

The term “frog-strangler” does not begin to describe the devastation from Tropical Storm Debby. Above, I-10 in Columbia County, below, the washout of the US-301 Bridge near Otis Road in Nassau County.





### **NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER**

As many of you may know the State's new fiscal year is upon us so "let the games begin!" I normally hate this time of the year because the month of June is when you try to zero out balances on some accounts while preparing for new budgets in July. It's a whirlwind of activity that must be squeezed into your normal workload and at times it can turn you dizzy if you let things get to you. It's multi-tasking at its best and I usually get only a few minutes of reprieve throughout the week.

Unfortunately, this July was a little more challenging because I had to visit my aunt in Puerto Rico. Her husband had been sick for several years and died in late June. She was very close to my father so I thought it best that I take a few days off to see for myself that she was doing fine. Of course based on the information in the first paragraph I was still in the "transportation mode" when I landed in San Juan. "Lucky me" when I realized that I was leaving the Avis parking lot right at peak PM rush-hour! If you did not know by now Miami, Tampa and Orlando have nothing on rush-hour traffic when compared to San Juan. Imagine nearly one-million commuters, one expressway and several two lane arterial roads. It took me nearly 2.5 hours to travel the 70 miles to her house!

In any case, let's get to the reason I am writing this story. Since I was still in the transportation mode I spent a number of hours talking to her about the life-style on this pristine island and how people deal with transportation. Ironically, it appears that this is a way of life for Puerto Ricans and they just "deal with it." One thing I should mention is that the City of San Juan is the major source of employment for many of the people living on the island. For instance, if a person lives in her town and needs to commute

to work in San Juan they normally leave before 5:00 AM to make it to work on time by 8:00 AM. Remember, it's only a 70 mile commute). To lessen their severity some of

The locals in her town spend the week in San Juan bunking with relatives and only come home on weekends.

Transit is a major source of transportation in Puerto Rico with special bus lanes and commuter rail used as the main method for getting around San Juan. These transit buses actually go to different areas around the island to transport people into San Juan. They are dropped off at bus/rail transfer stations on the outskirts of the City and commuters use the transit system within City limits to reach their final destination. My uncle lives right down the street from my aunt but refuses to use a local town doctor so he takes this commute every couple of weeks to see the doctor he's been with for over 20 years. His commute begins at 3:30 AM and he usually gets back home by 7:00 PM. Not the kind of lifestyle I think I'd ever adjust to if I lived in Puerto Rico.

Their Department of Transportation is trying to improve things via multi-modal solutions. The first thing I noticed was that they were extending their commuter rail system to outlying towns. This rail system is adjacent to the expressway for convenience (or so I would assume). Their long range plan is to circle the island with this commuter rail while running one rail line from San Juan to the south end of the island through the mountains. They are also increasing the amount of sidewalks throughout San Juan to promote pedestrian traffic and use of bicycles. The ironic thing is that even in 95 degree weather I saw a large number of people toting grocery bags walking on the grassed shoulder along the highway.

So, now that you've had a taste of the commuter situation let me talk about their response to

Continued on following page



**NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT 2 ITS ENGINEER CONTINUED**

traffic safety. Some things I noticed are that there were a very limited number of speeders (hence making ME feel guilty – hint, hint), everyone uses their seat belts, every kid in a car was fastened in a child seat, motorists were actually courteous when turning at intersections and I rarely (if ever) saw anyone run a red light. When I mentioned this to my aunt she said that most everyone on the island feels life is too precious so “why hurry?” She said this is normal situation and getting mad won’t help matters. These people embrace living, family and respect for the traffic laws. Don’t get me wrong, they would like to see the situation improve but they understand that 6 million people on this small island will most definitely lead to some trade-offs.

The DOT is looking toward the future and has begun to address operational issues with its roadway system. First thing I noticed was that they were transitioning to electronic toll collection everywhere. The cash lanes were 50 cars deep so it makes sense to prevent this queue by going to a cashless system. They are also beginning their ITS program to help in monitoring roadway conditions and improving incident response times. I believe their greatest challenge will come when dealing with the arterial roadways. Many of these corridors have limited right-of-way and I don’t think any form of ITS deployment can help them there, even if they go to an adaptive type signal system.

