

Even if you don't have school age children, you know, from traffic patterns and travel times that it is "that time of the year" after a wonderful summer break.



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

It's been a little over one-month since John Kell retired and I can already see the significant impact his departure will have on the ITS office. It will be hard to replace the combination of John's ITS expertise and his knowledge of roadway construction. As I've mentioned previously the ITS industry in Florida has a limited amount of experienced personnel so the loss of just one can create havoc in any District. Josh Reichert has been proving his worth over the last two months however nothing can ever replace the nearly 20 years of FDOT construction experience that John brought to the table. Josh has the skill set to pick up things quickly however it should take over a year before he can fully comprehend all the nuances involved during the construction of an ITS project. Even our Jacksonville Construction office has had a difficult time adjusting to his departure as they try to find the next "John Kell" to step into his shoes.

A good example involves a roadway construction project along I-295 in northeast Jacksonville. The contractor and CEI needed to relocate some power for an ITS device that required a new service from JEA. About 10 e-mails bounced around the construction office trying to figure out how to get the necessary documents for this task. Everyone kept saying "get with John Kell since he should know" then realizing "oh yeah, he's not here anymore". Once it reached my inbox the only response I could provide was "here are copies of the documents he provided that someone in the Construction office must now get used to handling."

Then on another project there was the need to relocate ITS conduit and pull boxes that were in the way of the construction contractor who had

to drive some pilings. Due to an error by the Engineer of Record this underground run had to be relocated but the CEI was unsure as to what needed to be done. I was able to squeeze two hours out of my day to meet them in the field so that I could provide some direction. Of course, they wanted someone from ITS to hang around and hold their hand (like John used to do) but that is not a possibility any longer. When I left I noticed the fear and anxiety in their eyes as they tried to figure out what to do. It didn't help that I mentioned this location tied into the Jacksonville Port Authority's Security office, hence this underground line fell under Homeland Security requirements of being available 24/7.

Another major project that has been leaning on John Kell's expertise is the I-95 Overland Bridge reconstruction. Unfortunately, this project is located near the downtown area and hence right on top of a major ITS deployment and fiber trunk line. There were several conflicts with the ITS infrastructure within the project limits and John was the "go to" guy that would assist their team. He was able to meet at the site to provide suggestions on how to handle a conflict but that can't happen any longer. The best I can do is provide some guidance over the phone with the reminder that this infrastructure is tied into JSO and FHP, hence it falls under the Homeland Security requirements as well. I don't think that team is very happy with ITS right now since some of the work will be impacting their schedule.

Along the I-295 west beltway there are several on-going landscape, ramp and interchange projects that relied on John for guidance. We've been able to utilize Kevin Jackson on some of these requests but he is also very busy trying to oversee the maintenance of over 100 miles of ITS, hence his availability is limited as well. Within the next year we will be able to rely on Josh to assist but he needs time



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

to understand the existing infrastructure and ITS deployments before we throw him to the wolves. There are moments when I feel these contractors are using the ITS conflicts to gain time and/or money on the roadway work so District Two needs to find a way to resolve this situation in the future.

Earlier this year I felt there was a need for ITS training that would help in dealing with the limited amount of expertise available. FHWA offers generic training on the industry and mainly focuses on the needs of the ITS consultant tasks. ITE and AASHTO provide numerous opportunities for training with the use of Case Studies, however this is a broad level approach that does not get into the weeds of what we do. ITS Florida provides some training but it is usually a one-hour webinar that barely gets into the details of ITS. Even the universities in Florida are limited on the type of training and courses available to the ITS industry hence I felt there was a need to take the bull by the horns on this situation and have decided that we'd do it ourselves in District Two.

After careful consideration I felt our District Two team was capable of developing three to four hour course modules that provide a "real world" understanding of ITS. I sat down with staff to discuss the different modules and have come up with a list of training programs on CCTV cameras, Dynamic Message Signs, Vehicle Detectors, Weather Information systems, Fiber Optic/Electrical methods, Wireless technology, ITS design/CEI, ITS Networks, TSM&O and Bluetooth Applications. These initial 10 courses should be ready for a Beta testing next March of 2015. I know that over time we may add or combine courses based on what is developed

but we feel it will be a step in the right direction to assist District Two as the ITS deployment grows by threefold over the next four years. I decided to work with the T-Squared team at the University of Florida for the delivery of these courses since they have the staff and expertise to get this effort underway.

