equipment is required, the RISC Contractor might qualify for an additional incentive as compensation for deploying and using the equipment in the incident clearance process.

Over the past three months, District 2 has utilized RISC six times. This program holds immense value and is vital for reducing roadway clearance times, particularly during high-traffic periods. On the chart on the following page, you will find specific information regarding the RISC events that occurred within District 2 from January 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024.

RISC Wrecker

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RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE continued

Date	Time	Location	Description
1/11/2024	8:31 PM	I-95 NB, beyond Atlantic Blvd, Duval County	Crash involving a loaded log tractor-trailer which overturned on a curve, spilling logs across all NB travel lanes. All lanes blocked.
1/19/2024	5:52 AM	I-95 SB, Ramp from SR-16, St. Johns County	Single-vehicle crash involving a semi-truck which sustained a tire blowout, causing the semi-truck to strike the guardrail, travel down the embankment, and overturn. Two SB lanes blocked.
2/17/2024	4:34 AM	I-75 NB at MM 439, Hamilton County	Crash involving a tanker semi transporting gasoline and a sedan, resulting in the tanker becoming fully engulfed in flames, and gasoline pouring into nearby river. All NB and SB lanes blocked.
3/9/2024	7:20 PM	I-10 EB at Lane Ave, Duval County	Single-vehicle crash involving an overturned semi-truck. All EB lanes blocked.
3/27/2024	1:14 PM	I-10 EB at MM 246, Madison County	Single-vehicle crash involving a semi-trucker which collided with a concrete barrier, causing it to overturn across all EB travel lanes.
3/29/2024	9:10 AM	I-295 E NB at Merrill Rd, Duval County	Crash involving a tractor-trailer which was loaded with logs. The log trailer detached from the tractor and overturned, spilling logs onto the roadway and blocking all NB travel lanes.

Taylor Rouse, EI
Metric Engineering

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

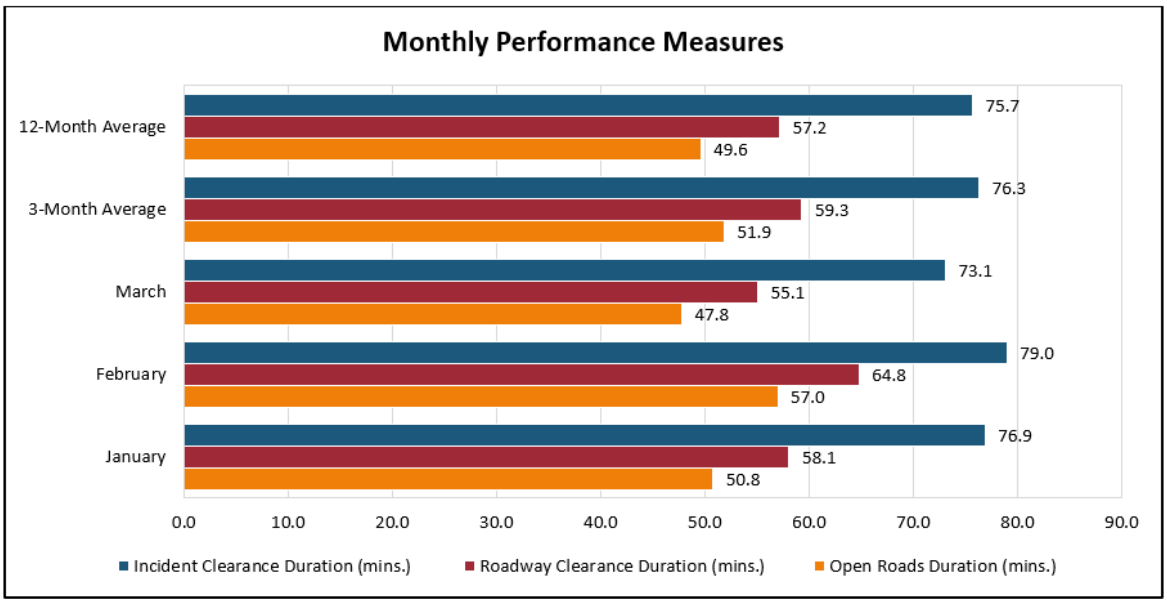
After reviewing the Road Ranger Event Summary, and the accompanying Road Ranger Events chart, it was observed that from January 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024, Road Rangers responded to fewer incidents on average than they did in Quarter 4 of 2023. On average, per month, Road Rangers responded to 254 abandoned vehicles, 580 crashes, 234 debris on roadways events, and 2,599 disabled vehicles, reflecting decreases on 9.7%, 11.4%, 0.4%, and 9.9%, respectively, from the averages of the previous quarter.

