



DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



January 2014 Issue 74

With all of these sub-freezing temperatures, we're all keeping our "eye on the star" for the hope of warm weather to come...SOON!





NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER

I am pleased to say that the North Florida RTMC ground breaking event held on January 10th at the State of Florida complex was a huge success for all involved. Many of the organizers were very nervous as the event drew near, wondering if the weather would warm up and stay dry. You couldn't blame them after the record cold that hit Jacksonville the week before the ceremony but luckily Mother Nature played nice this time. She even decided to stop raining about an hour before the event kicked off just to insure no late cancellations due to weather would occur. It was lucky for us that this occurred because we ended up having a larger than expected attendance for this event thus making this a huge success for the Department and North Florida TPO.

It ended up being an indoor/outdoor event where we utilized the FDLE training facility for the pre-event reception and a tent outside for the official ceremony. For those of you that didn't have the opportunity to attend all I can say is you missed poetry in motion. Inside the training facility there were several videos displayed, power point presentations at every corner of the building and an equipment exhibit to boot. I was happy to hear the compliments from a number of guests who really learned more than they expected about the benefits that this new RTMC will bring to the area. The displays helped put all the pieces together for them thereby leading to a greater understanding of this facility's importance once the speakers opened the ceremony.

The North Florida TPO Director, Jeff Sheffield, kicked things off splendidly then he passed the baton to our District Secretary, Greg Evans, who then passed the baton to Representative Lake Ray. Our final speaker was FHP Lieutenant Colonel Duarte who provided a clear message on the benefits in coordinating our response to roadway events within this inter-agency facility.

The event ended with the ceremonial shoveling of dirt and then we all called it a day. This was a grandiose way to say "it's time to get to work to make this a reality" so the team is now full steam ahead in getting construction of the RTMC under way. I received a funny comment near the end of the ceremony that I thought I should share. One of the attendees came up to me and wondered how nervous I was about this event. Looked him square in the eye and said "Nervous? Me? Hell, I'm just happy to finally get to this point." I will now share the history that led to this comment.

During the summer of 2003 I was still a naïve ITS Engineer who was wet behind the ears and looking for a way to upgrade our program. I'd been to the Minneapolis, Orlando and Miami TMCs that housed multiple agencies under one roof. I quickly realized that in order to truly manage roadway traffic there had to be a concerted effort amongst multiple agencies, working in unison inside a common facility with the goal of keeping all lanes cleared. Soon thereafter Governor Bush opened up an opportunity to achieve this goal with the advancement of construction funds for Strategic Intermodal System type projects. At the time I thought Jacksonville's chances were like a snowball's chance in hell but it wouldn't hurt to try, so I gave it a shot.

We were competing against freight, roadway and transit projects so the possibility of this RTMC project even being in the top twenty were slim to none. Then a miracle happened along the way! First, I utilized every asset and partner within our North Florida ITS Coalition to draft a proposal that would've brought tears to your eyes. I then lobbied our Central Office ITS folks on the value that this new RTMC would bring to the North Florida region with the hope that they would be able to convince our

Continued on following page



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED

Central Office management that this was an important step in the growth of Florida's ITS program. My last gasp effort was to try and win over our District Planning Office by explaining the added value this facility would provide to future SIS components like freight, roadway and transit projects.

Later that year I received notification that our project made the cut and thought "holy crap, what the heck have I done?" See, the District's ITS program was in its infancy so we still had not proven our value to the Department. That's when the butterflies kicked in because my first thought was (gulp) I think I put the cart before the horse. The RTMC project would be our most expensive endeavor yet and I still hadn't even participated in the design or completion of my first ever ITS project. Once I shook it off it was time to get the plan in motion so I turned to our valued partners in the Planning Office and NFTPO.

Ironically, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) also received SIS funding to build a Jacksonville Transportation Center complex that would incorporate a bus transfer station interconnected with the Skyway. The complex was to include area for a Greyhound Bus depot and access to a future Amtrak rail station. The final piece of their plan was to have an operations facility and transit management center facility somewhere within the complex. Obviously, the SIS funding they received was not enough to pay for it all so they hoped that matching Federal funds of up to 80% would cover the rest. Then a light bulb went off in our Planning Office leading to what has been a 10 year journey to our current situation.