The initial target audience will be in-house staff involved in Traffic Operations, Planning, Design and Construction. Other staff in the Department will be given the opportunity to attend based on their interest but the four offices mentioned previously have a key stake in the success of the ITS program. Once this initial target audience has been addressed we will try to utilize the T-Squared staff to provide outside training to consultants, contractors and vendors who may be interested in educating their staff. The goal is to gear up for the expansion of the program while understanding that these basic elements of ITS must be understood before we can take the next step into connected and autonomous vehicle technology.

I did some thinking on how much we lost with the departure of John. Basically, it was 20-years' worth of knowledge and 32% of overall experience within the ITS staff when you consider the years that Donna, Kevin and I have with the program. That is a huge hit to take when there is nobody ready to step in to handle John's tasks. I can moan and groan all that I want but the situation holds true for the rest of the District ITS programs in the State. We can already see the struggles in District Three and Five due to the departure of experienced personnel. Pretty soon the same will happen in Districts One and Six when Chris Birosak and Rory Santana retire in a year. This alone justifies my decision to develop these ITS courses for use in the near future.

Continued on following page



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

As a reminder, the ITS World Congress kicks off on September 7th in Detroit, Michigan. Josh will be attending this event for District Two and should gain a wealth of knowledge on the types of devices available to us. Likewise, he will have a chance to get hands-on experience with connected and autonomous vehicles since many will be on display for him to take a ride in during his visit. Likewise, the ITS 3C Summit will be held the following week in Mobile, Alabama. I will be attending this event on behalf of District Two and will be presenting in two of the sessions. I hope that some of you have the opportunity to attend one or both since by 2016 it appears connected and autonomous vehicles will become a reality (according to the car manufacturers).

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



**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS/TMC
PROGRAM MANAGER**

The District 2 ITS Program is beginning to embark on many new and different ITS projects. One of these is a pilot project for truck parking. We have been tasked by Central Office to set up a system that informs truckers in advance when the rest area truck parking on I-95 northbound in St. Johns County is full.

As many of you already know, there are strict regulations on the trucking industry aimed at eliminating drowsy truck drivers. They are responsible for keeping driving logs and taking

mandatory breaks every so often. It just so happens that many of the drivers coming from Miami and other places in South Florida are close to reaching their mandatory break time, and the truck parking at the rest area just north of CR 210 fills up past capacity, with truckers often parking on the shoulders of the ramp to get back onto I-95 from the rest area.

As part of this pilot project, we will be installing vehicle detection systems at both the entrance to and the exit from the truck parking that will track the ingress and egress of trucks. This equipment will send data to the TMC, where we will have a program that figures out the balance of vacant parking spaces at any given time (thanks Jason in advance for writing that program!).

We will use an existing wireless network we have in the area to communicate our calculated “vacant spaces” number to a small DMS board that will be housed inside of a larger static sign that will be placed south of the CR 210 exit for northbound traffic. This sign will say to truckers “Rest Area Truck Parking XX Spaces Available”. A traffic camera will be mounted on top of the rest area so TMC operators can periodically check in on the parking and visually verify that the number of vacant spots in the system is close to what is actually open in the lot.

What’s the point of all this, you may ask? Our goal is to give truckers with little time left until their required break the advance notice they need to make the choice to either pull into the rest area to take their break or pull off at the CR 210 exit and use the commercial truck stop to rest. In my opinion, a clever use of ITS indeed!

Josh Reichert
ITS/TMC Program Manager



NORTH FLORIDA TPO UPDATE

It has been a very interesting month for me dealing with NFTPO assignments. First, our staff has been keeping a close eye on the bridge wind sensors and have found that the biggest challenge will be insuring that NOAA prevents other members from stepping on our assigned space. We recently found two bridge wind sensors that were not reporting to the website and this is probably due to some entity stealing our airtime. We should have that resolved in a day or so but overall things are looking very good. Our next focus is on the BlueToad deployments we have in the area. We are still having some problem on certain roadways due to construction projects but our ITS network staff are working on alternate paths to avoid these conflicts in the future. We hope to have this resolved by the end of this month.

