



DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



October 2014 Issue 83





NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS (TSM&O) PROGRAM MANAGER

The month of October is nearly over yet it feels like it just began yesterday. The likely reason is that I attended the Operations Academy sponsored by the I-95 Corridor Coalition and FHWA earlier in the month. It was an intense 10-day session that began October 7th and ended October 17th. This Operations Academy is held annually in Baltimore and was the brainchild of Phil Tarnoff, one of the pioneers on the use of ITS to address roadway congestion. This total immersion program focused upon formal classroom training, workshops and field studies that required me to begin the workday at the crack of dawn while ending well after midnight once all my “homework” was completed. I’ll be honest in saying that during those two weeks I kept thinking “this sucks”, but at the end of day ten I realized the pain and suffering was well worth it. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity that will benefit me for the remainder of my career with the Department while allowing me to help expand the TSM&O program in the years to come.

I should’ve known how much work was involved once they sent me the pre-study assignments. I was required to read three books, review a periodical, complete a Systems Engineering training course, submit two exercises and pass two pre-tests prior to my arrival in Baltimore. By the time the course began I kept thinking “what else is there to do?” Well, Phil pretty much answered that on day one when going over the course curriculum. The Academy was designed to provide the necessary tools for operations, corridor management, concept of operations, systems engineering, performance measures, customer service, organization and management. Each segment was covered by an expert in that particular field of study with many traveling to Baltimore from various parts of the country.

Day one was handled by Phil Tarnoff as he instructed the class on what was to come over the next ten days. Part of the first day’s session was a video conference with Ed Oakley who is a nationally renowned motivational speaker and writer. On the second day we jumped right into Incident Management, led by the highly regarded John O’Laughlin who was formerly a Trooper with the State of Washington. That same afternoon we had a chance to visit the Maryland Statewide Operations Center. Then....the homework was assigned! My team had to develop a ten-minute presentation on the day’s events that would be shared with the class later in the week, hence there was no time to enjoy the nightlife that Baltimore had to offer.

Over the remainder of week one we were taught about the operations capability maturity model (Steve Lockwood), data visualization & performance measures (Michael Pack), concept of operations (Phil Tarnoff) and communicating with our customers (Bob Marbourg). On Saturday we were taken to WTOP, one of the nation’s most successful radio stations that earns over \$7 million per year providing daily traffic information. Bob’s approach is simple yet very successful in that he treats every listener like a customer with relationships spanning over 20 years. When I asked Bob if he’d considered the latest technology like smart phones or WAZE he just scoffed at me and said “technology will never compete with relationships”. I guess that’s true since his operation makes more money than any other radio station in the nation that provides traffic reports. You can guess that by 6 PM that evening I was beat and was thankful for the day of rest they provided us on Sunday. On Monday, October 13th, my team’s day began bright and early at 5 AM as it was our turn to ride with the Maryland Service Patrol. It



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER CONTINUED

was a very enlightening experience as each of us had a chance to spend one-on-one time with individual Service Patrol Operators for most of the morning, learning the challenges that they encountered and the tools they were given. I quickly learned that their operation was very similar to ours, yet it seemed that we had much more experience on how to do things right. On one occasion we pulled over to assist at a crash site and it seemed like I had to “coach” the operator on better ways to handle the situation.

On one occasion I even asked “are you going to park behind the State Trooper so that you can protect him with your truck and lights?” At the end of this field trip it seemed like he took more notes than I did when discussing our programs. He loved the idea of the smart phone application for Road Rangers, absorbed my suggestions for a safer MOT at the crash site and really liked the concept of a Safe Tow operation to keep the roadway clear.

Of course, this was our early morning assignment and the day did not end until 6 PM. During the remainder of the week we spent time learning about freight operations, performance measures and presenting our acquired knowledge of TSM&O via group presentations.

On the eighth day they gave us a break by bringing in presenters from all over the country. Topics covered included mainstreaming TSM&O into State Programs (Melinda Peters), connected vehicles (Shelley Rowe), safety in operations (Patrick Hasson), SHRP II naturalistic driving study (Jim Hedlund) and travel time measurement (Stan Yound). Day nine was reserved for the remainder of our presentations, round-table discussions on what we’ve learned and a fifty question final exam that counted for 20% of our grade (yes I passed!).

This Operations Academy sounded like a lot of work but it turned out to be more fun and beneficial than I initially expected. The class included 31 of my peers from various states around the country. Several came from the West coast (California, Washington and Nevada), some came from the Midwest (Kansas, Missouri and Michigan), while a majority came from the East coast (Florida all the way up to New York). During these torturous two weeks I developed a new network of colleagues **AND** friends that will help me with our program for years to come. My team had an East coast feel to it with individuals from New York, Tennessee, Maryland, Virginia and one lonesome soul from California. The interesting part of our group study was going over the differences in our program. By the time it was all said and done each one of them was very envious of Florida’s program and asked if they could come to observe our operations on a Peer-to-Peer visit.