Another way to determine how well the Road Rangers are operating within the district is to look at the Monthly Performance Measure information, which was gathered from Quarter 1. This data includes metrics such as Open Roads Duration, Roadway Clearance Duration, and Incident Clearance Duration.

The Open Roads Duration is calculated from the time the first responder arrives on scene until all travel lanes are cleared, with a goal of less than 90 minutes per event. The Quarter 1 average open roads duration was well below the 90-minute goal at 51.9 minutes per month, on average. Some circumstances can lead to a higher-than-average open roads duration, such as any traffic homicide or serious bodily injury investigations.

Roadway Clearance Duration is calculated from the first notification of an event to all travel lanes cleared. The average Roadway Clearance Duration for Quarter 1 was 59.3 minutes per month, and 57.2 minutes for the past 12 months.

Incident Clearance Duration is calculated from the first notification of an event to the last responder departure time. The average Incident Clearance Duration for Quarter 1 was 76.3 minutes per month, and 75.7 minutes for the past 12 months.



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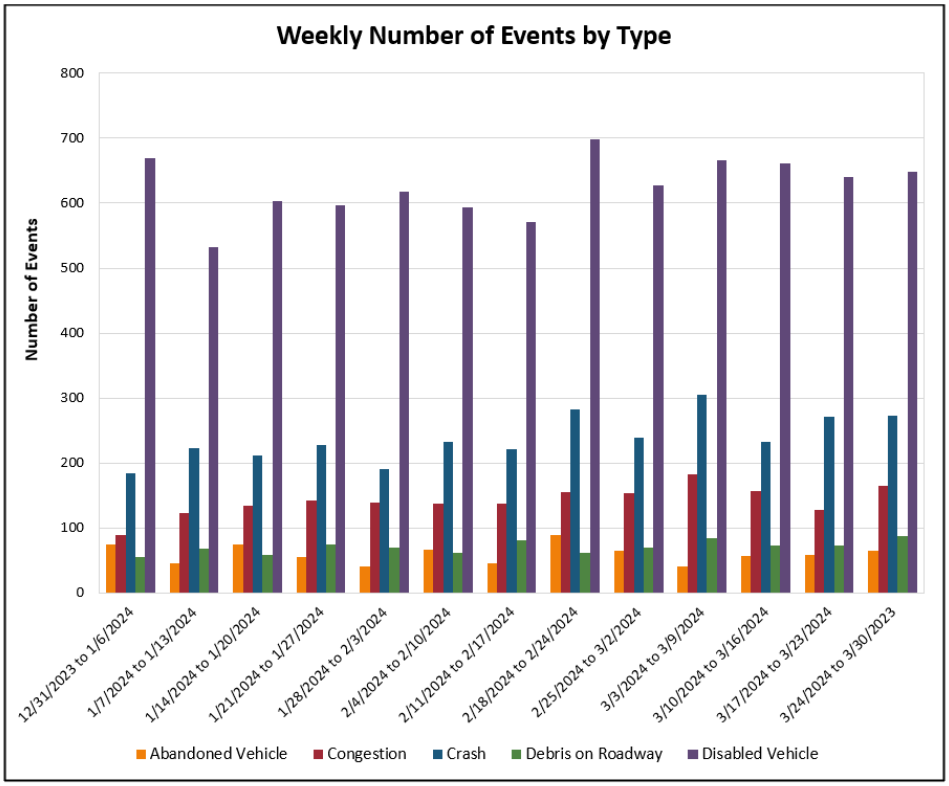
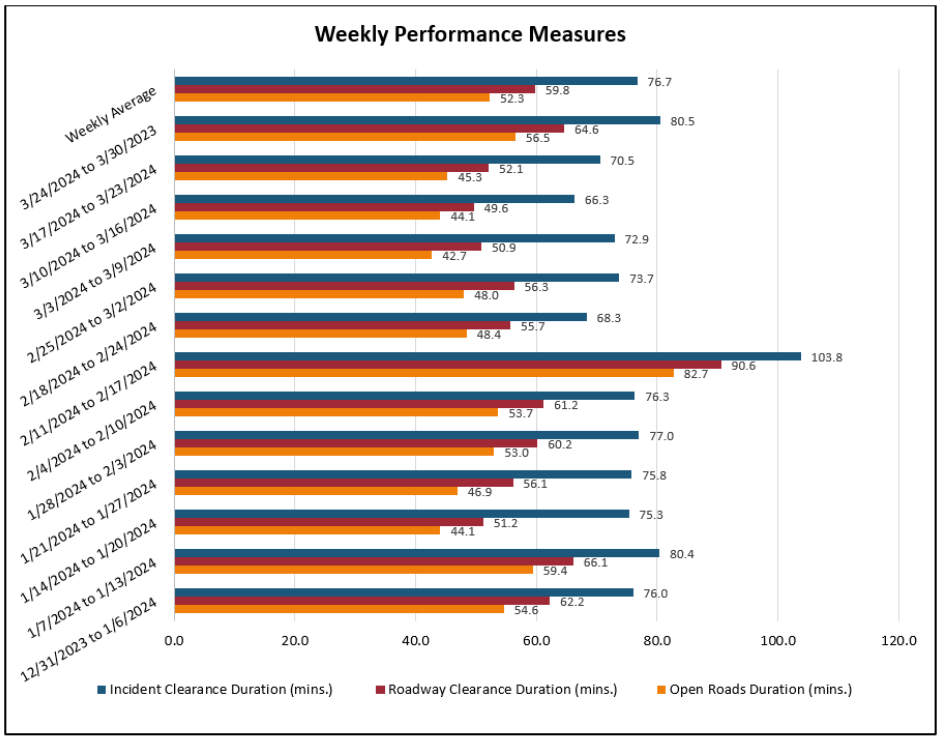
PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued





MARKETING

The first quarter of 2024 has been a whirlwind! We barely put our New Year's Eve party hats away before stepping full swing into the spring marketing calendar. Our first stop took us to downtown St. Augustine for a faculty health fair at Flagler College. That was followed almost immediately by Construction Career Days at the Equestrian Center. The number of students milling around the Exhibit Area at any given time this year was astounding. In a good way! I don't know if I'm imagining this, but the students seem to grow more engaging with each passing year. They were blown away by the career opportunities available to them within the Construction industry. At our FL511 booth we gave them a glimpse into the state-of-the-art technology that keeps motorists moving on a daily basis. They now know that what they see on the roadways is only one arm of the traffic equation. When they learn about the cameras, roadside sensors and technology that helps calculate travel times, they want to know more about what we do inside our Traffic Management Center. I wouldn't be surprised if someday I'm working alongside some of the juniors and seniors I met this year at Construction Career Days.

If January and February passed in the blink of an eye, March was a blur! We continued our marketing outreach with a visit to the University of North Florida for the Tri-Base Military Job Fair. This event was for military members transitioning out of active duty service, and/or their family members who might be seeking rewarding careers. This event serves a dual purpose for us. 1) We highlight available careers within the Transportation Industry. 2) We promote FL511 and the many benefits the service provides to motorists.

We rounded out the month of March by attending a new event! The Prime Osborn Convention Center played host to high school juniors and seniors looking to make career decisions. The event, aptly named the Duval County Public School Employment Fair, brought in almost 500 prospective candidates! After meeting with so many soon-to-be graduates, I think the future of our nation is in good hands.

Before hitting the roadways make sure all of your trips begin and end with FL511. From our operations hub inside the RTMC, we'll keep you up-to-date on current road conditions. FL511 is available in a variety of platforms. You can log onto FL511.com, download one of the free FL511 Mobile Apps available for Apple and Android devices, or visit us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Connect. Know. Go!

What are you waiting for?

Sherri Byrd
Metric Engineering
Marketing Manager

SPOTLIGHT ON…TAYLOR ROUSE, ENGINEER INTERN, Metric Engineering

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

I am a Florida baby through and through! I was born in Tampa, Florida, lived in Orlando for a couple of years, then by the time I started Kindergarten we had moved to Jacksonville, and I've been here ever since! Like a true Floridian, I have never seen snow. Unlike most Floridians though, I'm not a huge fan of the beach. As someone with very pale skin, I usually just equate the beach to major sunburns. Hopefully this summer I can learn to love it!