As for the RTMC, you may have seen some articles in local newsprint over the past few weeks. Word has gotten out that the facility is in the City's permitting process so we should be ready to begin construction very soon. The target is 10-months of construction however the contractor has found ways to shorten the length of time. This should put us in line for a move-in date of July 2015 if the weather holds up but after reading the predictions in the 2015 Farmers Almanac we may have a tough go at it this Spring. Apparently, we will have a very cold and rainy season ahead which are two things that can severely slow the construction process. Please keep your fingers crossed that we luck out for at least the next 8 months since by that time the walls and roof should be up with only the interior work to be done.

The NFTPO System Manager, DRMP, is wrapping up its last few task work orders before the contract ends and a new contract is generated. I have decided to focus their attention on daily operations along the arterial

roadway system, BlueToad and work in St. Johns County. They have added staff to assist with this effort since they only have until March 2015 to complete their work. The biggest challenge will be to develop plans for some deployments in the St. Augustine area and interconnection to the St. Johns County Public Works facility since there is a very limited amount of time to complete the work.

One huge change that's occurred has been the departure of James Bennett from the Department. He was a big supporter of ITS and our liaison with the NFTPO Board. James has been gone several weeks but I can already feel the difference since I can no longer go up to his office to hash out our plans. I have heard that his replacement is forthcoming and this will be a tremendous help as I try to incorporate the NFTPO's ITS work program funds into Production. This is not an easy task since time frames keep getting shortened while workloads continue to increase. The key thing is to insure that we capture all the needs of our partners.

Within one year the NFTPO will be part of the District Two ITS family as we share the same accommodations at the new RTMC. My belief is that this arrangement will make the North Florida transportation system much stronger since their staff will get first hand exposure to the challenges motorists and freight carriers encounter each and every day. As we've always heard, "a picture is worth a thousand words," and in this case they will have streaming video to assist them with their efforts. In the coming newsletters we will begin sharing photographs of the construction site so that you can share in our experience and excitement.

Pete Vega
TSM&O Program Manager



CONSTRUCTION

The Phase 9 Project has been awarded to American Lighting and Signalization (ALS). This project, which is located on the southwest quadrant of I-295, will complete the ITS System on the I-295 Beltway. ALS was given a 60-day procurement period prior to the start of construction and has been taking full advantage of this time. ALS personnel have been submitting device cut sheets for review by the Engineer of Record throughout the procurement period and should be ready to hit the ground running when construction begins on September 15th. 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 is currently under design. Construction crews have begun work on the St. Johns County I-95 portion of the project and will continue this work for the next several months. Work crews will begin on this segment by trenching in conduit along the Interstate and directional boring conduit under drainage areas and other obstacles. Once all conduit is in place, crews will then install fiber optic pull boxes and splice vaults to tie in the sections of conduit and allow for the connection of future devices. Finally, a fiber optic specialty contractor will install the fiber optic cable in the conduits and make any required fiber optic splices in the splice vaults. Once crews complete their work on the I-95 segment in St. Johns County, they will move on to the I-10 segment to perform the same work. The SR 23 ITS devices and conduit infrastructure will be completed last, due to the roadway work that needs to be completed first.

The Contractor 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. As detailed last month, the Contractor has encountered some issues with the welding performed on the DMS structures and has

instructed the supplier to take the structures back to their facilities to repair the issues. It is currently unknown exactly how this will affect the project schedule. The project is currently scheduled for completion in the spring of 2015.

Craig Carnes
Metric Engineering

MAINTENANCE

Hurricane Season still has a few months remaining, but thus far has not impacted us here in Jacksonville. Tropical Storm and later Hurricane Cristobal was the latest threat, but luckily stayed to the east of us and turned sharply north so as to avoid landfall in the US. Since the sensors have been installed they have been very reliable, with a few having issues now and then. Overall, though, they have not needed much maintenance. But, we aren't taking our good luck for granted and are regularly monitoring our bridge wind sensors for failures, so that when a Tropical Storm or Hurricane does come our way we will be ready to let emergency operations and emergency services personnel know the wind conditions on the major bridges around Jacksonville.

We are still in the summer thunderstorm season and have been seeing significant rainfall and severe storms throughout our area. These storms have caused lightning damage to several of the ITS devices over this past month, but our ITS Maintenance Contractor, Traffic Control Devices (TCD), continues to go out every day to troubleshoot and fix the problems. The storm/lightning damage has kept TCD personnel fairly busy this month and luckily there haven't been many other issues on the ITS System that have arisen.