The Planning Office approached me about the possibility of combining the RTMC project

(funding of \$9.5 million) with the JTA project (funding of \$9 million) and some local funds. The total sum of this combination neared \$25 million, thus providing the opportunity for us to receive FTA matching funds of approximately \$70+ million. It was a no brainer, right? Guess again. I quickly learned that nothing was guaranteed when it comes to Federal funds and we were soon on a path to a very painful experience with the RTMC project. The game plan was to build the facility and complex on property across from the Prime Osborn just west of downtown Jacksonville. We went as far as 100% plans and were ready to move, then the bottom dropped out.

The goal was to begin construction some time in 2006 or 2007, just about the same time that the economy hit the dumps. Soon thereafter we were notified that all pending SIS projects were on hold and moved out several years until Department funding levels returned to norm. It seemed that every year thereafter this project was pushed further and further out in the Work Program. Fortunately for us the North Florida TPO realized the importance of this multi-agency facility so they adopted the project using their SU and CMAQ funds so that this project could begin construction much sooner. Just like that this project became a reality and here we are just months away from starting construction.

It hasn't been easy and the experiences working with the Department of Management made me feel that this project has been snake bit from the start. Luckily, we are overcoming all recent obstacles and the Ground Breaking ceremony should push the "pedal to the metal" as we head towards the finish line. At this point, Donna Danson would be satisfied with just one day in her new office before her time



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED

in the DROP program reaches the end so please keep your fingers crossed that no new issues stop us along the way.

Next month I will discuss another much needed project that is finally kicking off after a successful Ground Breaking ceremony held on January 21st. I will rehash the I-75 Paynes Prairie ceremony that introduces ITS to the western half of District Two. Hopefully, this will be the start of a much needed system along that corridor through Gainesville and all the way to Georgia.

Pete Vega
District 2 ITS Engineer

NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE

The RTMC Ground Breaking ceremony gave me a chance to reflect back on just how important this organization has been not only to the ITS Program in District Two but Florida's ITS program as a whole. At the ceremony we provided displays and information on all the projects they have funded using their SU, CMAQ and box funds. Let's see, they have helped fund the upgrade of traffic signal controllers on a number of Department corridors throughout north Florida, helped make us the largest regional deployment of BlueToad devices in the ENTIRE WORLD, allowed us to develop the nation's first bridge wind sensor decision making tool, put us in competition for an Integrated Corridor Management grant and made our TIM team program one of the strongest in the Department.

In support of the TIM team they have contributed nearly half of the annual funding for our Road Ranger Program, led the development/distribution of the nationally recognized TIMe4Safety training CD, provided the support for the bridge wind sensor study,

provided seed funding for deployment/testing of traffic signal preemption for emergency responders and created a contract for consultant support of the ITS program. In a sense, they are committed to insuring that our emergency responders and law enforcement have all the tools necessary to improve performance while increasing safety. Also, keep in mind that these are only a few of the projects they have funded over the years.

I've mentioned it before but must do it again when I reference all of the calls I get from other MPOs and TPOs throughout Florida asking "just how does our NFTPO maintain such a good relationship with TIM team partners?" Guess it all began when they took the lead as the first Champion of the North Florida ITS Coalition. That decision was the turning point for this region's ITS program and is a major reason for our success over the past several years. These other MPOs/TPOs are so envious of our NFTPO that they have asked me to provide presentations in their area that will display the partnership and vision we have in this region. That's pretty impressive when you think about Orlando, Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale asking us how to get it done while doing it right. Remember, these areas have one of the largest deployments in the Country yet they are coming to us for guidance.

The next time you see, Denise, Jeff, Marci and the others do me a quick favor and just tell them "thanks!"





MAINTENANCE

The ITS Maintenance Section is still seeing very few device failures as we are out of lightning season, although we have recently had a few major storms roll through the area. The Maintenance crews have been busy installing BlueTOAD devices along the newly installed Phase 7 and Phase 8 ITS corridors. The devices have been working well and are providing travel time data for these corridors. BlueTOAD installations will be focused on some of the arterial roadways around Jacksonville in the next few months, to provide more travel time and traffic information to the Traffic Management Center.