Well, when I left Puerto Rico and landed in Jacksonville at about 2:30 pm on Tuesday afternoon my first response was aaahhh! “



San Juan Traffic

I live about 30 miles from the airport, got home in 27 minutes and thought “right about now commuter traffic on the island has begun.” I can only hope and pray that everything the FDOT is doing now in District Two will pay off in the future because I would NEVER want to deal with those traffic conditions on a daily basis.

I want to bring up a couple of things to come over the next few months with the newsletter. First, we have decided to transition from the **Lighter Side** articles to more humorous transportation related stories. I have challenged TMC staff by asking them to write a titillating transportation related story that can be included at the end of the newsletter. I will treat the TMC staff member whose story is chosen each month to lunch as a display of my appreciation. I am sure they have many interesting tidbits to share with us that will shed light on things we could never imagine.

In the next few months I will also update everyone on some major developments and progress with our ITS program. The wind sensors have been a huge hit, the Bluetooth devices are almost ready for full use, the new RTMC project has gotten further than it ever had in the past, the Philips Highway project is almost complete thereby giving us the opportunity to dynamically maneuver traffic between two major corridors (I-95 and US 1) and it appears that managed lanes has worked its way up the coast from Miami with anticipation that Jacksonville will be utilizing this type of system in the next few years. I will address these projects and the Transportation System Management & Operations program information beginning in August.

Pete Vega  
District 2 ITS Engineer



### **NORTH FLORIDA TPO**

The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization's projects are keeping us very busy as of late. The Philips Highway project is winding down as it nears the 90% field review. The College Drive project has picked up steam and should be completed on schedule. Design for the Airport Road project is complete and is currently on schedule to be advertised this month. The letting date for this project is October and construction should begin no later than January.

The Jaxport projects are at 50% design with relatively minor problems to overcome. The design for the US 17 project from Creighton Road to County Road 220 has begun. The Transit Signal Priority purchases for JTA should commence in early August. The Department will begin construction of the Arterial Dynamic Message Sign project on various arterial roadways sometime in September. The wireless connection across the Intracoastal Waterway that will link the beach signal system to the mainland is nearly complete. "Whew, they are keeping us kind of busy – wouldn't you say?"

I am proud to say that the bridge wind sensor investment made by the NFTPO has and will continue to pay huge dividends for the north Florida region. We've gotten more media coverage for this project than one could have imagined and the response has been nothing less than spectacular from everyone in this region. The customized website is 90% complete and access has been provided to key partners on the TIM team. It's been like night and day when compared to the original website provided by NOAA.

The next step is to validate the accuracy of these wind sensors against hand held anemometers. The TMC Consultant has been

tasked with this investigation but unfortunately has had little luck with the windy days as of late. There were a couple of times where thunderstorms rolled in but I'd guess to say it wouldn't be the wisest decision to stand on the middle of a bridge with lightning and heavy rain all around you. They did have a chance to compare low wind condition readings and the data seemed promising so far.

As for the Bluetooth, we decided to take a little hiatus until the upgraded equipment began to arrive from TrafficCast. The ITS Maintenance contractor is back at it with the installations and the results shown on the speed map are very promising. The southeast quadrant of Jacksonville should be completed by the end of July and the southwest portion done by late August. The remainder of the work will be finished by the Fall, just ahead of the holiday season. The best thing that I look forward to on this project will be when the pairings are finally complete so that we can begin to look at origin/destination data. This will give us a fairly good idea on which sections of north Florida impact traffic conditions the most.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

A Surety Company is now responsible for completion of the Phase 7 Project on the I-295 Eastern Beltway between I-95 and Atlantic Blvd. It is believed that they are getting close to hiring a company to complete the ITS work for this project. With an agreement expected to be in place in the next few weeks, work is anticipated to begin in August. It is currently unknown how long it will take to finish the project but work is expected to proceed at a quick pace as the project is already out of contract time. Completion of this project is eagerly anticipated by several of the local ITS Coalition members,



### **CONSTRUCTION continued**

as the project will enable fiber connections between various port facilities in the area with FDOT District 2 ITS as well as providing ITS coverage of this area of I-295, which is vital to truck traffic coming to and leaving from JaxPort.