Paint for us a picture of your early career before joining Metric Engineering, Inc.

Soon after turning 16, I got my first job at Sonny's BBQ. Because I was still a minor, I had to start as a cashier/host, but as soon as I turned 18, I began serving. I stayed there well into my Metric career, and only left in November of 2022. While working at Sonny's, I also briefly worked at Hurricane Grill and Wings and Texas Roadhouse, but wasn't a huge fan of either place and left shortly after starting. It was through Sonny's that I learned about Metric Engineering! I was talking with a few of my tables about my dogs (I could talk to anybody about my girls), and next thing you know I'm chatting with someone who worked at Metric. One thing led to another, and I have been here for over four years now!

Tell us a little about your current role as ITS/Traffic Engineer Intern for both Metric and FDOT.

Currently I do a little bit of a lot of things at Metric. I perform weekly Road Ranger break time and shift change audits, assist with TIM Team meetings, complete monthly performance measures, look at secondary crashes, amongst other things. I've also been a part of several safety studies and was the lead for both the District 7 TSM&O Master Plan and the Pinellas County Implementation Plan. I've been trying to get into more design work as well, so I can help with more tasks in the future. That's what I love about this job so much, there is always something different to do!

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

After nine years of working in a restaurant, I have certainly had some bad days. I would have to say any day that I worked in the summer of 2020 (yes that summer). The dining room was closed, so we transitioned into a takeout only restaurant, and customers weren't allowed to come inside. This meant we had to mask up, in the hot Florida summer, wearing black gloves to take and deliver takeout orders. Needless to say, it was hot and miserable, so we were very excited when we were allowed to let people back inside, even if it did mean social distancing.

Do you have a hidden talent that would surprise your coworkers?

While I'm not very good at any of them anymore, I do have some hidden talents! I went to arts school throughout grade school (Pine Forest School of the Arts, LaVilla School of the Arts, and Douglas Anderson School of the Arts) and can play both the violin and the viola! I used to be able to fluently read music in treble, bass, and alto clefs, but it's something that if you don't use, you lose. I could work my way through a sheet of music if I needed to, though.

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SPOTLIGHT ON…TAYLOR ROUSE, ENGINEER INTERN, Metric Engineering continued

Sports wise, because I went to high school at a school that didn't have sports, I was allowed to play for my neighborhood school, which happened to be Englewood High School. I played varsity fastpitch softball for all four years (voted all conference my sophomore, junior, and senior year), played volleyball for three years, and slow-pitch softball for two years. I also played competitive travel softball, and was scouted for some Division I schools, but my knee had other ideas for my college career.

If it were up to my parents, though, I probably would have been a golfer. My dad has played ever since he was a kid, and I even have a pair of my own clubs! Unfortunately for them I was never able to get into it since I find it incredibly boring (sorry dad!).

Have you ever been told you look like someone famous? If so, who was it?

I haven't been told that I look like someone famous, but I think I had a doppelganger in high school. Tons of people would come up to me saying I looked just like someone in the grade above me, but I never did see her with my own eyes.

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

Unfortunately, I think I'm a pretty boring person. I have two dogs (a Labrador and a Pitbull) and a kitten, so most of the time I am hanging out at home with them. I do like to go to concerts, so chances are if I'm taking time off work it's to go to a show!

Looking back over your career, name one defining moment you still carry with you.

For now, I would have to say graduating college and passing the FE exam within a week of each other (also a few days before my 24th birthday!). I thought for certain I had failed the FE exam and cried the entire way back to Jacksonville (I had to take the exam in Orlando). The day before my birthday I found out that I passed! I'm currently studying for the PE exam and scheduled to take that at the end of July this year, so hopefully in a few months I'll have another defining moment.

Tell us a little about your family. (or anyone else you're close to)

I'm very grateful to live close to my parents, although I lived much closer to them before I moved last month. I get to see them a few times a week and bring my dogs over for doggie daycare. They're both my biggest supporters and I wouldn't be where I am without them! I also have a brother who lives in the Raleigh area of North Carolina. At the end of 2020 he and my sister-in-law welcomed their first child, Barrett (Bear), into the world and he's my favorite person! I'm not able to visit as frequently as I'd like, but we do have a family beach vacation planned for the middle of May that I'm very excited for. Bear saw a commercial of the beach and said, "take me there, please!" and so of course we have to take him.