As noted in the October Newsletter, the ITS Maintenance Contract was put out for bid and the results were revealed this month. Only two companies submitted proposals and bids for the contract. The winning proposer was Traffic Control Devices (TCD), which has been the ITS Maintenance Contractor on the past several ITS Maintenance contracts with District Two. We look forward to continued success and a good working relationship with the members of the TCD staff.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist



CONSTRUCTION

The Phase 7 Project on the I-295 East Beltway, starting at Atlantic Boulevard and going north to the I-95 Interchange, has completed construction. Since the last Newsletter, the majority of devices have been made available to the Traffic Management Center for their use. During integration, one of the CCTV camera lowering devices failed and resulted in the lowering device mount and some components being damaged. The replacement components have been ordered but have not been received to date. Once these components are received they will be installed and project testing can be finalized.

The final plans have been submitted for the Phase 9 Project on the I-295 East Beltway from I-95 going north to Atlantic Boulevard. This project was previously put out for bid, but there was a protest of the proposed contract award and so the project had to be put out for bid again. The project is now scheduled to Let in May 2014.

The I-10 Interchange ITS Project, which includes the installation of fiber optic cable, CCTVs and MVDS within the area of the I-10/I-95 Interchange, is still behind schedule. The contractor is currently working on installation of devices, power services and MVDS poles. Upcoming work will include installation of CCTV poles, bridge mounted conduit over King Street, fiber optic cable installation, and ITS cabinet installation. This project is currently scheduled to be completed in February 2014.

The JaxPort Fiber Installation Project, which includes the installation of fiber optic cable to connect FDOT to the JaxPort Talleyrand and Blount Island Terminals, is still installing conduit and pull boxes throughout the project area. This project is currently behind schedule and is



CONSTRUCTION continued

anticipated to be completed in late February. Once completed, this fiber optic cable will tie-in the JaxPort facilities with FDOT and allow traffic information and video sharing between the agencies.

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 is still under design. The ITS portion for I-10 from I-295 to West of SR 23 and I-95 through St. Johns County will be the first stage of construction. This construction will complete the installation of fiber optic cable on I-95 from North of Jacksonville to South of Miami. It will also allow Florida's Turnpike to connect to SR 23 for their tolling needs.

The I-75 ITS Project in Gainesville is gearing up. The ground-breaking ceremony for this project was held January 21st. The ceremony attracted several elected officials and high ranking officials from local agencies who are eager for the ITS Devices to be in place and operational. (see pictures below & at right) The pre-construction meeting was held on January 28th and construction is expected to begin in early Spring.

John Kell
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager



From left:
FDOT District Secretary Greg Evans, ITS Engineer Pete Vega and FDOT State Secretary Ananth Prasad

**I-75 and U.S. 441 ITS Project
Ground Breaking Ceremony
Paynes Prairie - Alachua County**



From left:
Fla. Representative Keith Perry, of Gainesville, Alachua Sheriff Sadie Darnell, FDOT District Secretary Greg Evans and FDOT State Secretary, Ananth Prasad.



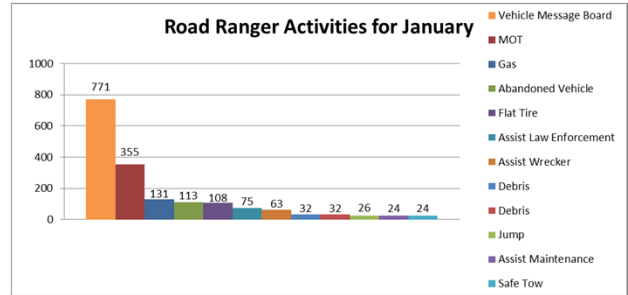
Pete Vega, District 2 ITS Engineer explains ITS devices to Florida Wildlife Officers



ROAD RANGER UPDATE

Road Rangers have proven to be a valuable asset to incident management when responding to the scene. The variable message signs on the trucks as well as the cones are used to warn motorists of the incident they are approaching which alerts them to slow down and thus improves safety at the incident scene. Not only are the incident scenes safer when the Road Ranger is present, but data shows that the incident is cleared much quicker. This improves safety since the involved motorists and responders are on the road for less time, but it also improves traffic flow since the impediment of traffic is removed quicker. For incidents in January through the 21st, the roadway clearance duration has averaged about 15 minutes shorter for events that had a Road Ranger on-scene.