The last day wrapped up the Operations Academy with a presentation from Emil Frankel who was a former high level manager at US DOT and Jeff Paniati who is the current leader of FHWA. Their presentations tied a nice bow around the package by explaining why this course was developed, how it will be useful to us in the future and what the Federal Government intends to do with transportation in the coming years. Emil focused on a gas tax that’s at 18.6 cents per gallon and hasn’t been raised since the early 90’s. He went on to explain that Congress has known for years that there was a decline in annual revenue due to hybrid, electric and high-mileage vehicles yet they refused to address the shortcoming with new taxes. He then tied it into the vehicle miles traveled that is growing



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER CONTINUED

at a faster rate than revenue collection and the fact that the supply/demand curve cannot continue under current conditions. In a sense, he was saying that TSM&O is quickly becoming an option to capacity type transportation projects.

Jeff Paniati was a little more blunt since he's had to deal with these conditions from the beginning of his tenure. Jeff basically said that FHWA has made Congress aware of the current situation yet they've felt compelled to kick the can for the past few years. MAP-21 is the Federal Authorization Bill that's coming to an end after several extensions. This is due to the fact that the past few years have had the most competitive elections and none of the party members wanted a Scarlet Letter so close to November. Jeff is pretty certain that after the election is over Congress will convene in May 2015 to present a new Transportation bill for Signature by President Obama. MAP-21 began the process of incorporating performance measures to the management and operation of our roadway system. He says that the new bill will take it much further in that TSM&O projects will be placed at the same level of importance as the capacity type projects. In a sense, he felt that every project requesting Federal funds will have to include a Benefit-Cost analysis to prove why TSM&O is not the better option.

Once he finished his presentation and group discussion was completed there was silence in the room. We all knew that this would be a huge transformation on the way we currently do business and the time was now to prepare for what's to come. During the break there was a consensus among the students that this change would lead to a huge amount of work with a limited amount of professionals experienced in

TSM&O applications. Our ITS group is used to three to four projects a year, however if this new bill comes to fruition I expect the projects to increase tenfold! So, if you have any sons or daughters trying to find their way in life send them over to me because we are going to need a lot of HELP! Let them know the training is free but the commitment is eternal.

I got back home from Baltimore on the night of Friday, October 17th, at 11:30 PM. My brain was still spinning from the past two weeks so I took a little time that night to unwind and watch some ESPN. I realized that "this Operations Academy wasn't so bad after all," then I realized I'd fallen asleep on the sofa. By the time I woke up and went to bed I was exhausted and knew I had my fill when my wife woke me up at 10 AM the next day. For the remainder of the weekend my mind kept thinking "Is Jeff really serious? Are we finally there with TSM&O? Why the hell did I convince John Kell to retire!?"

So, it looks like the North Florida region, our ITS program and TIM partners are in for a wild ride over the next several years. Let's just hope that we can keep up with the work while finding new participants to join us in this effort. I am getting too old to burn the midnight oil and it's time for some of the youngsters to step up and grab that brass ring!

Pete Vega
District 2
Transportation System Management &
Operations (TSM&O) Manager





NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS/TMC PROGRAM MANAGER

I like experiments. Not only does it take me back to the roots of the education I had to acquire to get me here, but it is always fun to solve a problem hands-on. So it seemed perfectly fitting when Kevin Jackson and I were on the same wavelength about testing a few different surge protection devices on cameras, and we decided we'd make a little experiment out of it.

We had both gathered in my office to discuss problems we've been having with certain CCTV cameras becoming victim to phantom "data surges". We can't physically see any evidence of these surges on the cameras or surge suppression devices, nor do we quite understand how "surges" in data feeds can create damage, but we have become concerned about the ongoing maintenance fees we are having to pay to have these cameras fixed. The vendor for the cameras claimed that we needed to switch from the existing surge suppression we were using to a different brand, and that would solve all of our problems. Since these devices are not too expensive, we decided that we'd do so.

We didn't just stop there. Kevin has been impressed with the few new self-healing surge suppressors that he's been using, and wanted to try out a few more. Our game plan is to purchase ten of the self-healing surge suppressors and ten suppressors from Citel. We will also randomly select ten existing cameras that have the existing surge suppression devices on them. These ten will be our control group. For six months to a year, we plan to monitor all thirty of these cameras and hopefully be able to find some results from our little experiment. If the vendor is correct, we would expect to possibly see some issues with our control group that use the existing surge suppression devices, but none with the Citel or self-healing ones. And if

we find issues on cameras across the board, well, that's a subject for another story.