The Phase 8 Project, on I-295 from I-95 South to I-10, continues to be on pace for an early Fall completion. The contractor completed installation of conduit and pull boxes and has been able to begin installing the fiber optic cable backbone. The contractor is also installing the device cabinets, which will then allow them to install the fiber cable drops from the backbone to the individual cabinets. Once all fiber optic cable is installed the contractor is required to test the entire fiber optic communications system. Also, a manufacturer has been listed on the Qualified Products List for manufacturing spun concrete CCTV poles. The contractor has ordered the CCTV poles for the project and they are in line to be manufactured within the next few weeks. Once completed, this project will finish the ITS installations on the Western Beltway of I-295.

The Phase 9 Project, on SR 9A from Atlantic Blvd going south to the southern SR 9A/I-95 Interchange, has completed the design phase. Signed and sealed plans were submitted to FDOT on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The Project will be advertised in July, with a mandatory pre-bid meeting on August 20<sup>th</sup> followed by the project letting in September. It is anticipated that construction will begin in early 2013.

The Phillips Highway (US 1) Project, on US1 from Greenland Road going north to Wishart Road, continues to progress. Crews have completed work on most of the major items of work and all of the CCTV cameras and Arterial Dynamic Message Signs have been installed.

Acceptance Testing is expected to begin in August and following completion of minor items of work to ensure all work is satisfactorily completed and completion of the burn-in period, project acceptance will be granted barring any issues.

The College Drive Project includes the installation of fiber optic cable along College Drive, a small section of CR 220 and Sleepy Hollow Road to provide a communications link from the Clay County Traffic Operations Center to Blanding Blvd. The contractor has installed all of the conduit and the CCTV cameras and is almost complete with the pull box installations. Once the pull boxes are installed the contractor will begin pulling in the fiber optic cable to provide communications throughout the project corridor. Although the project is a few weeks behind schedule, they hope to complete the project within contract time.

The Arterial Dynamic Message Sign (ADMS) Project has been awarded to Traffic Control Devices. This project will install various sizes of ADMS on arterials around the southern area of Jacksonville to provide traffic information to motorists and assist with signing for detour routing during Interstate closures and other events causing heavy congestion and delays in the area. Construction is anticipated to begin in the Fall with project completion in 2013.

Some future projects to be looking forward to include, Fiber Optic connections to the Talleyrand and Blount Island Port facilities, Fiber Optic connection to Jacksonville International Airport and new ITS devices and fiber optic cable relocation within the I-95/I-10 Interchange. More information will be provided regarding these projects as they near construction.

John Kell  
District 2 ITS Construction Project Manager



**MAINTENANCE**

The ITS maintenance contractor, Traffic Control Devices (TCD), has installed 10 CCTV poles along I-75 in Alachua County from just North of SR 222 going South to Payne’s Prairie. These CCTV poles will be outfitted with CCTV cameras, device cabinets, solar panels and wireless communications antennas within the next month by City of Gainesville Traffic Operations personnel. This project is a combined effort of FDOT District 2 ITS and City of Gainesville Traffic Operations to get streaming video coverage of the I-75 corridor in this area. The first CCTV on this corridor was installed on an existing Cantilever sign support on I-75 at Williston Road.



District 2 is able to get these images through a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection between the District 2 Traffic Management Center and the City of Gainesville Traffic Management Center (TMC). District 2 personnel are trying to get a dedicated fiber link in place between the two TMCs to increase the bandwidth and allow more camera images and data to be shared between the two agencies.

TCD has been installing the new Bluetooth vehicle detectors, BlueTOADs, on I-295, US 17 and several other arterial roadway locations around Jacksonville. The latest units being

deployed are considerably easier to install than the original version of the device. The newest version uses Power Over Ethernet (POE) technology to be able to mount the entire unit on a pole or structure and connect the device to a switch in the device cabinet by running an Ethernet cable from the device to the cabinet. The older units had to be installed in the cabinet and a thick antenna cable had to be run to an antenna, which was placed on a pole or structure near the cabinet. The thickness of the antenna cable often times made it very difficult to install the devices in desirable locations. By the middle of fall TCD will have all of the units installed and the complete system of 140+ devices will be providing critical travel time data to the TMC. This will allow the TMC personnel to get motorists accident and congestion information to make their commutes easier.

