



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

This past month it seemed that efforts for Automated and Connected Vehicle technology gained steam with all of the monetary opportunities made available by the Federal Government. One of the opportunities was the Smart Cities effort that would provide \$50 million to one lucky municipality for the advancement of such technology. The competition was stiff and unfortunately Jacksonville did not get short-listed, losing out on the chance to the likes of Austin, Portland, Pittsburgh and Kansas City. Although heartbroken we realized there will be many other opportunities in the near future to advance our effort. Once we finally put all the pieces together it will take a small amount of financial support to take our program to the next level. The reality is that our greatest need will be an improved network system since many of the arterial roads in Jacksonville contain multi-mode fiber optic communication and this is something that is not conducive for high speed/bandwidth type applications needed for Automated and Connected vehicle technology.

Another opportunity that's come our way is the MetroLab effort that pairs municipalities with local universities. The objective is to provide valuable data to these universities that will allow them to use their abundant resources to make the information understandable and useful. Jacksonville has decided to partner with the University of North Florida and University of Florida. My goal is to also include the City of Gainesville in this effort since both municipalities have the capability of interconnection at the RTMC. Our approach will be to let the universities take the lead in forming a coalition that will then propose projects to the

municipality. Since this effort will be based on their available resources and similar projects it should prove to be a "win-win" situation for the team.

Our first MetroLab meeting with the universities went well and many projects were examined. From these we short-listed our initial effort to three that could have an immediate impact on our region. We will look at Bike/Pedestrian data, disenfranchised communities and emergency response dispatch resources that will examine existing and needed technologies. During this effort we will look at how Automated and Connected vehicles will play a part in the next 10 years with many of these applications. We are lucky in that District Two has had a long-standing partnership with many of the professors involved so it will just be a slight transition in how we would conduct business with these funds.

Now that Donna has officially retired Josh can begin that long and grueling process of finding her replacement. There have been a number of highly qualified individuals who have inquired about the vacancy from inside and outside of the Department so I feel confident we can find the right fit for our needs now and in the future. This individual will have to manage the RTMC operations, Service Patrol, Incident Management Teams and RISC contract. This is a huge burden for one person to handle, hence we will have to be very meticulous on who is chosen to replace Donna. It will definitely have to be someone who can multi-task while being able to shift gears on the fly since every day is an adventure in our business.



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

There will be some drastic changes in the District Two ITS program over the next year as we begin efforts with the new Central Office ITS GEC. Coming in the near future will be arterial ITS/performance measures, Express Lanes, Tolling and rest area truck parking. Potential efforts include ramp metering, wrong way driving and hard shoulder running. The greatest challenge for us will be the limited resources we currently have for in-house staff and consultants. We are not unique in that every District has voiced their concern about the additional duties that must be handled. Central Office is also updating the Department's ITS Strategic Plan that will guide us in the future as we near the arrival of Automated and Connected vehicle technologies.

One of my greatest concerns is the availability of personnel to assist in taking on these coming changes to the program. Colleges and Universities do not offer much in the way of curriculum on ITS, hence most of the new individuals in the industry must learn through on the job training. This is not conducive to the rapid changes occurring, thereby leading to potential issues as the program expands. Keep in mind that many of our recruits majored in Civil Engineering due to their education in transportation yet a majority of our work also involves networking and technology. In reality, our program needs individuals that have that transportation background while also having the skill set provided by an electrical, mechanical or computer engineer. The higher education institutions are aware of this dilemma and are taking steps to provide the resources; however, it may be "too little, too late" as we march towards these newer technologies.

On a final note, things at the RTMC are going very well as we proceed with our long range plans for the facility. The greatest challenge is dealing with all the small issues that have arisen with the HVAC system, sewer lines, failing materials and landscaping. For example, last week I was drawn away from my normal duties to assist with a clogged sewer line, ground fault issue with an air handling unit, door hardware that did not work and grass/weed issues. We have support from Office Services, however, since this building is new and still under warranty I must stay involved since it could be a contractor related problem. I am hoping that by this summer everything is squared away to the point that all I need to concern myself with is paying the bills.

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

**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS
ENGINEER**

Most of my responsibilities and work here in the ITS office relate to our freeways. So when an opportunity comes up to branch out and do something a little different, I am quick to jump on it. A few months back, representatives for JTA approached us about providing a small fiber link to help them start up their Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program. As it turns out, the road that our new building is located on, Jefferson Street, is also one of the new BRT routes. To provide communication along these corridors and to provide the backbone for BRT operations (such as signal preemption to make sure the



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER continued

buses stay on schedule), fiber optic cable is needed. We agreed with JTA that we would look into a small run of fiber that would start at our building and run south along Jefferson Street to State Street, where it would take a 90-degree turn and head a few blocks east to a JTA data room at the Rosa Parks bus station. This was planned to run in existing City of Jacksonville fiber conduits, and would benefit not only JTA, but FDOT and multiple city agencies.

The project seemed simple on paper, as they always do. However, after a few coordination meetings and field reviews (one of which occurred very early on the coldest morning of the year), the project began to appear not so simple. There was a little more mapping and conduit “proofing” than we originally thought we would need. There was also some confusion on where exactly we needed to terminate our fiber, not only on JTA’s end, but also at the end of a new fiber spur that got added to the project to give us connectivity to the Jacksonville Fire Rescue building that also houses the city’s Emergency Operations Center. After a few additional meetings, we began to clarify how we would tackle these issues, but we were just getting into the weeds at that point.