If you have kept up with Pete Vega's monthly updates, you are realizing that the ITS Program



MAINTENANCE continued

is growing and evolving at the same time. It is growing because within the next few years District 2 will have every mile of Interstate roadway covered with ITS devices, and toll facilities are beginning to be designed and built in the Jacksonville area. And it is evolving because the ITS Program is beginning to concentrate more on arterial roadways and freight movements. This growth and evolution will result in a lot more devices for the ITS Maintenance Section to maintain. Also, with the increased reliance on the ITS devices for tolling and other initiatives, devices will require a high percentage availability. So, the future holds a lot of work for us, but we have been preparing our existing infrastructure for these possibilities over the past several years and are ready for the challenge.

Kevin Jackson
ITS Field Specialist

ROAD RANGER UPDATE

The Road Rangers held their monthly safety meeting on August 9, 2014 at 11:30AM at the FDOT Urban Office Training Center. Mr. Greg Gaylord started off the meeting by reminding all Road Rangers that safety is their main priority and that the purpose of the Road Ranger safety meeting is to learn from others.

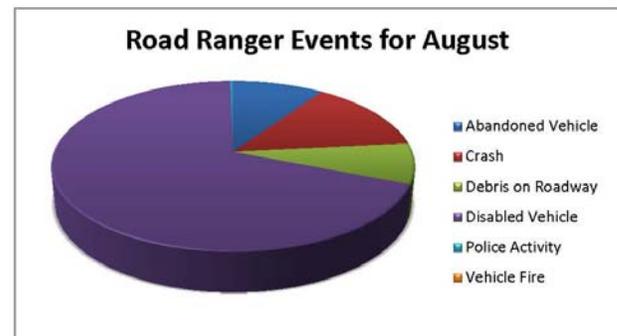
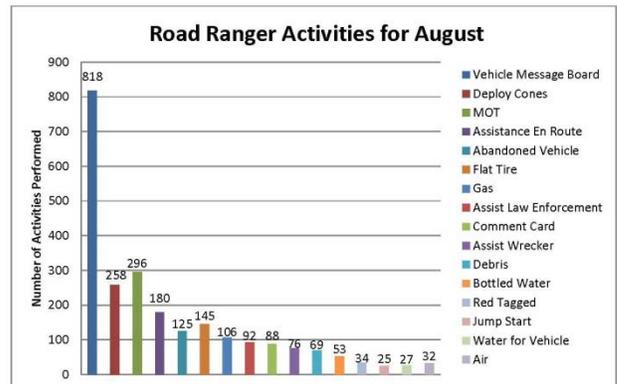
The Road Rangers are an essential part of incident management as they play a large part in making incident scenes safer for our incident responders. They work hard to ensure that the motorists have safe and clear roads to travel. We can see from their activities in the chart below they are very much utilized across District 2.

District 2 is very proud to announce that all of the phones in the Road Ranger vehicles have been updated, making it easier and more efficient for the Rangers to enter in the necessary information for the Traffic Management Center. So far we

have received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from the Road Rangers in regards to the look, feel and ease of the devices.

The Road Ranger Service Patrol Operators remain trained and ready to respond if a hurricane heads our way. They are fully aware of evacuation plans that were put in place for such incidents. Thankfully, we haven't had the need to utilize this service but it is comforting to know the Road Rangers are ready to assist if necessary.

The charts below illustrate the Road Ranger activities for the past four weeks as well as the different types of reported events. So far this month the Road Rangers provided a total of 2,444 services to motorists and incident responders, but compared to previous months, the month of August thankfully had less incidents on the roadways.



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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.

ALACHUA-BRADFORD TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team held its bi-monthly meeting on August 13, 2014 at the FDOT Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 N.E. 39th Avenue at 10:00 A.M. The following agencies were represented: Metric Engineering, FDOT ITS, FDOT Traffic Management Center, Alachua County Environmental Protection, Atkins, FDOT PIO, FDOT EOC, DBI, Alachua County Sheriff's Office, FDOT Traffic Operations, Florida Forestry Service, Gainesville Police Department, FDOT Gainesville Maintenance, District 8 Medical Examiner, FHP, University Towing, and the Alachua County Fire Department.