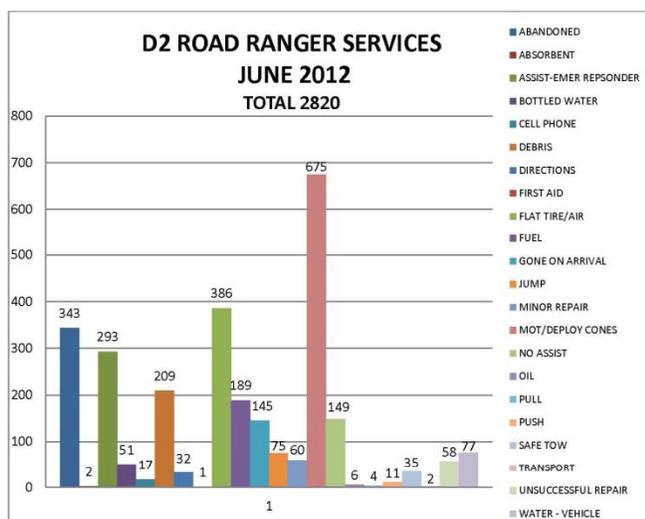
Finally, JEA had changed their power service routing in the area south of the Southern I-295/I-95 Interchange, which had disconnected the power for two DMS and several other devices in the area. The services had been down quite some time and JEA insisted that FDOT change the way that they received power to these devices. As a result, TCD was given the task of coordinating with JEA to get the power services restored to these devices. TCD worked with JEA and accommodated their requests for new electrical pull boxes and larger conduits to receive power at these sites. JEA has made the necessary connections and these devices are now in service providing vital video, data and traveler information services for this normally congested segment of roadway.

Kevin Jackson  
ITS Field Specialist



## ROAD RANGER UPDATE

Proving, yet again, their value to our Traffic Incident Management, the Road Ranger Operators assisted 2820 motorists in the month of June 2012.



At the time of service, motorists are given postage paid comment cards pre-addressed to FDOT Central Office so comments can be made and tracked for the services rendered and each yearly quarter a report is sent out to all Districts. According to the *Comment Card Report* for our Road Rangers during April through June 2012, the comment cards received show our motorists are pleased with the services received (as seen in the chart below.)

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES PROVIDED:

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	504	97.86	97.86
Good	5	0.97	98.83
Fair	0	0	98.83
Poor	0	0	98.83
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>98.83</b>	
No Response	6	1.17	
<b>Total</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## RISC – RAPID INCIDENT SCENE CLEARANCE - UPDATE

Having the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance Program in place is truly making a difference in our scene clearance times. Because of this program, crash scenes are being cleared faster thus making our motorists safer and happier. With the large rotator wreckers and other equipment required by this contract, vehicles and debris are moved faster and travel lanes are opened most times within our Local Open Roads Policy goal.

On June 26<sup>th</sup> University Towing responded to an incident on I-75 at MM 415 to clear a jackknifed semi truck. With the assistance of other Traffic Incident Team members, all travel lanes were cleared and opened with the 90 minute goal set by our Local Open Roads Policy.

Southern Wrecker was called to a RISC incident on July 10<sup>th</sup> at I-10 WB, MM 341. This incident was debriefed at the First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team Meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Great work was done by all incident responders as detour routes were activated.

Thanks to all incident responders for the great teamwork and success!



Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (R.I.S.C.)

Donna Danson  
District 2 ITS Program Manager



**TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (TIM) UPDATE**

**ALACHUA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

Our next Alachua Incident Management Team meeting will be held August 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM at the Gainesville Operations Office, 5301 NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Gainesville, FL. Since we will be completing our *FHWA Traffic Incident Team Assessment* we will be meeting in the large conference room. We have had a productive year and to properly assess our Team's score, we need all members present. Immediately following the regular Team meeting we will be conducting the debrief meeting for our June 26<sup>th</sup>, I-75 Rapid Incident Scene Clearance incident.