Luckily, we had planned in advance to proof the conduit. Proofing is where a crew goes out and uses methods such as blowing air or running fish tape down conduit to determine which pipe from one pull box goes in the direction that we want it to, uninterrupted, to the next pull box. Through this method, we have determined that we likely have a phantom pull box in the middle of a conduit run that we did not expect. It is probably hidden under the asphalt of State

Street, but we are not even sure of its exact location. We will need to troubleshoot this, and are looking into options to either discover the pull box, or route our fiber around that link entirely.

There is also a pull box that will not be big enough to house our fiber slack and splices (this is where we plan to create a branch off of the fiber spur going to the JFRD building); we will need to carefully dig the existing pull box out and replace it with a bigger one; work which will also incorporate redoing some sidewalk. There is another location where the fiber should jump underground from one pull box to another, but instead goes to a third pull box, then a splice vault (think very large pull box), then up into a signal cabinet, before continuing on its journey. We are currently evaluating options for how we will handle that.

Things also get a little hairy as we approach our new building. Installing conduit under existing infrastructure, especially sidewalk, is not easy. It is even more difficult when other underground utilities are squeezed into the same small right-of-way. This is what we will deal with for about 100 feet along Jefferson Street before we jump up onto JEA utility poles and run above ground to our building. It will take some creativity and ingenuity to get us that short distance, but we have a game plan that includes even more sidewalk work.

This small, exciting job has proven to be more difficult than first imagined, although I am confident we will find a way to get it done. I wanted to bring it up because it foreshadows what the future holds for us in ITS, as we round



NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER continued

out our interstate infrastructure and start shifting our focus towards building arterial networks. This is also being driven by connected and autonomous vehicle technology, as well as the ever-increasing connected world in general (think street garbage cans that send messages to officials notifying that they are full, or parking spaces that let road users know they are vacant). Our ITS world will change greatly when we enter fully into our arterial programs, and we will need to be prepared. Luckily, it's smaller projects like this that allow us to get our feet wet and gain some understanding of our issues up front, that will help us out and prepare us for what lies down the road.

Josh Reichert
ITS/TMC Program Manager

NORTH FLORIDA TPO

Many of you may not realize all of the things the NFTPO is involved in outside of the RTMC so it's time to share some of the other efforts they take on for the North Florida region. For example, they were the champion for the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) in our region. Gate Petroleum is a key partner on their team, with JTA and Jaxport also playing key roles in the expansion of CNG use in North Florida. The NFTPO is also leading the effort for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in the region and even had one installed in front of the RTMC to encourage the use of this technology. Ironically, we have motorists on campus who use this deployment regularly to charge their vehicles while at work. The NFTPO also is taking the lead in Bicycle/Pedestrian needs for their partners and is beginning to work with the ITS staff on technology that could assist their program.

The CNG effort is interesting in that it cannot only be a cost saving measure for firms who commit but also a benefit to the environment. The fact that they've lined up some major partners speaks volumes and the hope is that this can build momentum whereby freight carriers will also buy-in on the use of CNG instead of diesel fuel. Since one of Jacksonville's greatest assets is logistics and shipping there could be huge benefits and an improved quality of life for the residents of North Florida. The key challenge will be for them to convince everyone that this CNG effort will pay huge dividends in the outer years since the initial investment will have some impact on near term budgets.

The Electric Vehicle charging station project they are leading is unique in that with the reduction in the price of gas they are facing an uphill struggle convincing motorists to convert. The reality is that those motorists who have converted to electric vehicle technology realize the benefits with the challenge being where to find a recharging station. The key is to get the word out to the public so that they can be convinced on the benefits with the hope that a grass roots effort ignited by the NFTPO will take off.

As for Bicycle/Pedestrian needs, the reality is that the technology is there to collect the data needed by the NFTPO. The objective now is to find the appropriate locations where higher volumes exist so that a deployment can be initiated. Once deployed we can provide data on volumes, conflicts, signal timing impacts, movements and other issues that may exist at these locations. As I explained to the NFTPO staff, with Smart Phone technology it's not a matter of how but where we need to collect



NORTH FLORIDA TPO continued

the data. Likewise, there is camera technology that can assist in getting counts, pedestrian speeds and occupancy on a sidewalk at any given time and day.

The NFTPO is much more of a leader than many may be aware of so I thought I'd share some of this information. They get a gold star for supporting and financing the RTMC but they go far beyond just supporting the movement of vehicles. They are one of the reasons why the quality of life in the North Florida region is the envy of many communities around the nation.

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

CONSTRUCTION

The Phase 9 project devices have been integrated and tested this past month. At the time of the writing of this article, all testing and integration activities are on track to be completed by the end of the month. Once this has been completed, TMC Operations personnel will have full operational capabilities to view CCTV images, post DMS messages, and receive traffic congestion and speed information along the I-295 corridor from Atlantic Boulevard going south to the I-95/I-295 Interchange. This project completes the installation of ITS devices and infrastructure on the I-295 loop around Jacksonville.

The I-95 St. Johns County ITS Device Installation Project has continued with the installation of fiber optic and power conduits and has begun installing fiber and power pull boxes. The project was shut down during Daytona Bike Week, but crews came back out in full force to continue work on the project once they were allowed back on site. This project is scheduled for completion late this year.

Construction is ahead of schedule on the 87 mile ITS fiber optic cable project on I-75 which spans from SR 24 in Gainesville, north to the Florida/Georgia state line. Crews are over 95% completed with trenching in conduit and have continued installing conduit via directional boring. Bridge conduit and pull box installation continued throughout the month and although there have been a few issues encountered with sign attachments conflicting with conduit runs, installation of bridge conduit is still on schedule. This project is scheduled to be completed early next year.