The Team began the meeting with introductions and then started right away on the Emergency Operations Center, ITS and Construction updates. Mr. Craig Carnes informed the group about upcoming projects in District 2 including the deployment of ITS devices from CR 234 to the Georgia line which is estimated to be completed in 2017. We would like to congratulate the Office of the Medical Examiner Florida District 8 for winning the 2014 Hunger Destroyer Award for their amazing work at the Annual Touch-a-Truck event on May 17, 2014.

The TEAM then conducted the Alachua-Bradford TIM Self-Assessment together and held an in depth discussion in regards to each item on the assessment. The TIM Team discussed several other incidents that occurred since the last meeting as a learning tool to help bring the TEAM together and benefit each

member during incident management. Lieutenant Blair and Captain Thomas also confirmed that they will be conducting a SHRP II Training session in Lake City on August 27, 2014. Mr. Carnes extended the offer to all TEAM members for anyone interested in joining the training.

The Alachua-Bradford TIM Team will hold its next bi-monthly meeting on October 8, 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 September 16, 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. Please mark your calendar to attend this meeting. 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



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

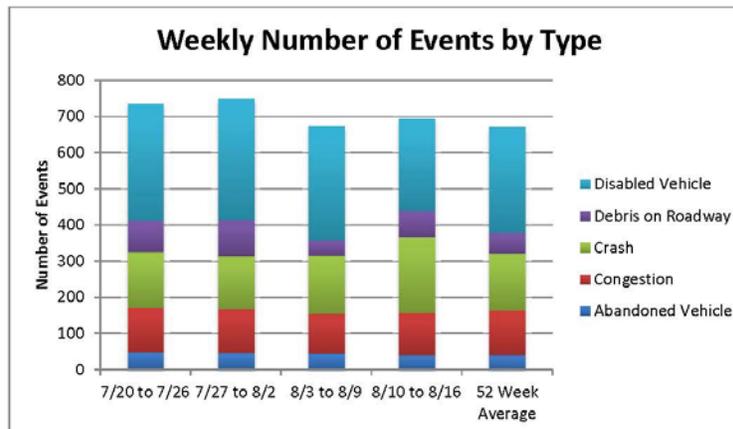
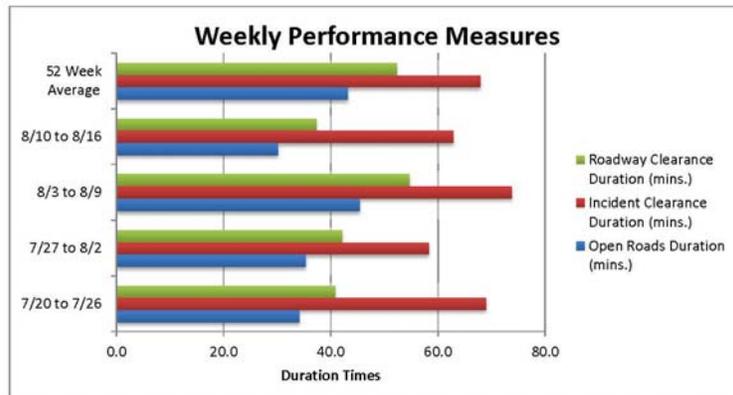
Even though there was much less rain in the month of August than any of the other Summer months there was still a significant impact on our roadways most likely due to the school season starting back. All of the hustle and bustle to get the kids ready for school began with the official start of the school year near the middle of the month and created increased traffic problems for our roadways here in District 2.

An interesting fact is that even though there was nearly five inches of rainfall reported for the time period of July 20th through August 16th the rain did not have a great impact on the incident clearance, roadway clearance, and open roads duration, as can be seen in the chart below. During the week of August 10th the rain accounted for more than half of

the four week total at approximately three inches. This heavy amount of rain could have caused the increase of 53 crashes observed when compared to the past three months. This may also be attributed to the fact that between the start of the school year for Clay County during that week along with the increased amount of rainfall it was a bad week in terms of events. On a more positive note, there were fewer reported secondary events and minor fender benders for the past few weeks, which accounted for 41 fewer events than when compared to the yearly average.