**FIRST COAST TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE**

The First Coast Traffic Incident Management Team held its June meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>. After reports from our team agencies, incidents were debriefed followed by our bi-monthly report of performance measures. Peter Vega gave a presentation on our new RWIS Bridge Sensors and Ryan Crist gave a presentation explaining how the SunGuide software and FHP CAD software merge together to assist in the monitoring of incidents.

Craig Carnes, Metric Engineering, led the Team members in completing the *FHWA Traffic Incident Management Team Assessment*. With participation from all members, scores were placed on the form. A copy of the completed form will be sent to all members when all notes and scores have been input.

Announcements: WebEOC Training – Date to be announced

*Our condolences to Team Member Greg Gaylord and Southern Wrecker and Recovery, LLC for the loss of professional wrecker driver, Terry McCart. May you receive comfort in your time of healing.*



Above, Pete Vega giving update on projects; Below, Ryan Crist giving overview of SunGuide

**D2 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.*

**D2 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.*



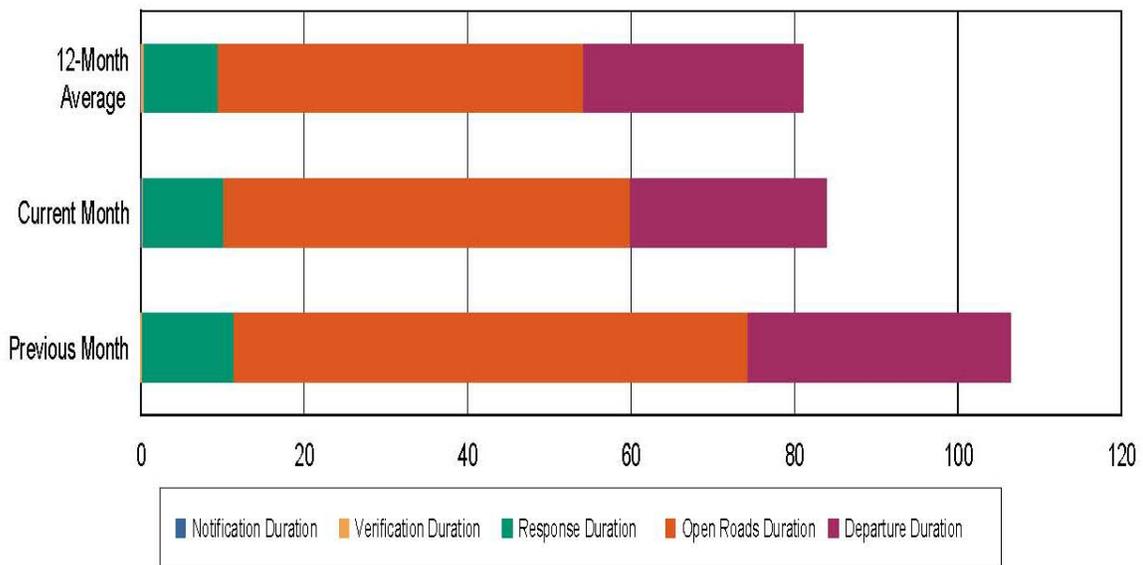
**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The June Newsletter did not include the “typical” articles that are normally in the Newsletter and therefore the Performance Measures article was not written. When doing the Performance Measures article each month we always look for trends, but also look for things that stick out as being out of the ordinary. This being the article for July, I won’t talk in depth about June, but let me tell you, the excessive rainfall during the month really did a number on our key Performance Measures for the month of June. Open Roads Duration, Roadway Clearance Duration and Incident Clearance Durations for the month of June were all more than 20 minutes longer than the previous 12 month average. Keeping in mind that we had several road closures, including I-10 in both directions, due to flooding, which resulted in these excessive average durations, the incident responders did a good job of responding to incidents and clearing the roads as quickly as possible.

With a considerable reduction in the amount of rain for the month of July, schools still out for the summer, and our Emergency Responders doing a great job, we have seen our key Performance Measures looking much better than in June as can be seen in the following graph, below.