The Signed and Sealed plans were submitted this month for the ITS device installation project for I-75 from SR 24 in Gainesville, going north to the Florida/Georgia state line. This project will install ITS devices, structures, and power services which will utilize the fiber optic communications cable installed under the project described previously. This project will be Let for construction in July and construction will begin this fall. The project will install MVDSs, CCTVs, and DMSs throughout the project corridor and will connect to the previously installed I-75 Visibility Project on the south end of the project near SR 24. The ITS devices will be monitored and controlled from the Gainesville Smartraffic Center operated by the City of Gainesville and the North Florida Regional Transportation Management Center operated by FDOT.

The Signed and Sealed plans were submitted this month for the ITS fiber optic communications project for I-10 from Jacksonville to Tallahassee. This project will install fiber optic conduits, pull boxes, splice vaults, cables and communications hubs along I-10 from Jacksonville going west to Tallahassee. This project is over 150 miles in



CONSTRUCTION continued

length and will connect FDOT District Two and FDOT District Three's ITS communications networks. The project will be Let for construction in July and construction will begin this fall.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Construction Liaison

MAINTENANCE

The ITS Maintenance Contractor, Traffic Control Devices (TCD), is in the process of taking on quite a few new ITS devices and several miles of fiber optic cable and power service cable. The visibility project on I-75 and US 441 in Gainesville was accepted several months ago and TCD has recently been working on several devices to both fix device issues and upgrade the wireless communications between several sites. As noted in the Construction section, Phase 9 has been accepted and final integration and testing is about complete. TCD was recently provided with the Phase 9 as-built plans so that they can get the fiber optic and power cables entered into the Sunshine One Call (811) System. Once the conduit/cable runs are entered into the 811 system, TCD will begin receiving locate request tickets for any work in the area of these lines. Finally, the I-95 fiber optic cable installation project in St. Johns County is nearing completion. Once this project has been finalized, TCD will be inputting this information into 811 as well.

Besides all of the new devices and infrastructure, TCD is still working to keep up with the remainder of the system. This month they repaired fiber optic communication cables at four different locations. Each of the locations at Pritchard Road,

Commonwealth Avenue, Forest Street and Gilmore Street had damaged fibers that were affecting communications to the ITS devices. TCD has also been proofing conduits in preparation for installing new fiber optic cables to the Rosa Parks Transit Station and JFRD building from the new RTMC in preparation for future initiatives with city agencies.

TCD is also replacing CCTV poles on I-95 near Lem Turner Road and I-295 near Dunn Avenue as well as Dynamic Trailblazer Signs on Emerson Street off of I-95 and on University Avenue near Philips Highway. The CCTV poles and trailblazer signs had all been damaged over the past several months in separate accidents involving passenger vehicles and semi-trucks.

Finally, TCD has been installing CyberLocks on ITS device cabinets on several of the existing ITS Phases. These CyberLocks are electronic locks which are only able to be opened by a CyberKey that has been programmed to open the lock. Each CyberKey is programmed separately and can be customized to provide individual access to the person who has been given the key. By installing these locks and keys, ITS Maintenance is increasing security of the ITS network and devices while also being able to track where and when the cabinets are being accessed. The individual keys must be recharged regularly at a station located at the new RTMC building which allows the ITS Maintenance Manager the opportunity to update access privileges and other items when the key is recharged.

Matt Harbert
ITS Maintenance Manager



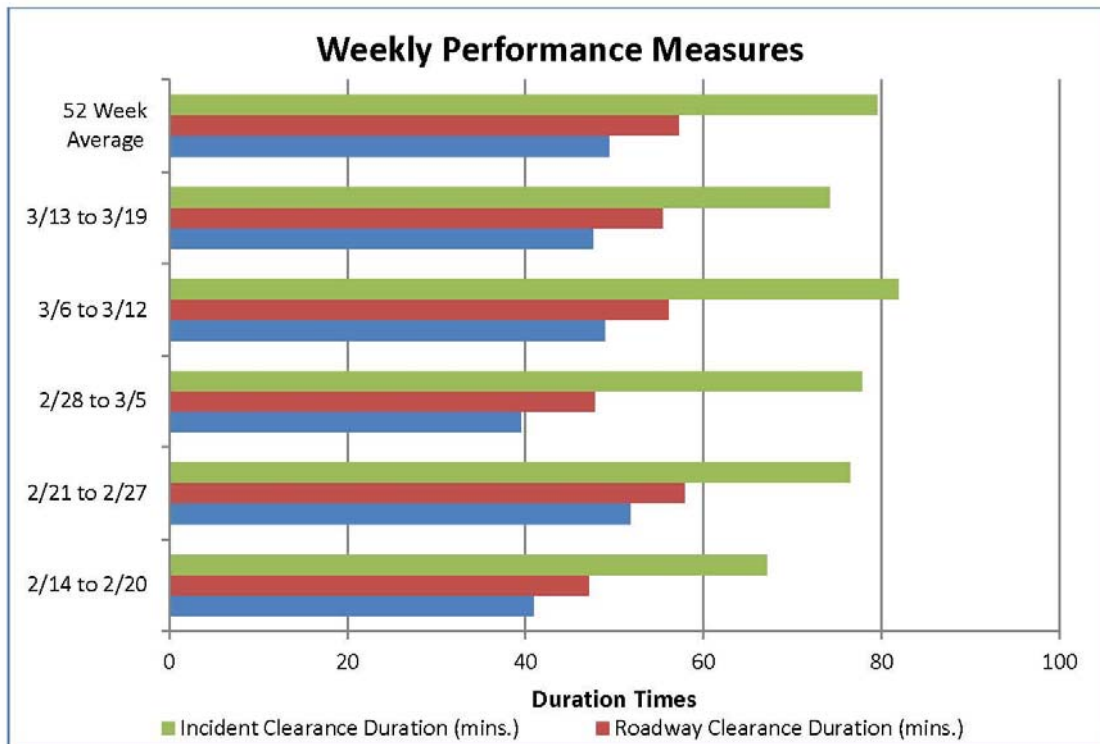
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Spring has sprung and allergies have just begun! Happy Spring! Well if you didn't know spring is here I bet you can surely tell by the number of people walking around sniffing, sneezing and trying to hide their puffy eyes. I swear my car gets a new coat of pollen every day. Nevertheless, the gorgeous weather has just begun and of course, spring also brings spring break when the kids are out of school and peak hour traffic seems bearable again. We can surely see that travel is definitely being affected through our monthly performance measures review.