Josh Reichert
ITS/TMC Program Manager

NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE

I am going to sort of diverge on speaking about the North Florida Transportation for most of this section. I will mention that during the Operations Academy the NFTPO was the envy of many attendees once I explained our program and deployment efforts. What I really want to talk about is the presentation I gave to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Puerto Rico section last Friday, October 24th. If you recall from a previous newsletter, this past summer a contingent from Puerto Rico DOT, Tolls, Transit and FHWA came to visit us in Jacksonville during their southeast US tour to get an overview of our ITS program. This group went to Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Jacksonville and Atlanta so that they could get a feel for what's needed to grow their TSM&O program. I guess we left a lasting impression because soon thereafter I was asked to go to Puerto Rico to do a presentation at their annual ITE meeting. When I asked what was expected they said "EVERYTHING" and wanted me to explain how the NFTPO and FDOT accomplished so much in so little time.

I figured a fifteen minute presentation but when they sent the agenda they booked me for 1.5 hours! I quickly realized I'd better learn how to tap dance if I couldn't find enough material for that amount of time. I flew in Thursday night and arrived at the hotel around 10 PM. I thought about rehearsing my presentation but



NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE cont.

didn't have it in me since I was still recovering from Baltimore. So, I went to bed early, dreamt about the dance routine I could do to cover the 45 minutes or so of "dead air time" in my presentation and then awoke at 3 AM to a panic attack because I did not study for the exam!!! (Oh wait, that was last week☺). By the time the alarm went off I was refreshed and ready to tackle the day even with no dance routine for the last part of the 1.5 hours.

The first speaker was from FHWA and he opened up the annual meeting by discussing connected and autonomous vehicles. He kind of made me feel at ease since he could not speak Spanish so that took the pressure off of me since I was not sure if I could pull off my presentation in that language. He had some very interesting information to share on the status of this technology and finished one-hour later. "What! He gets to only do one-hour and they give me 30 minutes more! What are these people trying to do to me!"

When I got up on stage I realized I had no "ice breaker" joke to share. As I stared at the crowd with dry lips and a wandering mind I decided to just let them know that I would also be presenting in English since I rarely get to practice my Spanish back home and would probably say something about ordering a sandwich instead of the ITS topic they asked me to present. Once the laughter began in the crowd I knew it wouldn't be so bad. I started slowly by explaining how ITS first began in Jacksonville, how the NFTPO helped take it to another level with the ITS Coalition and how their support allowed us to be one of the best programs in Florida.

I then began discussing some of the arterial projects we've completed, the state of the art technology we are using and the fact that it had

to be a team effort or none of it would have happened. I then presented my vision on the future of our program, what new technologies would be deployed and the overall goal to generate performance measures to gauge where we are and where we are headed. Once I was near the end of my presentation it was time to "tap dance" for the remainder of my 1.5 hours. I am pretty good at ad-libbing so I started by refocusing on partnerships and Puerto Rico's need to recruit and train the younger generation who will make their effort a success. I then mentioned that it does not have to be a Civil Engineer or P.E. to make it a successful program. I told them that the ITS Industry needed Electrical and Computer Engineers, mathematicians, business majors and such because of the varying nature of our business.

By the time I looked down at my timer I realized "I did it!" Finished right at a one-hour and fifteen minutes with the remaining time open for questions. After I fielded the last question it was time to take off the jacket, relax and listen to the Island's perspective of ITS. Unfortunately, the relax part did not occur because it seemed like I left a lasting impression on some of the audience. They kept asking questions about the NFTPO projects, Bluetooth, social networking opportunities and future technologies like drone cameras that could help them manage traffic. Guess there's no rest for the weary when it comes to ITS.

I hung around for the afternoon presentation by the Puerto Rico DOT State Secretary and was enamored by his vision of ITS in Puerto Rico. He hit the nail on the head by first focusing on the Service Patrol program he plans to initiate in the near future. He then spoke about

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NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE cont.

deployments, the new TMC, performance measures, adaptive signals, Bluetooth technology and partnerships. He basically repeated everything we mentioned this past summer and in my presentation! You could tell he was a leader because he had a commanding presence and did his homework before the presentation. He knew enough about what he envisioned in the program that he could respond to questions fluently with no hesitation. And, oh yeah.....he did this all in Spanish!

The final presentation was done by the Puerto Rico DOT's ITS consultant. The presenter's name is Felipe and he sort of brought the meeting to a grinding halt by presenting the formalities and boring stuff involved with ITS. Felipe discussed the need for ITE PR to host training on System Engineering, Concept of Operations and many of the mundane tasks that suck the air out of our lungs when working on ITS projects. Even though the subject matter is pretty boring it was the most important part of the annual meeting because without solid footing for the program they would see scope creep, unsuccessful deployments and cost overruns. Once he finished you could tell he was not very happy. When we spoke he said the State Secretary took 30 minutes longer than scheduled so Felipe had to fly through his presentation. All I can say is "Thank You Secretary!"

If you haven't realized it by now we should feel very fortunate to have the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization on our team. They are quickly becoming the benchmark for our nation when it comes to producing a highly successful ITS program. They have not only been able to influence the thinking of several municipalities around the nation but also internationally. When you think about it, Canada is using their TIme4Safety CD for training purposes, China sent a contingent of Mayors to



learn how we are so successful and now Puerto Rico is shaping their program to mimic ours. Not Ft. Lauderdale, not Orlando and not Atlanta but Jacksonville, FL!