The month of July was slightly above the 12-Month Average for our 3 key Performance Measures and when looking through the events for July one event clearly contributed to the higher than average times. The response and clean-up for the semi that overturned on I-10 Westbound beyond US 301 lasted for a total of 27 hours. The lane closures required to upright and remove the semi and trailer along with the need to remove the load of small plastic bottle forms from the travel lanes were long enough to cause the Open Roads Duration, Roadway Clearance Duration and Incident Clearance Durations to be skewed for the entire month.

Incident Duration Summary





### OPERATIONS

Traffic Signal Operations hit the ground running back in March of this year. Eight Operators were hired and trained, within weeks, to staff the Clay County, City of Jacksonville and the City of Gainesville Traffic Signal Offices. The Signal Staff (management included) went in with a basic concept of how monitoring Signals could benefit the motorists of those communities but we all had very little knowledge of the ATMS.NOW software that is used to do such tasks. Carlton Copeland, Mike Jamemes and, when he isn't traveling the world, Matt Weisman have been critical in the training and providing the Signal Staff with significant insight into Operations and signal timing. Controller issues are monitored and problems are reported back to the staff or, in some circumstances, maintenance trucks are dispatched for repair. Cameras, FHP Troop pages and Police Department websites are monitored for incidents that might cause traffic congestion issues. These incidents are reported to the proper office to see if a change in signal timing could help clear some of the traffic queue. For lane blocking events the Dynamic Message Signs and floodgates are posted to the 511 system and are utilized to inform motorists of traffic conditions. When a broader grasp of the ATMS.NOW software is achieved duties will be expanded as needed.

Traffic Signal Operations work with the District 2 TMC to make sure that City and State roads are working jointly to minimize traffic delays. The best example of this was when I-295 northbound north of Blanding had a complete closure. Clay County and the City of Jacksonville Offices were notified and they were able to change signal timing and post to their arterial Dynamic Message signs of the issue on I-295. The

signals that would allow people to turn onto I-295 northbound were removed from rotation since traffic could not turn on that ramp at that point. With a complete closure of an Interstate you cannot expect there to be no congestion but it was drastically minimized due to the coordination between the TMC and the two Traffic Signal Offices. Circumstances like this really show the true benefit of the coordination and partnerships.

District 2's venture into Traffic Signal Operations has been enlightening and has increased the performance of the D2 TMC. There is still a great deal to learn about ATMS.NOW and Traffic Signals but we are on our way. The most difficult step is usually the first and with that out of the way I look forward to picking up the pace and offering more to the Signal Offices and the motorists of the three communities we are working within.

Without ITS devices outside of Jacksonville (and parts of Jacksonville) the TMC depends on FDOT and FHP personnel to give us traffic information reports. You can reach our 24/7 line at (904)359-6842 or our work day line at (904)360-5465. You can now also leave feedback on the Next Generation 511 system about road conditions and bugs you may find in the system that is relayed to our operators in real time. Remember the story above and

**“Know Before You Go! Dial 511”.**

**Ryan Crist**  
**TMC Lead Supervisor**



## MARKETING

It's time to fill up the tank and head out for one last hooray before summer ends and school is back in session. And, if you're looking to stay local, yet still escape the heat, you can join us at the Avenues Mall Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> for the Shadco Safety Fair in conjunction with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. There will be a number of displays inside the mall (including the 511 booth) and a host of service vehicles (including the JSO helicopter) outside the mall. Every year, JSO gives out free bike helmets to kids and other safety related items to the hundreds of mall visitors who come out in support of the safety fair. We're proud to be partnering with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office again for this exciting event.

This past month we had the privilege of visiting Landstar's southside campus along with representatives from the Mayo Clinic. This was quite an honor since we were the only other vendor to be asked to share space with Mayo. We value the relationships we've established over the years with Jacksonville's elite leaders, and we look forward to continuing these partnerships. One new relationship we established this month was with the Nursing Department at the University of North Florida. We attended their "poster ceremony" for up and

coming graduates and were met with enthusiasm and immense hospitality in their beautiful University Center conference room just off the Kernan Boulevard entrance.