Looking at the last three weeks in February compared to the first two weeks in March we can tell that there has been a spike in travel. Upon looking at the data a bit closer, we can see that on average there has been a spike of at least 14 congestion as well as 31 crash events per week. This might justify a need to extend our Road Ranger coverage if this trend continues.

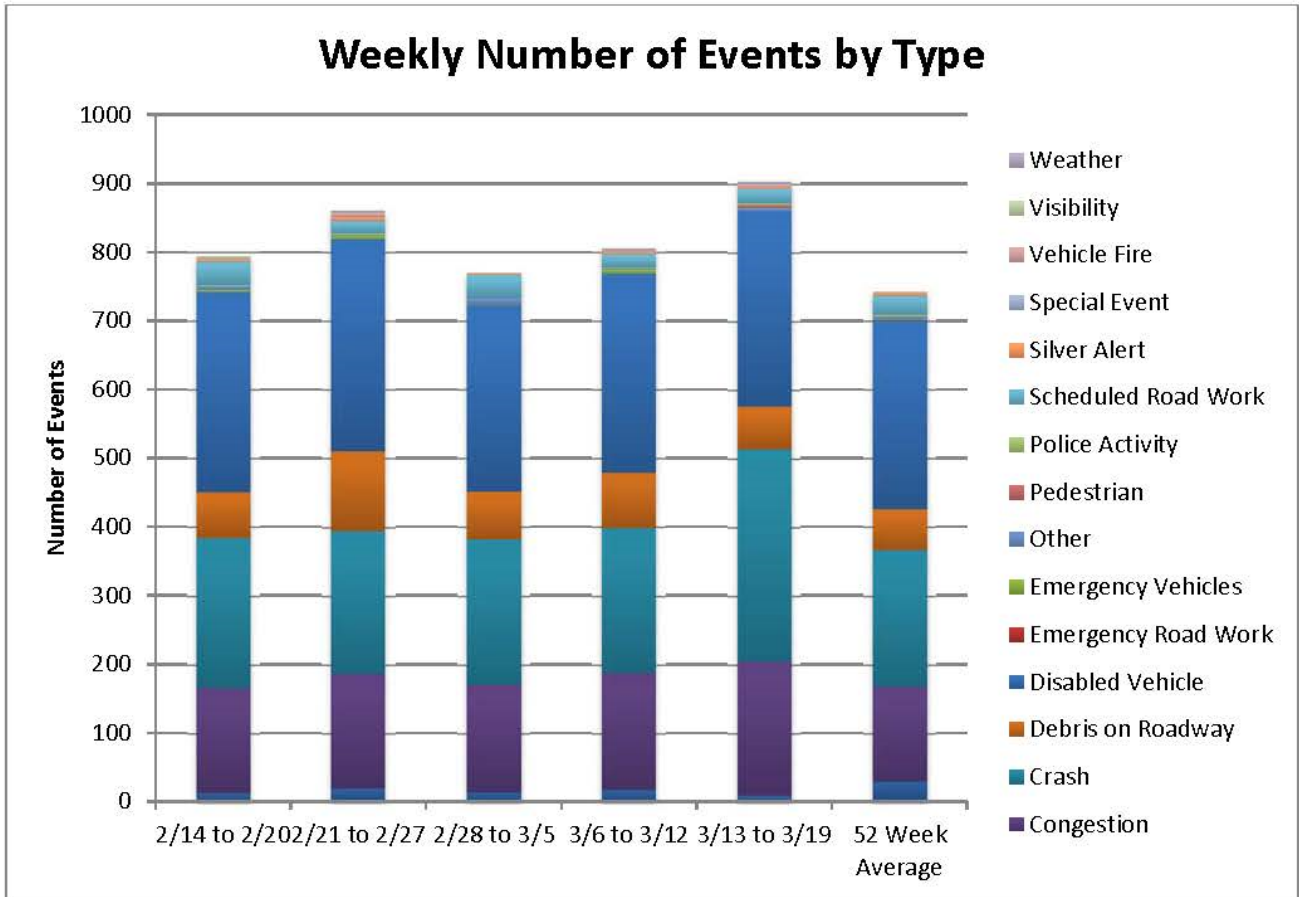
On a bright note, our Open Roads duration, Roadway Clearance Duration and Incident Clearance duration times have all been well under the set goals here in District Two, with our Open Roads duration time lasting approximately 50 minutes on average. The second week in March did have a spike in police activity due to a JSO officer being shot several times while making a routine traffic stop. Thankfully, the officer survived and is well on his way to making a full recovery.

The following charts show the Performance Measures for the Open Roads, Roadway Clearance, Incident Clearance durations and events for the past five weeks.





PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued



**Sherrell Lall
Metric Engineering**



RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE

The Florida Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) created the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program to support Florida’s Open Roads Policy and established a 90-minute goal for the clearance of motor vehicle incidents on Florida’s roadways. The goal of RISC is to quickly secure and restore highway facilities for public use and is a major component of Florida’s Traffic Incident Management strategy. Our RISC program comprises nine counties and covers major incidents along our interstates. RISC has not been activated so far in the month of March but District 2 is fortunate to have our current RISC vendors as well as other great prospects in Southern Wrecker and Dave’s Hi-Way Towing as they are expected to join our TEAM.

ROAD RANGER UPDATE

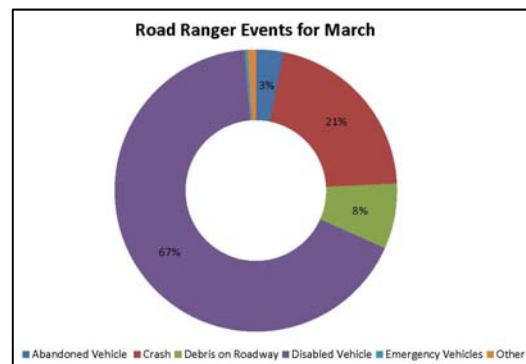
The Road Ranger Program plays a key role in incident management by assisting motorists and local agency partners with Traffic Incident Management. The Rangers provide real-time information to the Traffic Management Center (TMC) regarding accidents, congestion, disabled vehicles and road debris.

The First Coast Road Rangers held their monthly safety meeting on Monday, March 7, 2016 at 11:30 A.M. at the North Florida Regional Transportation Management Center (NFRITMC). This meeting was a sentimental one for everyone as it was Ms. Donna Danson’s last Road Ranger Safety meeting. While reflecting in the past there were many stories shared as to why Donna made this program such a great one. She has a heart of gold and treated this program just like if it was her own child. Donna’s caring nature and sensitivity will truly be missed.

During this meeting, the Road Rangers took the opportunity to discuss several events and safety measures that occurred over the past month. With each scenario that was discussed each member was able to learn how to better handle certain situations and how to learn from one another.



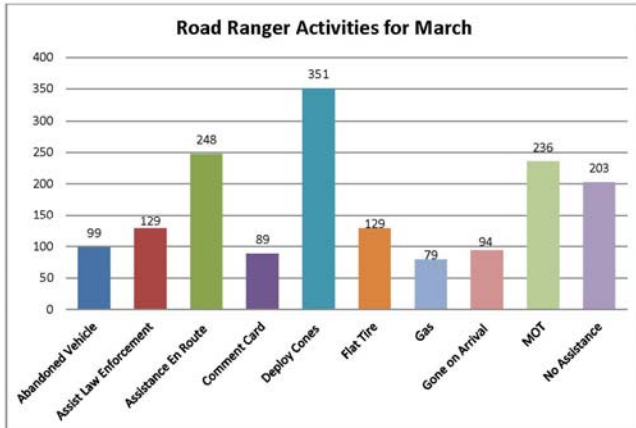
The charts following show that the Road Rangers have been very busy so far during the month of March. They have responded to over 2,100 events and activities. Our Road Rangers continue to show their dedication by working extremely hard to keep our roadways clear and congestion free. They have helped motorists with numerous activities, which include close to 738 disabled vehicles, 232 crashes and approximately 82 debris events.



Continued on following page



ROAD RANGER UPDATE continued



Be sure to see Folio Weekly cover article on the Road Rangers on page 16

FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting held its bi-monthly meeting on **March 15, 2016** at the North Florida Regional Transportation Center (NFRMTC) at 10:00 A.M. Ms. Donna Danson welcomed all of our TIM members to the meeting for her last time. She reminded everyone that the purpose of these meetings is to work together to become the greatest that we can be in terms of safety and incident management. She encouraged all TEAM members to express any concerns or thoughts that they might have for the benefit of the group.

Mr. Bill Kays kicked things off by discussing upcoming traffic switches on the Overland Bridge Project around the San Marco exit area. These shifts are expected to take place around the beginning of May. He was then followed by Mr. Ron Tittle who thanked the Road Rangers for

their services to the public. Mr. Tittle also mentioned that the Road Rangers were featured in an article in Folio Weekly where they were giving a tribute to the services that the Road Rangers provide and also shining a positive light on what the Road Rangers do and continue to do for the motoring public. The link to the article is as follows: <http://folioweekly.com/THE-RANGER-ZONE,14847>.

The TEAM then jumped right in to the Hurricane Update given by Ed Ward. Mr. Ward informed the group that the Hurricane Conference will be coming up in May and will be held in Clay County at Camp Blanding. He also shared that it is looking like it is going to be a very dry summer. This will have a drastic effect on us here in District 2 and we will most likely see a spike in wild fires over the summer months.

The group had several discussions, which were led by Mr. Josh Reichert, in regards to ITS and 511 updates that are coming to the area. We are definitely expecting to see some exciting upgrades to the 511 system by this summer.

We would appreciate if our TEAM members can fill out the online Road Ranger Responder Survey for the benefit of the TEAM. The link is as follows: www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015-2016StatewideRoadRangerSurveyforincidentResponders.

If anyone is interested in the SHRP2 Incident Management Training Course, please contact Craig Carnes at ccarnes@metriceng.com or Misha Gonzales at melder@metriceng.com /904-260-1567. Craig is available to work with any agencies' schedule; including nights and weekends to make sure the course is available for groups of ten or more trainees.



FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE continued

We would like to wish Ms. Donna Danson a happy retirement as this will be her last TIM meeting. We all got sentimental as she gave her goodbye speech and of course teared up with her several times as she led us on a journey starting with her first TIM meeting to her last. We wish you well Donna and hope nothing but the best for you in your retirement. You will truly be missed.

The next First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team meeting is scheduled on **May 17, 2016** at the North Florida Regional Transportation Management Center (NFRTMC), 980 N. Jefferson St at 10:00 A.M. We look forward to seeing everyone there!

ALACHUA BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The next Alachua-Bradford Traffic Incident Management Team meeting will be held on **April 13, 2016** at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office – 5301 N.E. 39th Ave., Gainesville at 10:00 A.M. Please mark your calendars to attend this meeting as your presence helps the TEAM learn and grow with each other.

TEAM MISSION:

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

TEAM VISION:

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

OPERATIONS

On March 15th we had a chance to celebrate the upcoming retirement of Donna Danson. Donna's last day in the office was Thursday the 17th and she will be officially retired on her birthday, April 1st. I had the pleasure of working with/for Donna the last 12 years and the displeasure of trying to learn everything she did over a 2 day crash course on her way out the door. This woman wears a lot of hats! I learned a ton from Donna and I miss her already.

My crash course started with a trip to Gainesville to do a RISC inspection. On the drive down she went over the documentation process and entering the agreement through procurement. The guys at Dave's Hi-Way Towing were fantastic. Donna walked Josh and I through the process of inspecting a potential RISC Vendor. We went through all the trucks, trailers and equipment making sure to lay eyes on everything. I documented and took pictures for my own benefit as well as whomever tries to replace Donna. With pages of notes and a full belly of Brisket we left for Jacksonville.

Though tired from the brisket and a waffle cone at Carl's Donna walked me through her Road Ranger contract and all of the attention that requires. New hires, inspections, ride alongs, red tags, procedures, billing, feedback, meetings and more were discussed at length. 5+ pages of notes later I wished I brought my voice recorder. The Road Ranger discussion spilled over to our arrival back to Jacksonville where she walked me through all of her documentation and files. Donna is an organized woman and a file hoarder! It reminded me of....me. All of the questions I could ever ask about her various programs are in those files, I just need to figure out where!



OPERATIONS

Her last day in the office, on the 17th, was my last chance to get a few hours with her to gather as much information as I could before her and her sister Thelma and Louise'd across the country looking for cowboys. She walked me through both TIM Teams and her role as the TIM Program Manager. I am grateful that I know the ins and outs of TMC Operations so she didn't have to walk me through that! We shared some more laughs, hugs and a few tears. I think I have a grasp on how to keep Donna's babies a float until FDOT hires a replacement. As 10:15AM approached I started to think of all of the Donna-isms over the years, drives to Gainesville where I got to know Donna the person, our Monday Morning Meetings and so many more good times. As her final minute ran down Donna walked out of the TMC to a standing ovation and her picture on the video wall. After one last hug she was off to enjoy the next phase of her eventful life. She is a beautiful person who cared deeply about her

job. I hope Donna enjoys her retirement and finds her submarine with screen doors so she can tell the Alachua TIM Team "I told you so!" Best wishes Donna!

February was the squeaky oil that got the wheel at the TMC (Donna-ism). It was a busy month that had the TMC handle almost 3,500 events in a 29 day period which is several hundred more than January. We approached 1,000 crashes and over 1,500 events had some type of lane blockage. The Road Rangers responded to 1,881 events and performed 4,853 activities! They are active! Construction is active, as well, out there so drive safe and...

**Remember to Know Before You Go:
Use 511!**

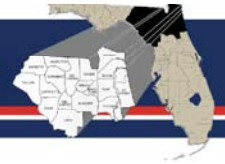
**Ryan Crist
RTMC Manager**

Award Winner!



This picture sums up Donna and I love it!





MARKETING

“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.” – Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

After reading this quote, I was fairly certain Charles Dickens had once wintered in Florida. I can picture him now, wearing knickers and sandals, his arms completely covered in a Victorian style wool frock. (much like our modern day shorts and hoodie winter ensemble) Because of Florida’s bipolar spring weather, I’ve been rather grateful for the number of indoor events we’ve attended recently. For starters, we trekked over to Florida State College at Jacksonville’s Deerwood Campus where 511 took center stage...literally, as the event was held inside the atrium of the former Grand Boulevard Mall. What a beautiful facility! Since taking over the property in 1994, FSCJ (formerly FCCJ) has transformed the center into a state-of-the-art institution for higher learning, where courses can be taken as part of a degree program or on an individual course-by-course basis. During our time at the Open Campus, as it’s commonly referred to, we stumbled upon students of all ages. Some, who I initially mistook for professors, were actually “seasoned” adults who were embarking on a second career later in life. At any rate, all of the students we talked to were excited to learn about 511, since most of them suffer daily at the hands of the “traffic gremlins” wreaking havoc on the 295 East Beltway, Butler and I-95. (all of which are main thoroughfares leading to this centrally located campus)

Since we didn’t want the neighboring colleges to feel left out, our next stop took us to the Orange Park Campus of St. Johns River State College. We timed it just right, visiting during their Spring

Fling event. Armed with their newfound knowledge of 511 and a pocketful of 511 goodies, the students were well equipped as they headed off for their Spring Break road trips.

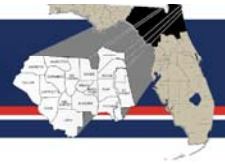
Next month, when the weather turns warmer, we’ll set up our 511 tent Tuesday, April 19th at Hemming Plaza’s Career Festival. If you get a chance, swing by on your lunch break. The event is within shouting distance of some of downtown’s most popular eateries, or you can dine outdoors at Charlie’s Café, an open-air venue that features a rotating ensemble of vendors and is open for business every Monday – Friday from 11am-2pm.