I will end it by mentioning a comment given to me by someone in their Tolls Authority right before I left to go back home. He pulled me aside and thanked me for the presentation. He then went on to say, Jacksonville is not only doing it right but they are doing it cost effectively. He finished by saying that this is what Puerto Rico needed for guidance since they are only getting one chance to get it right.

I am glad that the presentation was able to reach out to many of the attendees but I am much happier to finally be home after a long month.

Pete Vega
TSM&O Program Manager





MAINTENANCE

As mentioned in last month's newsletter we are working on a Freight Parking Pilot Project. This month our maintenance crews installed two MVDS (vehicle detectors) and one CCTV at the northbound rest area on I-95 in St. Johns County, north of CR 210. Each of these devices are communicating back to the TMC and providing the data and video that will be needed to monitor the number of available truck parking spaces at the northbound rest area. The ITS network manager is currently writing the software code that will be used to add the trucks that are entering the parking area and subtract the trucks as they leave the parking area. The project also includes the installation of a combination static and dynamic sign which will be installed south of CR 210 in the northbound direction. The bases for this sign have been installed and the static sign will be installed soon. Following installation of the static sign, the ITS maintenance contractor will install two LED panels and a solar panel on the sign. Contractor personnel will also install a wireless communications link from the sign to a mobile CCTV trailer in the median of the overpass on I-95 over CR 210. This will allow TMC operators to display the number of available truck parking spaces at the rest area. More to come in next month's newsletter once we have the system operational.

The ITS Maintenance section has been seeing the "fruits of our labor" for quite some time in regard to the device availability for all of our ITS devices within the system. TMC operators perform device checks periodically throughout the day and record their observations for each of the devices on a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is sent out to TMC management, network and ITS Maintenance personnel on a daily basis to provide our ITS Team with knowledge of the devices that are available that day. For the past several months all of our device types (DMS, CCTV, MVDS, and RWIS) have had 98 to 99 percent availability. This spreadsheet is also reviewed and summarized at

the end of the week to determine devices that have been inoperable for multiple days, which may require special attention. During the month of October there have been no devices noted with multiple days of downtime. These fantastic statistics are a result of the efforts we have made over the past few years of upgrading device site grounding and replacing older equipment. The investment in those efforts is resulting in greater device availability to allow the TMC operations staff to have the most information possible to provide motorists in the Jacksonville area with quality real-time traffic information.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist

CONSTRUCTION

The Phase 9 Project began construction on September 15. American Lighting and Signalization personnel and subcontractors have installed erosion control and are in the process of installing MVDS device poles. The contractor plans to continue setting device poles as they are delivered to the site and will be performing directional bores in the next few weeks. The project is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2015.

The SR 23 Toll Project, which is installing ITS on SR 23, I-10 from I-295 to just west of SR 23 and I-95 through St. Johns County has completed design plans for all 3 sections. Work is currently progressing along the I-95 corridor in St. Johns County, as crews have been installing directional bore conduit along the southbound right of way. Conduit installation is expected to continue for several months. Once conduit installation is completed, crews will install the pull boxes and splice vaults along the entire conduit run.

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CONSTRUCTION continued

Arcadis has recently submitted 60% design plans for the installation of ITS devices on I-95 throughout St. Johns County. This project will utilize the fiber optic cable installed on I-95 as part of the SR 23 Project described above. A complete ITS System including DMS, CCTVs and MVDS will be installed from US 1 at the south end of St. Johns County to the rest area north of CR 210 in the north end of the county.

Hinson Electric is currently installing pull boxes and splice vaults along the already installed conduit on the I-75 project, which runs from CR 234 to SR 121. They are also installing the conduit runs from the pull boxes and splice vaults to the device site locations. Crews have completed conduit installation on the US 441 section and are installing pull boxes in this area. The DMS structures were also delivered to the project this month after being sent back to the manufacturer for re-welding of several areas on the structures. This project is scheduled for completion in the Spring of 2015.

Metric Engineering recently submitted 60% design plans for the installation of conduit, fiber optic cable, pull boxes and splice vaults on I-75 from SR 24 in Gainesville going north to the Georgia State Line. The design portion of this project is less than 9 months long and allows FDOT to have a contractor under contract early next summer. The second phase of this project will provide for the design of the ITS devices along the same corridor. The second phase will follow the same design schedule as the first phase with the construction contract being awarded in the summer of 2016.

Craig Carnes
Metric Engineering

ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team meeting was held on October 8, 2014 at the FDOT Urban Office Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Avenue at 10:00 A.M. Josh Reichert opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and stated that these meetings are held so that all incident management agencies involved can work together as a team and learn from each other.

The TEAM started off the agenda with the ITS and 511 updates. Mr. Craig Carnes informed the TIM members of the huge upcoming ITS project from SR 24 to the Georgia line in which the design portion for the Fiber Optic Conduit and Fiber Optic Cable should be completed before April 2015. Mrs. Penny Kamish then gave a detailed description of FDOT's agreement with the smartphone application WAZE and answered questions from TIM members.