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

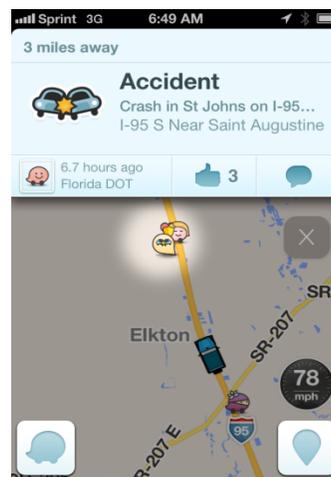
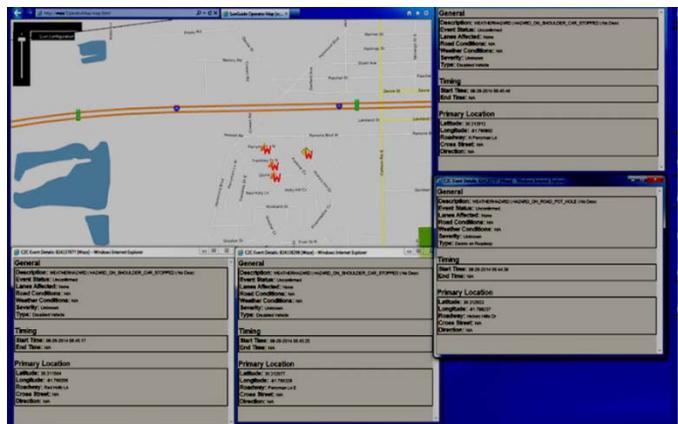
Back in May, the Florida Department of Transportation Central Office partnered with Google-owned WAZE. This partnership is geared towards providing motorists more up to date real-time information. With District 2 having the majority of their ITS Devices located on Interstates in the Greater Jacksonville area this partnership is viewed to help supplement current ITS resources and provide greater detail outside of the Jacksonville area and on Major Arterials.

This is an in-kind partnership where event data is shared both ways at no cost to either party. You have all read enough about, and have used, 511 but how does WAZE work? By connecting drivers to one another, WAZE helps people create local driving communities that work together to improve the quality of everyone's daily driving. After typing in their destination address, users just drive with the app open on their phone to passively contribute traffic and other road data, but they can also take a more active role by sharing road reports on accidents, police traps, or any other hazards along the way, helping to give other users in the area a 'heads-up' about what's to come. Personally, the "actively" sharing role portion of the WAZE App scares the safety side of me but we all know people love their smartphones.

Earlier in July FDOT started pushing information to WAZE to help make their system more robust. You can see some FDOT attribution being provided to us on their App and web page. FDOT's Central Office and the ITS Software and Architecture Team are working hard to integrate WAZE data into our SunGuide Software in a useful manner. This is planned to be done in a 2 Phase approach with the hope that Phase 1 goes live mid-September. Needless to say, they have been busy!

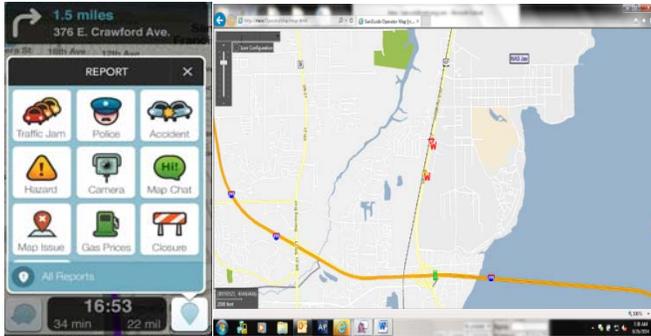
The WAZE data has proven to be challenging to deal with so far due to its crowd sourcing, social

media, type approach. Some of the issues that have been encountered are 1) Multiple people (WAZERS) can report on the same event 2) non-State Roads can be reported (which do not involve the State...refer to screen shot below) and 3) there's no clean mechanism in place to remove old events (again, documented in screen shot below). Since WAZE uses a crowd sourcing/ social media type approach it leaves room for different interpretations of what is currently going on and wording that creates data scraping issues as there is no consistent format.





OPERATIONS continued



FDOT and TMCs statewide will continue to work hard to iron out some of these issues as the benefit of having WAZE as a secondary notification source is evident. The value is there. Now it's just a matter of finding the most useful way to receive and process the data. The process may be long and tedious but the end result will be a more robust 511 system to assist motorists in northeast Florida.