The following charts show all event types that the Road Rangers have responded to up through January 21 and also some of the main activities performed when responding to these events. Notice that the Road Rangers primarily respond to Crashes and Disabled Vehicles. For their activities, they primarily provided MOT and the use of their VMS along with assistance to other responders such as maintenance and law enforcement. They also conduct an average of nearly 2 Safe Tows per day. Safe Tows improve the safety of the motorist and the responder by removing them from dangerous locations.

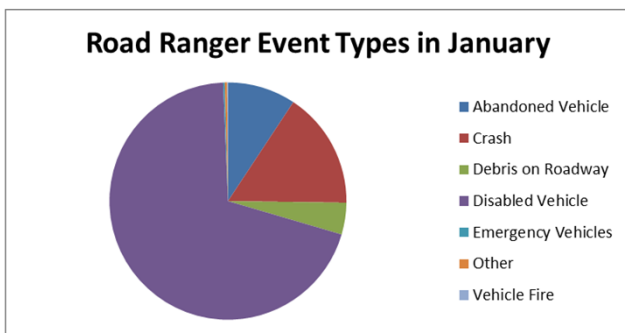


The Road Rangers currently operate in the Jacksonville area on I-10, I-95, I-295 and Butler Blvd from Monday to Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM. You can call for Road Ranger assistance by dialing *FHP (*347).

RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE

On Monday, January 6 before 2 AM, a RISC event was activated in Alachua County on I-75 southbound at mile marker 378. University Towing responded to the incident and was on-scene in less than 20 minutes.

The wrecker cleared the travel lanes by 3:15 AM, but FHP decided to keep the lanes closed due to a fuel spill of around 300 gallons. The road was opened just after 9 AM. This incident will be debriefed at the Alachua-Bradford TIM Meeting on February 12. Please join us at the TIM meeting if you have any comments to share with the team about this incident.





FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

A First Coast TIM team meeting was held on January 21 at the FDOT Urban Office. At this meeting members discussed upcoming road closures due to construction, particularly for the Overland Bridge Project. Representatives of KCCS informed the team that the ramp from Main Street to Hendricks Avenue will be permanently closed around the beginning of February.

The team also discussed the major incident that occurred in Flagler County on I-95 northbound. Though the main affect to District 2 was only congestion on I-95 southbound in St Johns County, members of the team noticed that communication between agencies could be improved and the team in that area could benefit from having diversion route maps for when a major incident like this occurs. It was suggested that there be an annual joint TIM meeting between that First Coast TIM meeting and the TIM meeting in District 5 that borders St Johns County to improve communication between agencies and provide other lessons learned by the District 2 TIM teams.

Several team members also took copies of the TIMe4Safety Videos to share with their agencies. This training video is divided into 4 modules and provides valuable information on maintaining safety at an incident scene. It was also announced that the District 2 Diversion Routes will be updated soon so members could be thinking about what changes might need to be made especially in areas where there have been major changes to the interstate such as at Collins Rd and Blanding Blvd. See the schedule on the final page of the newsletter for dates of upcoming First Coast TIM Meetings.

Donna Danson
District 2 ITS Program Manager

ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The next Alachua-Bradford meeting will be held on February 12. At this meeting the team plans to debrief the RISC incident that occurred on I-75 SB at mile marker 378 which is described in the RISC section of this newsletter. The Alachua-Bradford TIM meeting will also afford members an opportunity to discuss recent traffic incidents and upcoming construction or other expected future events so that responders will be prepared when working in those areas. Deployment of the I-75 ITS project will no doubt be a major asset to responders in this area once it is completed. Updates and other details of this ITS project can be obtained at these TIM meetings.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Traffic Incident Management Website:
<http://jax511.com/D2TIMwp/>.