The TEAM moved on to the Construction Project Update where Rebecca White informed the TIM TEAM of many projects occurring in Alachua and Bradford counties that will affect traffic flow in upcoming months.

During the agency reviews FHP noted that all of Troop B received SHRP 2 training. If you are interested in presenting a training session for your agency and would like assistance, please feel free to contact Team Member Craig Carnes with Metric Engineering at: ccarnes@metriceng.com. Mr. Carnes is willing to work with agencies' schedules, including nights and weekends to make the training course available.

The Luke Bryan concert was a success and Chief Stewart from the Alachua County Fire



ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE cont.

Department commended everyone within the agencies who assisted. The concert had over 17,000 attendees and ran smoothly with no incidents to report.

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team will hold its next bi-monthly meeting on December 10, 2014 at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Avenue at 10:00 A.M. Please mark your calendar to attend this meeting.

FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The First Coast TIM Team will hold its next bi-monthly meeting on November 18, 2014 at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center, 2198 Edison Avenue at 10:00 A.M. Please remember your attendance at this meeting is important as we need representation from all incident responder agencies to continue to grow together. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there.

District 2 TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM MISSION:

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

District 2 TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM VISION:

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

Donna Danson
District 2 ITS Program Manager

ROAD RANGER UPDATE

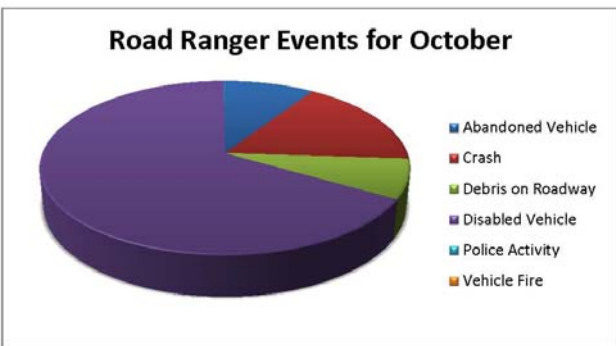
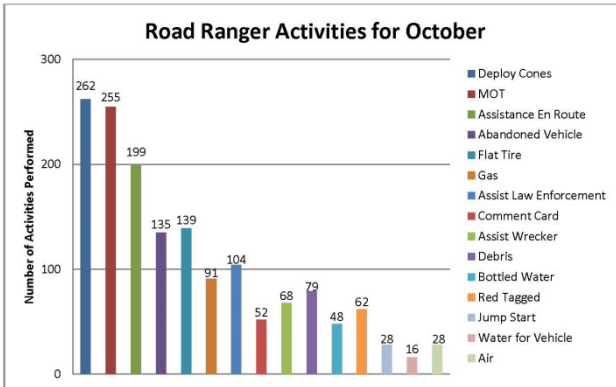
The Road Rangers held their monthly safety meeting on October 7, 2014 at 11:30AM at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center. Mr. Marshall Adkison started off the meeting by thanking the Road Rangers for following proper policies and procedures when out patrolling. Marshall also congratulated the Road Rangers on having good Road Ranger etiquette in terms of their speed and uniforms for the past month. He then reminded all the Road Rangers that safety is their top priority and that their main purpose is to assist in incident management.

Mr. Josh Reichert also attended the Road Ranger safety meeting and praised the Road Rangers for the good work they do out on our roadways. He stated that he has driven by several Road Rangers either on his way home or in to work and he always sees them doing an excellent job when helping motorists. During the meeting Ms. Donna Danson made a point to note that the partnership between the TMC and the Road Rangers is crucial due to the amount of danger that the Road Rangers put themselves in each and every day. The TMC is always there to assist the Road Rangers in times of need and we are thankful for all partners involved. The Road Rangers play an essential role in incident management and are utilized to make incident scenes safer for our incident responders and motorists. So far, the month of October has been fairly busy for our Road Ranger service as the rangers have been involved in assisting with close to 1,100 incidents.

The charts following illustrate the Road Ranger activities for the past few weeks as well as the different types of reported events.



ROAD RANGER UPDATE



RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE

District 2 has not had a RISC incident in the last month, but our RISC Contractors remain ready to respond if needed.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

We welcomed some cooler temperatures in the month of October, some nights with the temperature even dipping down lower than expected to a cool 59 degrees. It seems as if this summer was definitely hotter than usual here in District 2. Of course, this means an increase in travel in our area with what some would say is the perfect weather.