Next month we'll be heading over to the Teacher Supply Depot for their annual Back to School giveaway on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Last year over 700 teachers lined up to get free school supplies for their classrooms, and the 511 Marketing Team will once again be on hand to give out pens, sticky notes and highlighters as these teachers prepare for the upcoming school year.

Whatever you do to round out your summer travel plans, make sure you begin your trip with a call to 511. You can also log onto [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com) or download our free 511 Traffic App. It's available for use with iPhone, iPad or iPod devices. Simply go to the iTunes store and search "Florida 511." As always, we welcome your comments, thoughts and suggestions.

***Know before you go and keep moving!***

Sherri Byrd  
Marketing Manager



511 and Mayo visit Landstar!



511 goes to the School of Nursing at U.N.F.



### “WILL WRITE FOR FOOD”

*Editor’s Note: Since our illustrious boss (Pete Vega has written the inaugural article for our new feature, this gives us a month for you, the reader, to come up with the name of this new feature. Lunch at the award winning “On the Fly” Food Truck to the winning entry. If you aren’t sure what I’m talking about, read below and read the ITS Engineer’s notes this month!*

Since I volunteered to be the Guinea Pig for this new feature guess I'd better put it all on the limb by sharing some very personal information (related to transportation of course!). I have been driving for over 32 years and have yet to be the cause of an accident. I have been rear ended twice in my life and on both occasions it was due to the other driver being distracted. While driving, I try to avoid using my cell phone, never attempt to text message, shy away from the “two-elbow” dinner and always keep my hands in the two/ten position.

How and why did I get to this point? Well it's due to some previous experiences during my younger days. The first event was when I was eight-years old growing up in Manhattan. I attended a private catholic school that closed the ends of the street when they let us out for recreation. There were cars parked along the road (mainly the teachers' vehicles) but it always seemed to be safe. One day a few of us were playing tag and I came bolting out between two cars when “BAM!” I was run over by a bicyclist. After getting over the stars in my head I rose up to learn that this idiot was driving his twelve-speed bike full throttle down the road even though he saw all the kids running around.

My torso was black and blue all over so I figured it could earn some sympathy from the parents. I was expecting a toy, some ice cream or extra

attention when I got home. You guessed it! Instead I received a spanking and punishment for this accident. I kept hearing “we’ve told you to look both ways when out in the street” and “you should be paying closer attention!” At the time that lesson didn’t kick in but over time I realized that the roadway is a dangerous place and unless I wanted to be road kill I needed to be aware of my surroundings.

Did I learn anything from this experience? Not! Instead, at the age of 14 there was another bicycle experience where I was the driver. I mastered the art of carrying baseball gear, a bottle of soda and no handle bar riding. That is until a car came out of a drive way, I hit it square on the side, went flying over the hood and landed on my back. I was impressed that the bottle did not break but was disappointed to learn a new bike would be needed in the future. Fortunately, I was too old for a spanking but still ended up on restriction.

So, at the age of 17 I was fully prepared for the open road. That is until I developed a crush on Trish Williams. I knew that each afternoon she would be at the Community Center swimming pool practicing with the high school team. Since I did not own a car yet I did constant drive-bys on the sidewalk next to the pool, trying to get a glimpse of Trish on the starting blocks. Did this daily (with both hands on the handle-bar!) until one day she looked my way as I was riding by and waved to me. I tried to return the favor but as my hand rose.....WHAM!.....my head and shoulders rammed right into the concrete light pole. Embarrassing? Yeah. Painful? Only in my head. Educational? I have never forgotten and since that day have never been involved in an accident that was due to my mistake.

Pete Vega  
Safe Driver



***ITS Calendar of Upcoming Events***

**ALACHUA TIM MEETING**

**AUGUST 8, 2012; 10AM**

**FDOT GAINESVILLE OPERATIONS OFFICE – 5301 N.E. 39<sup>TH</sup> AVE- GAINESVILLE 352-381-4300**

**FIRST COAST TIM MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2012; 10AM**

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

**TRANSP0-2012**

**OCTOBER 28-31, 2012**

**HYATT REGENCY COCONUT POINT, BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA**



[www.fl511.com](http://www.fl511.com)

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