Find information about SHRP 2 Training at:
http://www.jax511.com/D2TIMwp/?page_id=844



MARKETING

You know it's a true Florida winter when you go from wearing flip flops and shorts... to parkas and gloves... all in a 24 hour time span! I took a leisurely stroll along the beach on January 20th, basking in the warm sunshine and snapping a few pictures along the way, only to be greeted the very next afternoon by a hailstorm that sent temperatures plummeting into the 30s overnight.

We have a few outdoor events coming up, so I hope the weather can strike a good "balance" sometime in the next month or so. Thank goodness it was nice and cozy inside the Renda Broadcasting studios when we made a guest appearance on Jim Byard's Community Outreach Program a couple of weeks ago. Renda Broadcasting is home to Lite 96.1, Gator Country 99.9, Classic Rock 94.1 and Bull Country 100.7. Jim is always the most gracious host. And by the way, he just celebrated his 37th year with Renda's Jacksonville cluster of stations! A feat almost unheard of in radio. He let us rattle on for a while about 511 and the new RTMC, then we started talking about our new cameras and sensors along the I-295 Corridor (the portion of the East and West Beltway stretching from I-10 all the way across the Dames Point Bridge and over to Atlantic Blvd). Jim promised to have us back in the studios for another interview when the new RTMC is complete and we're all settled into our new facility.

We'll also be hosting another media day in conjunction with Global 5 that will be held on Tuesday, February 18th prior to the Daytona 500. After noticing how much media attention was generated by our event with THE PLAYERS this past spring, officials at The Daytona International Speedway expressed an interest in holding a similar event. It will, of course, take

place at our Edison Avenue facility, and members of the media will be invited to do live broadcasts from inside our Traffic Management Center. We're looking forward to another successful (early morning) event. When I say early, I mean EXTREMELY early. Television crews usually start rolling in around 3:30am the morning of the event.

Whether you're headed to the Speedway or the Plant City Strawberry Festival at the end of February, make sure your trip begins with a call to 511. You can also log onto www.FL511.com or, of course, download our free 511 Traffic App.

Know before you go and keep moving!

Sherri Byrd
Marketing Manager





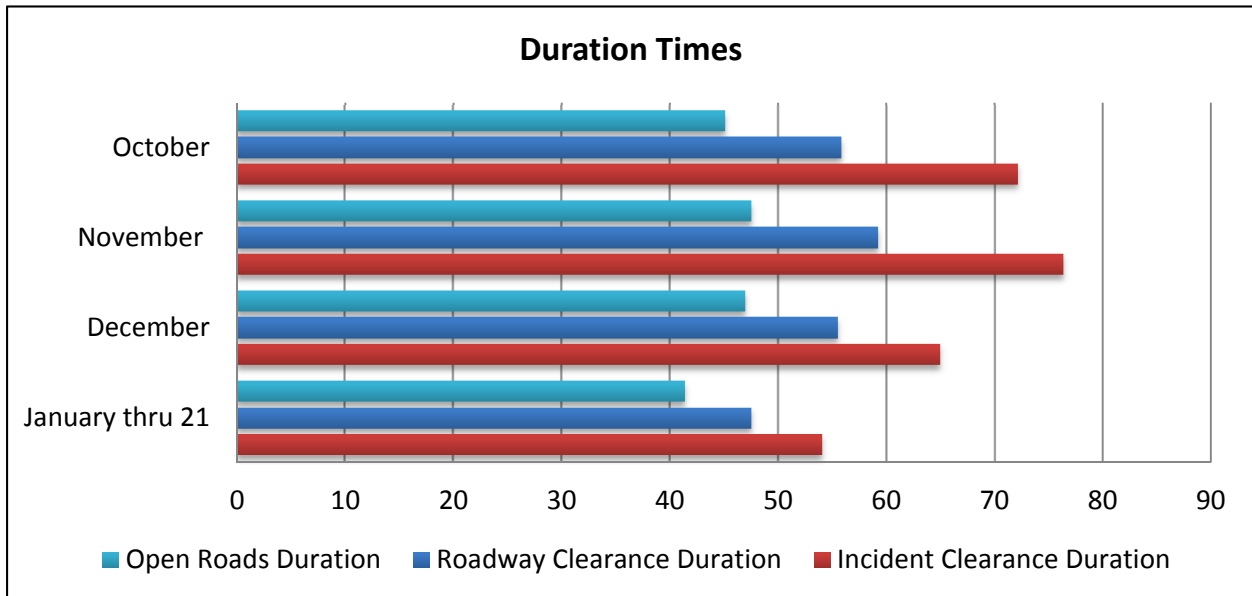
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Construction on the Overland Bridge project continues to impact traffic in that area of I-95, though fortunately there does not seem to be a significant increase in crashes. When comparing the number of crashes on I-95 northbound from Emerson to the I-10 interchange in the first 3 weeks of this January versus the first 3 weeks of January 2013, there was actually 1 less crash this year. Though for the same comparison on the southbound side there have been 4 more crashes this year. Perhaps the reduced speed limit and information disseminated to the public about the project are reducing the potential for crashes in this area.