Also in April, we’ll be visiting our friends at the I-95 Florida Welcome Center for National Work Zone Awareness week, hosted in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration. And following on the heels of this visit, we’ll attend Landstar Trucking’s annual Health and Safety Fair. April is certainly looking to be a busy month. Wherever you’re headed, we hope your trip begins with 511. “Know before You Go!” Call 5-1-1, visit www.FL511.com or download one of our free 511 Traffic Apps available for Apple and Android. When it comes to the most up-to-date traffic information, we’ve got you covered!

Sherri Byrd
Marketing Manager



www.FL511.com



SPOTLIGHT ON...PAULINE MORALES

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

I was born in Rockford, IL. Most people don't know where that is so I say Chicago (It's about an hour west.) I moved a ton as a kid, so I was raised in various places. Mainly Waukegan, IL, Jacksonville, FL and Miami, FL. I just recently moved back to Jacksonville to be closer to my sister.

Early Career and/or brief job history: I've worked in customer service since I was about 15 (I'm 21, yes I know, young!), started working in banking about two years ago now and honestly I wish I liked it more. I love working with people, people are great, sometimes!

Are you currently in school? If so, where? What are you studying? My goal is to go back to school. Currently debating finishing at UNF or UCF, if I decide to move. I originally went to school for Marketing and business. I have updated my major to Communications and minoring in business. I hope to return this summer to school!

Job description - your current role at the new RTMC. (Regional Management Transportation Center):
My current role is Feedback. Right now it's just Tuesdays, hopefully I can learn signals and pick up a few of those shifts.

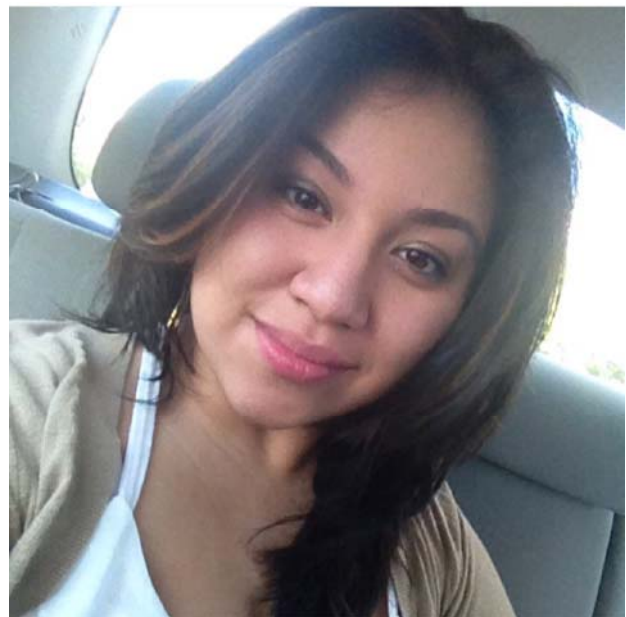
How long have you been working this position? I have been with the RTMC since November, right after Thanksgiving was my first shift.

Do you have any funny stories relating to work (on this job or any previous jobs)? Such as a foot-in-mouth moment or a bad day at the office story? At my second job, which is at Citi Bank for the collections

department, every day is a possible bad day. I think the funniest, non-degrading, moment was when an inbound call came in and he said he was with the FBI! He asked how it felt to be a huge part of a scam. It was great considering I didn't have to speak with him, I just sent him to our customer service department since he wanted to speak to the "Boss of the scams"!

What's the best advice anyone's ever given you? "Use us as examples of what you don't want to become. Be better and strive for greatness, even if nobody else notices. Make everyone proud to be in your shadow." – My mom

Do you have a favorite quote? Something that inspires you? "She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future. When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness." Inspires me to be the person my mom knows I can be.





SPOTLIGHT ON...PAULINE MORALES
continued

Any job related awards or special recognition you've received? Educational awards, scholarships, etc? I received thank you points at Citi Bank, which if you get enough of, you can buy things with or use it like gift cards. I used \$75 worth, currently have about \$150 accumulated!

Describe a 'defining moment' in your career or personal life. A defining moment in my career was when I was asked to train new hires in my old call center job in Miami. Showing others how to do a great job and giving them the break down on how everything works made me realize I want to do more than just do a job. That taught me that I want to work with others and be able to train them or help them learn anything.

Best job ever / worst job ever... or both? I think I have one of those Best/Worst jobs ever. Citi Bank, definitely. Best because it is an awesome company to work for and great to move up into, and I also met some pretty amazing friends there that made me not want to run away screaming for the hills! Worst because... well it is in the job title, "Collections agent". I'm not fond of being yelled at for the lack of responsibility of others, but it is manageable.

Tell us a little about your family. They are crazy. Mixing Mexicans and Puerto-Ricans is a recipe for craziness. I love them! My mother lives in Miami, everyone stalks me here in Jacksonville (father, brother and sister). I have an amazing, spoiled niece which is like my own kid! And three equally crazy nephews. Big family of headaches.

You've just been gifted with 24 hours of glorious, uninterrupted free time. If money wasn't an option, what would you do for the day? I would bring my mom up here and my best friends from Miami, have everyone that I love just around and do a little bit of everything. I would spend time with them and not have to worry about anything else.

What's your favorite thing, so far, about working at the RTMC? I like that there is no drama compared to other places I've worked. Everyone here gets along with each other, at least to me they do. Everyone is friendly and can tease each other without feelings being hurt, feels like a family.