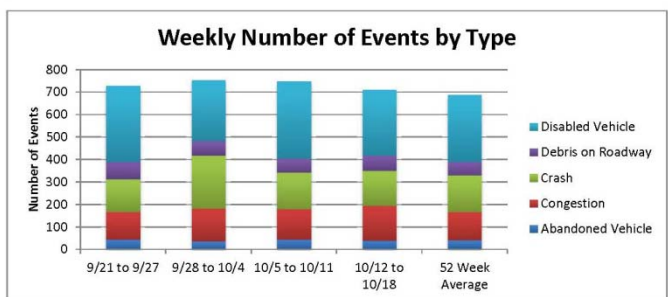
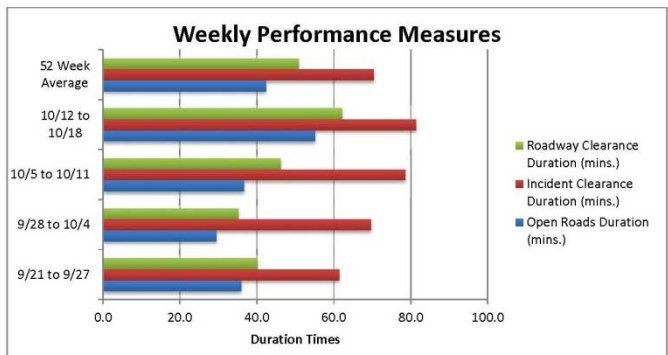
Road Ranger activities for the month of October have been fairly consistent. So far in

October there were over 2,100 activities here in District 2. Events such as crashes, congestion and the amount of debris on the roadways have also significantly increased in the area.

Our Open Roads Duration, Incident Clearance Duration and our Roadway Clearance duration have been significantly lower than our yearly average by approximately 8 percent in each category for the past month.

Looking at the Weekly Performance Measures chart below we can see that we only had one week where all three duration categories were slightly above the yearly average. During the week of October 12 to October 18, there was an increase in the number of crashes along with congestion events which could have contributed to the average being slightly higher for that week than usual.

The following charts illustrate the Performance Measures data for the past few weeks as well as the different types of events reported.



Sherrell Lall, Metric Engineering



OPERATIONS

“Ch-ch-ch-ch-Changes! Turn and face the strain.” Operations has been busy and seen major changes in the past few weeks, with the biggest changes happening on the personnel front. We started off with a contraction of duties, folding our daily operations in Clay County Signals. While this obviously involves the shake up with schedules and employees, it also changes the duty structure for our operators. With our current connection to Clay County intact and running, (Jacksonville) operators will now have the opportunity to utilize the same features (performed by Clay County operators) remotely.

Operations’ second big shake-up was a change to the management team. James Speed has moved on to other opportunities and is no longer with Metric Engineering but that presented an opportunity for Michael Harper who has transitioned from Lead Operator to Supervisor. Michael has been with Metric since January 2011. He has covered every shift/ position we have and has excelled in all of them. With that experience he will bring a fresh perspective to our approach to Operations and training. His enthusiasm, work ethic and communication skills are all attributes that will play up as a Supervisor. Michael will be working hard to make sure everyone reaches their goals within the TMC and I look forward to see staff members meet their full potential. He will be spearheading some big tasks that I am very excited about. Michael has worked hard to earn this promotion and he has a bright future ahead.

These changes have drastically altered the make up in operations with some departures and lots of position changes with operators. This has brought in new faces to the TMC floor but with change there is opportunity. During this transition Operations has not missed a



One of the many faces of Michael Harper

beat and moves full steam ahead. Our strong staff continues to excel through proper training and team work. Changes have come and the future looks bright.

Without ITS devices outside of Jacksonville (and parts of Jacksonville) the TMC depends on FDOT and TIM Partners to assist us with traffic information reports. You can reach our 24/7 line at (904)359-6842 or our work day line at (904)360-5465. You can also leave feedback on the 511 system (Phone and smartphone applications) about road conditions and bugs you may find in the system that is relayed to our operators in real time. Know Before You Go! Use FL511.

Jesse Gilmour
TMC Supervisor



www.FL511.com



MARKETING

That distant rumble you hear can only mean two things... a) the Blue Angels have been to town, and b) Biketoberfest! We were fortunate enough to be at the Adamec Harley-Davidson store on Baymeadows Road when scores of bikers rolled into town. They may have just been passing through on their way to the main event down in Daytona, but it didn't stop them from throwing out their kickstands and sharing space with us beneath the 511 tent.

At this particular event, I was blown away. Not so much by the people who approached our 511 booth, but by two of our very own. First of all, let's talk about the birthday girl, Penny Kamish. I kept telling Penny she should be home, celebrating her birthday...that we had everything under control. (yes, the event fell on her actual birthday)...but, she **INSISTED** on being there with us. And you know as well as I do that Penny has never met a stranger. She's right at home talking to a crowd of people, and so for hours on end, she sang the praises of 511. Her biggest accomplishment of the day, however, was convincing a big, brawny tattooed motorcycle dude (with a handlebar mustache) to download the 511 app, even though he insisted a Garmin was the **ONLY** thing he'd ever use to navigate traffic as long as the wheels of his Harley were touching pavement. But within minutes, he was cruising off into the sunset with a new 511 app on his phone! And Penny Kamish was standing in the parking lot grinning from ear to ear.