Overall, thus far in the month of January it appears that the amount of crashes is slightly

higher than last month, but still lower than the average for the last 12 months. In December, there was an average of about 19 crashes per day, and there have been about 21 per day in January, but the average for the last 12 months is about 23 per day. It is likely that the increased travel around the holidays is offset by the decrease in recurring congestion from daily commuters due to taking off time from work or school.

The following chart shows the Open Roads, Roadway Clearance and Incident Clearance durations for the last few months. November reported the longest duration times, while January has reported the lowest duration times of the months compared.



Jill Dawson
Metric Engineering



OPERATIONS

My wife and I have four year old twins named Lyla and Bennett that bring an abundance of joy every day to our lives, especially on holidays. They both continue to grow at a pace that my wife and I are not comfortable with. I wish we could bottle this age and keep them like this forever but there are already signs of growing up. Earlier this year as we watched Bennett knee himself in the chest as he attempted to ride his bike that was too small for him, we decided Christmas would bring new bikes for the kids.

We love to spend time outdoors and bikes are a big part of that. We witnessed pure elation on their faces when they saw their new bikes (put together by Beach and Bike!) and it was off to the cul-de-sac. But first there were more presents. Lyla's imagination is immense and she got a Little Mermaid toy cell phone so she can talk to everyone (real and fiction) anytime she wanted. I love standing just outside of her doorway, listening to her conversation with some Disney Princess that just HAS to come over and play. As we made our way outside, the TMC work side of me thought this was going to be an interesting case study.....a teenager (I mean 4 year old going on 18), a cell phone (I mean play Little Mermaid cell phone) and a brand new car (I mean flower power beach cruiser bike) going out for a cruise. This should be interesting.

Lyla and Bennett took to the streets. Bennett whirled in circles around the cul-de-sac on his new Spider Man bike, trying to keep his balance while lapping his sister. Lyla started off strong but then....the cell phone came out! My wife and I watched while she talked to her cousin in Connecticut and managed about 20 feet over several minutes. My neighbor's mailbox and Lyla's head almost paid the price (Helmet on!) as she zigged and zagged. Pavement to grass to sidewalk back to pavement and back to grass she went before we finally took her phone from her. After that she was right on Bennett's heels.



Lyla using a cell phone while driving

Looking at the situation it reminds you of just how dangerous distracted driving can be. Yes, she is four and it was on a bike but the lesson is the same. Distracted driving is dangerous driving. The lessons our kids receive on being a good/ safe driver will be extensive. BlueTooth is here already and in 12 years my kids should be all set with that. What about texting? Is it banned? So what? People still do it. I have been on numerous calls where the person says "hold on, cop, I need to put my phone down." People will always do it. Autonomous car...you cannot be here fast enough! Put it down, it can wait.