Ryan Crist
TMC Manager

MARKETING

On a typical day I spend anywhere from 5-6 hours in a car where I jokingly tell people that I have a "window to the world." From my mobile office I cover just about every square inch of Jacksonville, and anyone who has ever ridden with me knows that my typical "pre-flight" routine consists of checking 511 in its various forms, multiple times per day, even before I put my key in the ignition. This has kept me from getting stuck in traffic jams more times than I can count. But when traveling away from home (as in outside the country) it's a totally different story.

Let me back up a little. Two summers ago we booked a trip to Costa Rica and fell in love with this Central American gem. So when we

booked a return trip last month, we were ecstatic! After landing in San Jose, Costa Rica around lunchtime on a Saturday, we had a somewhat adventurous yet uneventful drive over to the Caribbean coast. Granted, the drive took a little over 5 hours, but that was due in part to the slow-moving tractor trailers carrying loads of bananas over to the port... and the treacherous mountain roads it took to get us there.

Three days later, after enjoying loads of sun and fun in the city of Puerto Viejo, we packed our bags and headed inland to one of our favorite volcanoes. Our journey took us north on Highway 36 up the Caribbean coast, then west onto Highway 32 through the port city of Limon. We traveled along the coast admiring the views and jamming out to local Hispanic radio stations, when all of a sudden, we came to a halt. A complete stop. As in, not moving at all. And we stayed that way for 1 hour and 20 minutes. I know because our GPS marked the agonizing minutes.

In this moment, I became fully aware of just how much those daily up-to-the-minute "real time" traffic reports mean to me. And how motorists in every corner of the world could benefit from similar systems. Already, Puerto Rico is poised to implement its own 511 system (as you'll see from our Spotlight Feature on Ashley Figueroa this month). And while we can't do a whole lot to get the ball rolling in other parts of the Caribbean and Central America, we'll do our best to make sure our own little corner of the globe is covered. Here in District 2 for instance, we have outreaches planned for Deutsche Bank as well as the Adamec Harley-Davidson Store in Baymeadows. And this past month, we attended the annual Back to School Extravaganza at the Teacher Supply Depot, while also donating goodie bags to the Greater



MARKETING continued

Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament and the Shadco Safety Fair at the Avenues Mall.



Above & Below:
511 visits the Back to School Extravaganza
at the Teacher Supply Depot

As for Costa Rica, we found out there was an accident half a mile ahead of us that kept us glued to that one spot. And reaffirming our belief that Costa Ricans are some of the friendliest people on the planet, we also learned that once Emergency Responders clear a scene, they drive away announcing from their loud speakers, “Gracias por su paciencia. Mucho gusto.” Or, “Thank you for your patience.” (*mucho gusto is a phrase used generously by the Costa Ricans to mean “with much pleasure”)

And it is with much pleasure that I remind you to start your Labor Day Weekend 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...Ashley Vargas-Figueroa

My name is Ashley Vargas, and I was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. My interest in Civil Engineering began when I was in seventh grade and I was chosen to participate in a one week Summer Engineering Camp at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez Campus. Motivated by this experience and by my uncle who is a senior builder, it was my desire to study Civil Engineering. Having excelled in the major, my passion for Transportation began during my first Transportation Engineering course where I was especially intrigued by highway design. My interest grew even stronger after being awarded with the Dwight David Eisenhower Fellowship sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a fellowship awarded only to five students annually at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (PUPR) designed to expose students to a research experience at the undergraduate level. After participating in the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) in the Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory (TOPS Lab) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus, I was sure I had found an area of engineering that fit both my skills and my passion.

My research experiences helped me secure my first full time job beginning in November 2011 working in the Transportation Engineering Department for a private consulting firm in Puerto Rico. This experience has contributed to my professional development mainly because I integrated different skills such as project management, traffic studies development, revision of highway construction plans, preparation of project's proposals, scheduling, professional presentations, and project coordination with different agencies.