And of course, there's Jocelyn Hill. What a secret weapon she proved to be! I think my jaw dropped to the floor a couple of times watching her "talk shop" with seasoned cyclists who were decked from head to toe in chaps and skull caps. She simply blew me away. I half expected her to crawl beneath the hood of one of the vintage automobiles on display and rebuild the engine right in front of me. Her extensive knowledge of cars, motorcycles and all things football left me speechless. Turns out, the word "stranger" isn't in her vocabulary either. To Jocelyn, strangers are just friends that she hasn't met yet.



For once, I was "out talked" at a Marketing event. Kudos to these two beautiful ladies. What a terrific Sunday!

Whether you ride a Harley or a broomstick (don't let your cauldron boil over, this is simply a reference to Halloween), make sure your trip begins with a call to 511. You can also log onto www.FL511.com or download our free 511 Traffic App available for Apple and Android. Know Before You Go and Keep Moving!

Sherri Byrd
Marketing Manager



SPOTLIGHT ON...Michael Harper

Tell us a little about your background. Where did you grow up? I understand you bounced back and forth between Florida and Texas for a while.

Actually, I am originally from Jacksonville, born at St Vincent's and raised in Arlington until I was 10. At that point, we moved to Houston, Dad claims it was for a transfer at work, but I think he was looking to make a fortune wildcatting for oil. I spent my teenage years in a small town north of Houston called Humble, which is most famous for the Green/White Power Ranger opening a dojo in town, where he trains youngsters to fight the evil of Rita Repulsa and Goldar.

Where did you go to college and what did you study?

After high school, I headed to the University of North Texas. UNT was one of the top rated music programs at the time and I began my college career there as a Vocal Music Education major. After a few semesters of music, I switched to business and began studying Accounting. After 2010, I decided it would be best to come to Jacksonville and live closer to family, so I finished my AA at FSCJ before enrolling at UNF to study Mathematics. I've got a bit of an infinite curiosity, so settling on one major was a difficult task. As of now, I am working on finishing the Accounting degree through Florida Atlantic University online while working with the TMC.

We'd love to hear more about your family. Rumor has it you're a twin! Identical or fraternal?

WHO STARTED THIS RUMOR?!?!?!? I DEMAND JUSTICE! A DUEL!

Ok, ok, it is true. I do have an identical twin brother, Matt, and we have an older (by about

a decade) sister Heather. Matt and his wife Liz live in Houston currently. Liz teaches for a Montessori School and Matt just began his first year of law school. How you go from a BA in Theatre to Law School, I am not sure, but they are happy so I wish them the best. Heather actually lives next door to me with her husband and 4 girls, Cordelia, Josephine, Genevieve, and Eleanor. Heather was the measuring stick Matt and I were always compared to (Graduated third from Stanton, 1600 SAT score, full ride to JU), so it took us a while to develop a close relationship, but now she is one of my best friends.

Would people say you and your twin brother are more alike? Or as different as Sinatra and Stefani?

This is always the hardest question to answer as a twin. I usually respond with 'I don't know what it's like NOT being a twin?', but as we've grown older and lived separate I've learned to cherish our experiences growing up. Matt and I are very similar, but absolutely different in many ways. Growing up, he was the brain and I was the brawn. I have always been more competitive and involved in athletics, while Matt enjoyed scholarly pursuits. However, by the end of high school, we were both performing on stage in the Theater and Choir, so we both have an appreciation for the arts. And yes, he is every bit as much of a clown, ham, jokester, prankster, as I am.

Tell us how you ended up at the Traffic Management Center.

I ended up at the TMC by pure luck. I move to Jacksonville in December 2010, without a dime or a job. My sister knew Jason Summerfield from high school, and he mentioned in passing that I should apply for a new Feedback position that



SPOTLIGHT ON...Michael Harper continued

his work was taking on for Central Office. That was January 2011, and I suppose the rest is history.

Do you remember who interviewed you? What thoughts were going through your head at the time?

Ryan 'The Big Show' Crist was the unfortunate soul to interview me. I remember duping him fairly well. I had just left working for the UNT Football team as an equipment manager, so I was clean shaven and my head was shaved. We can all see how long that lasted.

I remember talking to Ryan being very natural. We managed to hit it off on sports talk, as well as his children, who happened to be twins as well. At the end of my interview, I had actually run out of gas in the parking lot, and called Ryan to ask for some Road Ranger assistance, so I've been a believer in our services since the beginning.

Now, tell us a little about the new role you're stepping into at the TMC.

My new position will be as D2/D3 TMC Operations Supervisor. My main objective is to ensure day to day operations are working like a well-oiled machine. However, my goal is to train each and every operator in every facet of the TMC, from Feedback to Road Ranger dispatch. I am really excited about this new opportunity, and look forward to growing with the TMC as we take on new challenges together.

Do you have any funny stories relating to the job? I'm sure you've witnessed your share of traffic incidents.