Some statistics:

***In 2012, 21% of fatal crashes for drivers 15-19 years old were distracted by their cell phone**

***Drivers who use their cell phone are 4 times more likely to get in a crash that injures themselves**

***Texting while driving has the highest risk of all forms of distraction and is comparable to driving drunk**



OPERATIONS continued

***In 2009 a report stated that at least 52% of drivers ages 16-17 have talked on the phone while driving and another 34% admitted to texting and driving (both stats are for non-hands free devices)**

***At any moment during daytime hours, over 800,000 drivers are using a hand-held cell phone**

***Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds. Going 55 MPH that would cover more than a football field...blind folded.**

Stats provided by [DISTRACTION.GOV](http://www.distraction.gov)

Secretary Ray LaHood launched a nationwide effort back in 2009 to address this epidemic. The first National Distracted Driving Summit took place in 2009 and the transportation community hasn't looked back since. LaHood stated that they will use every tool available to address this issue including- research, technology and rule-making. I, for one, am thankful for this effort starting now so habits can be broken by the time my kids start to get behind the wheel. Stay safe!

Ryan Crist
TMC Manager

<http://www.distraction.gov/>



SPOTLIGHT ON..SHERRELL LALL

Tell us a little bit about your upbringing.

I was born and raised in the Caribbean on an island called Trinidad. My upbringing was a simple one where I just loved to play outside with my brother. I was one of those girls who were classified as a "tomboy." Wherever my brother went, I was right behind him. I remember us getting into so much trouble one day because I wanted to be one of the boys. I ended up climbing a fence and ripped a big hole in my pants, yet I was still walking along going about my business. My mom came home and saw the big rip up the back of my pants and she had some words for the both of us. It is funny now to look back on it, but it wasn't funny back then when we were getting yelled at. As you can see it was a joint effort because my brother should have been watching me a bit closer.

At 10 years old I moved to Rochester, MI. That was one of the worst experiences I had encountered in all my 10 years on this earth! (at that point). The cold weather got to me and 2 years later I returned to my Caribbean weather back in Trinidad. My mom decided that it was time for us to try moving to the United States again and we attempted to do so when I was 13 years old. We ended up moving to Florida and once again the U.S. proved to be so different from my home country that I adored and loved, so 2 years later I ended back up in Trinidad. While attending secondary school I fell in love with engineering. I was one of those nerdy kids who loved math and science and wanted to build bridges. I completed my secondary education and began my career working as a secretary for a Fire-Fighting company in Trinidad.



SPOTLIGHT ON.. SHERRELL LALL

Describe your early career.

In 2007 I moved back up to the U.S. (Ft. Lauderdale area) and attended Broward Community College to attain my Associates Degree. Upon completion, I decided to pursue my Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering at the University of South Florida. I initially went into the program thinking that I wanted to focus on Structural Engineering but as I got further along I noticed a shift in my interests and realized my true passion was in Transportation. I then went on to complete two Master's degrees from USF in Engineering Management and the other in Civil Engineering with a focus in Transportation.

Throughout my entire career as a student I worked full time. I started off as a secretary for a printing company and then worked my way to becoming a pharmacy technician for Wal-Mart for 5 years. Up to this day I still retain my pharmacy license. When I was about to enter into my Masters degrees I decided that I needed to find a job which pertained more to what I liked to do and what I was focusing on in school. I started looking for work in my last semester as an undergraduate and ended up as a Research Assistant at the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at USF. Working at CUTR has given me so many opportunities to see how projects are handled from beginning to end and also the ability to network. This is how I ended up at my current job today.

How would you describe your current role in Transportation?

I am currently a Traffic Engineer Intern for Metric Engineering. Seeing as I have only been here for two weeks I am still working out the kinks in my specific duties. So far I am assisting the TMC here at FDOT by learning how to monitor the Road Rangers by performing a quality service report, keeping track of the Road Ranger AVL

and performing audits on the SunGuide and AVL reports. I am also working with the Safety Team here at FDOT helping with whatever needs they have on projects.

How long have you been at your current job?

I actually just started with Metric Engineering at the beginning of January. I am really excited to work at this company. Everyone has been really welcoming and understanding and I cannot ask for anything else. It is a pleasure to work with individuals who make your day better and can impart so much knowledge to you. Just an example of how welcoming they were: they even offered to get me to and from the airport so I wouldn't have to park my car in long term parking when I went to Washington, D.C. for TRB. I was astounded and so appreciative of everything they have done for me.