Anything else you'd like to add... My birthday is in March (on Easter this year), I like chocolate, gummies and I don't mind anyone surprising me! I'm also a huge joker and sarcastic for everyone who doesn't know me!



Happy Belated Birthday, Pauline!

PHOTO GALLERY



**Our own Sherri Byrd goes back to College,
 Above: St. Johns River State College; at right
 Florida State College at Jacksonville.
 Below: “Thelma” dumped Louise for Brad
 to ride off into the sunset (he’s the lucky one)**





PHOTO & PUBLICATIONS GALLERY

FOLIO WEEKLY

COVER STORY

THE RANGER ZONE

Making Northeast Florida’s highways safer one tow, tire and gallon of gas at a time



PHOTO BY DENNIS HO

Story and photos by [DENNIS HO](#)

Near the middle of the Buckman Bridge, on the northbound side just before the incline, a red Ford Explorer is festooned, tucked uncomfortably between a lane of traffic and the concrete barrier that prevents cars from careening into the river. The driver is a young man, his head under the hood.

He is visibly nervous, even agitated, for his car, because he’s trapped in a narrow emergency lane, or because it’s in the middle of a bridge, maybe, probably, all three.

Outside the confines of a car, the Buckman is an unfriendly place. It is a loud, sterile landscape, a rigid and unforgiving mix of metal and concrete dangerously active with hurtling vehicles.

The driver mumbles something unintelligible over the roar of cars whizzing by. It’s almost unbearably loud.

“I don’t want no pictures of myself or my truck,” he repeats at a shout, anxiously eyeing my camera.

Meanwhile, Cody Parham, the Road Ranger who has come to assist him, is as cool as a cucumber. He’s done this too many times to count.

Anyone who spends any time on any highway in Northeast Florida has probably seen the First Coast Road Rangers’ vehicles, those white Ford F150s with the greenandyellow branding and electronic truckmounted message boards.

Parham has raised his board and turned on a message. It alternates between a left arrow and the words “MOVE OVER” in all caps, a reminder to obey Florida’s Move Over Law.

The driver of the Explorer declines Parham’s offer of a quick tow off the span. He already has a tow truck on the way.

By now, another Road Ranger, Rich Tripp, has arrived and is placing cones along the edge of the emergency lane. He points toward the other side of the road, motioning for cars to move over. Together, Parham and Tripp create a safe zone until the tow truck arrives.

“Our goal is to keep traffic flowing and to keep the road clear,” Parham explains. “We work pretty much every accident on the highways and help with traffic management.”



PHOTO & PUBLICATIONS GALLERY 2

Parham is the supervisor of Road Ranger Operators, overseeing a fleet of nine trucks shared by 16 drivers. There are eight Rangers on patrol at any given time between 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., five days a week. Operators watch for disabled vehicles in four overlapping segments around the I295 beltway, while the two drivers guard I95 from Yulee to World Golf Village Parkway, one guards the entire length of J.T. Butler Boulevard and one covers I10 as far west as Macclenny.

They have a dispatcher at the Traffic Management Center, the agency that monitors the roads through video cameras along the highways. That dispatcher sits next to the dispatcher from the Florida Highway Patrol.

“Law enforcement is the first one to call us,” says Parham. “At an accident, we can handle traffic, keep the officer safe, keep the road safe. You got law enforcement there, fire rescue and first responders there, they’re all on foot and it’s dangerous.”

The Rangers have been contracted by the state since 2007, and because of that government connection, the drivers must pass a background check and have a clean driving record.

“My guys are first aid and CPR certified, too,” Parham proudly says.

All this might come as a surprise to anyone — and there are many — who thinks the Road Rangers organization is a private service. On the contrary, it falls under the purview of the Florida Department of Transportation.

“We’re not here to interfere with enterprises [such as] AAA,” says Ron Tittle, FDOT public

information officer. “This is incident management, we’re just trying to keep the roads flowing.”

Parham confirms that aside from providing a gallon of gas, changing a tire or filling a radiator, the Rangers don’t perform repairs.

Back on the road after the Explorer is safely off the Buckman, Parham continues navigating the highways. He drives in the right lane, five miles under the speed limit. Tittle is along for the ride with Parham, and they talk about traffic as if they were talking about the weather. The dispatcher chimes in intermittently with something new to report: A van out of gas near Monument Road, an overturned vehicle near Old St. Augustine Road, a big rig in need of a safe zone near Airport Road. The dispatches come in smooth staccato, blending with the sounds of the asphalt and the men’s conversation.

Parham has an eagle’s eye for disabled vehicles; he spots one across eight lanes of traffic on I95 south near the San Marco Boulevard offramp.

As he merges onto I295 south from I10 west, Parham comments about the fact that there are more accidents on this ramp than anywhere else on the highways.

“It’s probably that blind curve,” offers Tittle, and everyone nods in agreement.

“This is what we do, man. We help out a ton of people,” says Parham. When asked why he does this, he points toward a narrow strip of emergency lane. “There’s a difference between changing a tire and changing a tire *right there.*”



**Traffic Incident Management
2016 Meeting Schedule**

First Coast TIM Team
 FDOT Urban Office Training Center
 2198 Edison Avenue, Jacksonville
 904.360.5400

May 17, 2016 July 19, 2016
 September 20, 2016 November 17, 2016

Alachua/Bradford TIM Team
 FDOT Gainesville Operations Office
 5301 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville
 352.381.4300

April 12, 2016
 June 8, 2016 August 10, 2016
 October 12, 2016 December 14, 2016

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