Oh, the stories. I will forewarn anyone working at FHP to look out for the relief shift. Glenn and Tony have tons of stories and comments which

will keep you rolling on the floor. Also, they will give you a nickname. There is nothing you can do about it, and no, you cannot choose it or change it. Actually, add overnight duty officer Ed to that list as well, he is a hoot.

Unfortunately, most stories revolve around fatalities, how they occurred, model Darwin Award nominees, etc. So, I won't go into those, just know that traffic is always unpredictable, and unless you can laugh about it, traffic management will always be very long and boring shifts.

I hear there are certain words we're not allowed to use inside the 4 walls of the TMC (to keep from jinxing things). What are some of the words or "catch phrases" that have been banned? Any you'd like to add???

If I use those words in this newsletter, won't they have a sense of permanence around the TMC? When a tree falls in the woods....

Avoid the 'Q' word is my only one, having played sports I tend to stick to superstitions when they have produced consistent results. Also, don't talk about how nice traffic is, or how shocked that a certain area hasn't had a crash occur or congestion hasn't been building.

*You have been warned. *Looks directly at camera* Yes, you.*

What changes have you witnessed since first coming on board with us?

When I started, we still dispatched Road Rangers with the truck radio, and all events were manually input by the FHP Op. The incorporation of the SPARR has been a godsend for streamlining the workload at FHP. Additionally, there were no cameras on 295 NW or 295 NE when I first began, so it is amazing to see how quickly technology can change and



SPOTLIGHT ON...Michael Harper continued

redefine how we do our jobs at the TMC. Then, there is the recent deployment of WAZE, but let's keep things positive in this Spotlight, shall we?

Describe a 'defining moment' in your career or personal life.

A huge turning point in my life was the Summer of 2010 when I worked as a youth minister intern with my former youth minister. I had a great time mentoring middle school and high school youth. The big moment would be our mission trip to Brasil. We spent 10 days between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janiero. I fell in love with Brasilian culture; the sense of community really helped shape my perspective on life and my interactions with people.

How do you like to relax and unwind when you're not at work?

I love spending time outdoors. Camping, kayaking, skeet shooting, and hiking are great ways for me to relax, though I don't do those activities as often as I'd like. Around the house, I love playing with my nieces who live next door, as well as reading (mostly science fiction and fantasy, though I am trying to work through the classics currently) and finally, playing bass. Music will always be my first love and passion. One of my earliest memories is directing hymns with my dad when I was knee high to a grasshopper. I started playing double bass in the orchestra when I was about 13, and just fell in love with rhythm and blues.

At right: The many faces of Michael Harper (and, yes, that is a seersucker suit).





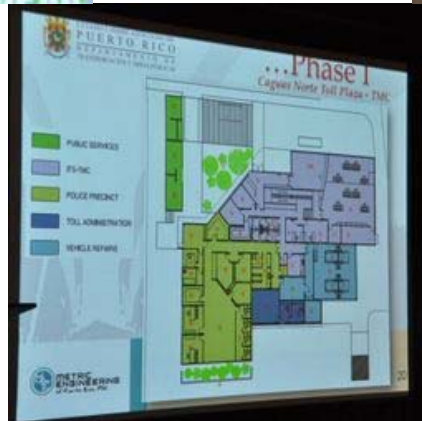
PHOTO GALLERY



Marketing Assistant, Daniel Roy, took a little time off recently to say "I do" to his beautiful bride Paula. After an intimate ceremony in St. Augustine the couple honeymooned in the Greek Isles.



At the recent annual meeting of Puerto Rico's Chapter of ITE. Above: Puerto Rico Secretary of Transportation, Miguel Torres Diaz. Right: PRHTA is getting a new RTMC, just like District 2.



Above: A panel on Traffic Incident Managed, moderated by Javier Ramos, Executive Director, PRHTA, with panelists Alberto Figueroa, President, Puerto Rico Bus Authority, & Zuleika Colon, Department of Justice.



**TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT
2014 MEETING SCHEDULE**

FIRST COAST TIM TEAM MEETING

FDOT URBAN OFFICE TRAINING CENTER
2198 EDISON AVENUE- JACKSONVILLE
904-360-5400

NOVEMBER 18, 2014

ALACHUA/BRADFORD TIM TEAM MEETING

FDOT GAINESVILLE OPERATIONS OFFICE
5301 N.E. 39TH AVE- GAINESVILLE
352-381-4300

DECEMBER 10, 2014

FDOT DISTRICT TWO ITS STAFF



**Peter Vega, District Two
Transportation System Management & Operations
Program Manager**
904.360.5463
Peter.Vega@dot.state.fl.us



www.FL511.com



**Josh Reichert
ITS/TMC Program Manager**
(904) 360-5642
Joshua.Reichert@dot.state.fl.us



**Donna Danson
ITS Operations Project Manager**
904.360.5635
Donna.Danson@dot.state.fl.us



**Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist**
904.360.5454
Kevin.Jackson@dot.state.fl.us