What's the best advice anyone's ever given you?

Always take notes. Along the way several people have told me to do this and it has worked out to be an advantage.

Do you have a favorite quote? Something that inspires you?

"Que Sera, Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be)"~ Doris Day. It just lets me know not to stress about what I cannot change because sometimes I worry myself with the dreaded thoughts of "what I could have done differently", as we all probably do. Things happen and I try to take them on a moment to moment basis.

Any job related awards or special recognition you've received?

I was recently selected by the National Center for Transit Research as their Student of the Year for 2013 due to a project that I worked on titled "Improved Traffic Control Measures to Prevent



SPOTLIGHT ON.. **SHERRELL LALL continued**

Incorrect Turns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings". This project entailed many different aspects, such as identifying major causes, critical features, and prevailing conditions influencing the incorrect turning behavior of vehicles onto railroad tracks. I assisted faculty at the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) by thoroughly reviewing literature, designing a set of comprehensive countermeasures aimed at improving incorrect turns at highway-rail grade crossings and preparing a final report for FDOT. This award gave me the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to attend the Transportation Research Board 93rd Annual Meeting and accept the award in front of many professionals. It was nerve racking being up on stage under the spotlight but I had a wonderful time. It was a moment to shine and I enjoyed every moment of it. It was amazing to get recognized with so many other reputable schools and scholars. It also set the precedence for the rest of the conference because people kept coming up to me asking me if I was the person who won the student of the year award. It was a great introduction opener and people wanted to get to know more about me due to the recognition. This would be a defining moment in my career due to the fact that it made me realize that hard work does pay off. Sometimes we may get discouraged but if we keep on working towards our goals we can achieve what we want to.

Best job ever / worst job ever... or both?

The best and worst job I ever had was working at the pharmacy in Wal-Mart. Some days were awesome and then again some days were just plain bad. Customers can make you really go crazy sometimes but then there are always the really nice customers who can balance the good and the bad for you. It was great to learn a job outside of my field of engineering and it gave me a break from constantly being immersed in engineering.



Sherrell Lall,
the newest member
of the District 2 Team

Tell us a little about your family.

I have family spread all over. Some are back home in Trinidad, others are in New Jersey, Michigan, and the bulk of them are actually all over Florida. As for my immediate family my mom moved back to Trinidad approximately two years ago, so it is always a joy to see her whenever I get the chance, and I have one brother that lives in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. I also have a niece and a nephew by my brother and they are the light of my life. Whenever I go back to Ft. Lauderdale to visit them it is always a fun time but leaving them breaks my heart every single time. I do not think I will ever get used to that feeling.

Do you have any hobbies?

I love to read. I am a sucker for a vampire book series. Currently I am working on reading the House of Night novels. I also love to cook and try different restaurants/foods. Seeing as I just completed school I realized how many opportunities I can now explore. I was very much caught up in ITE, work and school that I forgot what it was like to have hobbies in general! We shall fix that this year!

Favorite vacation spot?

The Caribbean. Very general, I know, but I love to be close to my home. I would also like to visit England, Australia and the Maldives sometime in the future. So who knows if this can change possibly?.. Nah. Probably not.



PHOTO GALLERY



RTMC Groundbreaking

From left: Pete Vega, FDOT District 2 ITS Engineer; Clay County Commissioner, Clay Chamber President and TPO member Doug Conkey; Lt. Col. Ernesto Duarte, Florida Highway Patrol; former Atlantic Beach Mayor and former TPO Vice Chair Mike Borno; TPO Executive Director Jeff Sheffield; TPO Chairwoman Nancy Sikes-Kline, St. Augustine Commission and Vice Mayor; State Rep. Lake Ray, former TPO Chairman; Nassau County Commissioner and outgoing TPO Chairman Danny Leeper; and FDOT District 2 Secretary Greg Evans.



Sherrell Lall at the Transportation Research Board's 93rd Annual Meeting with her award.



Talk about a true believer in 511! You should follow the advice!