In December 2013, I was subcontracted by Metric's subconsultant in Puerto Rico, Vagtec, to prepare the Marketing and Business Plan for the

ITS Project in the San Juan Metropolitan Area (SJMA), to be included as part of the Program Management Plan. During my first meeting with Dale Cody, he tasked me to prepare something simple but with all the information that is required in this document. My first assignment was to carry out the literature review, and then to propose an outline for both documents. After the successful completion of both documents, I got an employment offer by Metric Engineering of Puerto Rico in March 2014. What a great opportunity to be part of Puerto Rico's first comprehensive ITS project, which is expected to expand throughout the Island!!

The Puerto Rico Highways and Transportation Authority (PRHTA) has identified the need to find solutions to improve the efficiency and safety of SJMA's surface transportation network. These solutions could save travelers time through enhanced traffic management, traveler information and transit services, will bolster traffic safety, alleviate congestion and reduce the incident clearance times. The SJMA ITS Program intends to implement innovative solutions in order to provide general ITS Services to the PRHTA and transportation network users with the objective of mitigating the increasing congestion problem in the SJMA. As depicted in dark orange in the figure below, the ITS Region within the SJMA includes the

Municipalities of Bayamón, Caguas, Carolina, Cataño, Guaynabo, San Juan, Toa Baja and Trujillo Alto.



According to the 2010 Census Data, the ITS Region has 1,213,612 inhabitants, which represents 32.6% of Puerto Rico's total population. The SJMA ITS Program will provide direct benefits to this population.

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SPOTLIGHT ON...Ashley Vargas-Figueroa **continued**

As part of the continued training and professional development of Puerto Rico's ITS Project consultants and as part of the peer-to-peer exchange with Florida, I participated in a training at the Florida Department of Transportation's District Two (D2) in Jacksonville. It has been a few days since I completed the ITS/TMC training in D2's Traffic Management Center (TMC), but words are not enough to express my gratitude with all the FDOT ITS staff and Metric Engineering. During my days in Jacksonville I received a lot of information related to their ITS deployment, TMC operations and consultant side. Lessons learned from all the ITS/TMC team, especially from Pete Vega and Ryan Crist, are priceless for our project on the Island. During my training one of the highlights was that I had the opportunity to observe and to be part of a real time incident management during the Buckman Bridge tragedy back in July 16th, where the dedication and commitment of D2's ITS/TMC employees to their work and the responsibility that they have to improve incident management was remarkable. The ITS/TMC team ensured that the four weeks of training in the FDOT TMC and in ITS Consultant offices (Metric Engineering) was a valuable experience. Not to mention that I had the opportunity to get into a Dynamic Message Sign (DMS), which was a great experience since I had never been inside a DMS, and as part of the ITS Program in the San Juan Metropolitan Area (SJMA), the PRHTA will deploy DMSs on major highways in Puerto Rico with the highest AADTs, including, Highway PR-52, PR-30, PR-18 and PR-26. Another highlight of my training was to get certified with the *SHRP 2 National Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Responder Course*. The Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) has begun the process of developing an integrated TIM Program as part of the ITS



project for the San Juan Metropolitan Area (SJMA). The TIM Program consists of a planned and coordinated multi-disciplinary effort to detect, respond to, and clear traffic incidents so that traffic flow be restored as safely and as quickly as possible.

But, how does D2's TMC pull together to operate a center with more than 500 miles of roadway coverage? During the ITS/TMC training I had the opportunity to spend time with each of the employees dedicated to the different tasks needed for the TMC operations and incident management; including operators, TMC supervisors, marketing and 511 probe, Road Rangers, network personnel, ITS field specialists and TCD. Also, it was of great value to visit the TMC at the City of Jacksonville and Gainesville, to have a better understanding of how all the pieces work together for a successful ITS/TMC Program. Everything is back to Puerto Rico in my mind, my notes and my flash drive!!



DISTRICT TWO ITS NEWSLETTER



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TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT 2014 MEETING SCHEDULE

FIRST COAST TIM TEAM MEETING

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

SEPTEMBER 16, 2014 NOVEMBER 18, 2014

ALACHUA/BRADFORD TIM TEAM MEETING

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

OCTOBER 8, 2014 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



**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



Florida's Intelligent Transportation System



**John Kell
ITS Construction Project Manager**

904.360.5455

John.Kell@dot.state.fl.us



www.FL511.com



**Josh Reichert
ITS/TMC Program Manager**

(904) 360-5642

Joshua.Reichert@dot.state.fl.us