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SPOTLIGHT ON…TAYLOR ROUSE, ENGINEER INTERN, Metric Engineering continued

If you could travel back in time to meet anyone, who would it be and what would you say to them?

I would have to say my grandmother on my father's side. She passed away when my dad was in his early twenties, which was long before I came around. I think I would just want to have a conversation with her. I would want to learn all about her and tell her all about what she's missed since she's been gone. I'd like to think she'd be proud of me and my dad.

Above, Taylor nailing it at TopGolf; below, Taylor and her beloved Dad

PHOTO GALLERY 1

Above, Sherri took FL511 to Construction Career Days at the Equestrian Center;

Below, the Tri-Base Military Job Fair

PHOTO GALLERY 2

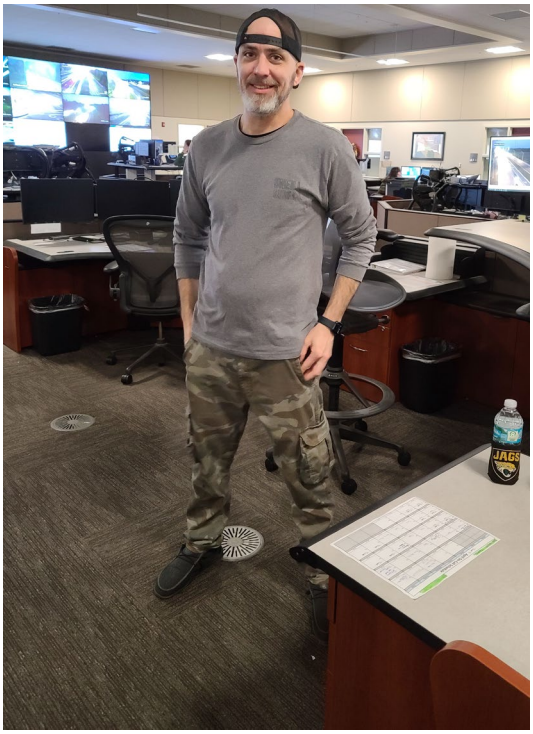


PHOTO GALLERY 3
HURRICANE SEASON PREP

Hot showers!

Generators and fuel

Network ready

Hurricane Contract Reviews

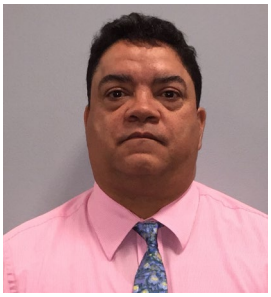
(r) 1 of 3 loads of food (non perishable)

Air Mattresses!

(r) Evacuation routes & Hurricane/Major event procedure review

"Pete Hurricane Jinx"- if cruise scheduled, there will be Hurricane development!

FDOT DISTRICT 2 ITS STAFF



Peter Vega, District 2
Transportation Systems Management & Operations Program Manager
904.360.5463
Peter.Vega@dot.state.fl.us

Alex Varela
ITS/TMC Operations Manager
904.903.2008
Alex.Varela@dot.state.fl.us

Dee Dee Crews
ITS/TMC Project Manager
904.903.2009
DeeDee.Crews@dot.state.fl.us

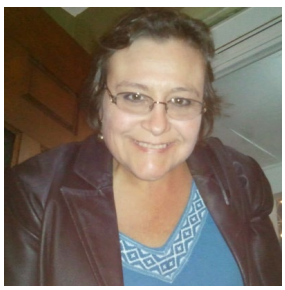
Glenn English
SMA/AMS Engineer
904.360.5643
Glenn.English@dot.state.fl.us

JoAnna Hand, CPM, FCCM
TSM&O/ITS
386.961.7502
Joanna.Hand@dot.state.fl.us

Joshua Wood
Signals/ITS Specialist
386.961.7534
Joshua.Wood@dot.state.fl.us

Antonio Tyes
Facilities Manager
904.903.2015
Antonio.Tyes@dot.state.fl.us

Jose Morales, CPM
ITS Maintenance Manager
904.903.2013
Joser.Morales@dot.state.fl.us



Kathaleen Crisler
Contract Administrator
904.903.2012
kathaleen.crisler@dot.state.fl.us