



SUNGUIDE® DISSEMINATOR

Florida Department of Transportation's Traffic Engineering and Operations Newsletter



Improving on Fog/Smoke Notifications

By Peter Vega, FDOT District Two

On January 29, 2012, an unfortunate accident occurred along a stretch of I-75 within the Paynes Prairie area that claimed the lives of 11 individuals. A mixture of fog and smoke enmeshed this area in a matter of minutes, leading to near zero visibility within the prairie limits and little to no advanced warning for motorists. In March 2012, State Representative Keith Perry spearheaded a Florida State Legislative bill to provide \$3 million of funding for the deployment of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) equipment along this area of I-75 and US 441 with a goal of avoiding similar events in the future.



*Smokey conditions near Paynes Prairie on U.S. 441.
(Photo courtesy of Donna Green-Townsend, WUFT)*

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is using a systems manager approach whereby FDOT purchases, tests, integrates, and configures the 12 visibility sensors, 15 closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, two thermal imaging cameras, 21 vehicle detection systems, and five dynamic message signs being placed around the Paynes Prairie area. A low bid contract was awarded for the installation of structures, conduit infrastructure, and over 12 miles of fiber optic communication. The Gainesville and Jacksonville transportation management centers will be monitoring the system 24/7 for roadway incidents and potential fog/smoke events in the future. The objective was to provide advanced warning to motorists when traffic congestion or low visibility conditions were present along I-75 or US 441.

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I-75 in the Paynes Prairie area.

On the afternoon of January 21st, FDOT's District Two office held a groundbreaking ceremony at the I-75 southbound rest area near the northern limits of this project. State Secretary Prasad, District Two Secretary Evans, and Representative Perry gave inspirational speeches on the reasons for and goals of this deployment. The ITS staff provided table top displays of all the equipment being deployed with the exception of a dynamic message sign. Instead of a 30 by 8 foot sign, we showed them the inner workings of this device. We also incorporated a temporary installation of a thermal imaging/CCTV camera at the rest area to display the features of this technology. All attendees were allowed to play with the camera to get a feel for the features of this device.

When the groundbreaking ceremony ended, the focus was set for a quick and effective project that could help avoid similar events to what occurred on January 29, 2012. We anticipate that this deployment will be completed by February 2015, but hope to have access to the system by the end of this calendar year. Once the system is up and running several of our Alachua County traffic incident management members will be given access to the CCTV cameras, visibility sensor data, and detector information for better management of any incidents that may occur.

For information, please contact Mr. Vega at (904) 360-5463 or e-mail to Peter.Vega@dot.state.fl.us.

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Secretary Ananth Prasad and District Secretary Greg Evans stand with Representative Keith Perry and Alachua Sheriff Sadie Darnell to kick off the ITS project on I-75 and US 441 in the Paynes Prairie area.

Modifying SunGuide® Software for a Fog Warning System

By Clay Packard, Atkins

Currently, Florida is among the top states with collisions due to fog, smoke, and heavy rain. Most recently in January 2012, a fog-related crash on I-75 in the Paynes Prairie area near Gainesville resulted in a pile-up of dozens of cars and tractor trailers, which resulted in 11 deaths and 18 people hospitalized with injuries. This was not the first occurrence of a fog-related incident in Florida. In the early hours on January 9, 2008, drivers on I-4 in Polk County also encountered fog smoke resulting in 70 cars and trucks colliding with five deaths and 38 injuries. These two incidents alone have demonstrated the need for a fog warning system.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is working on a fog warning system that will automatically detect fog conditions and warn motorists. Motorists will be warned by flashing beacons attached to static signs that read “Fog ahead when flashing.” Another way to alert motorists is by posting “Fog Advisory Ahead” on dynamic message signs (DMS). Fog can occur so quickly that this warning should happen automatically without operator intervention; then an operator can jump in to observe and fine-tune the response. Other detailed objectives of a fog warning system include setting specific thresholds of what fog intensity is needed to activate warning messages, determining when to deactivate warnings, archiving fog conditions and their warning responses, and interfacing with a transportation management center (TMC) operator. The TMC operator will have the ability to configure the fog intensity thresholds, observe the fog conditions, and fine-tune the warning response to motorists.

SunGuide® software currently reads information from road weather information system (RWIS) devices and displays weather conditions to the TMC operator. SunGuide software also has the architecture and generic components that would be helpful to fulfill the objectives of a fog warning system for the Paynes Prairie area. However, in order to fully satisfy these objectives, the software requires several enhancements.

FDOT will modify SunGuide software to support the National Transportation Communications for Intelligent Transportation Systems Protocol (NTCIP) 1204 version 3 released in October 2009. This is the newer version used to communicate with RWIS devices. Originally, SunGuide software only supported NTCIP 1204 version 2.18 released in April 2004. Modifying the software to support NTCIP 1204 version 3 will allow SunGuide software to communicate with the fog sensors used in the Paynes Prairie area and any other RWIS device using this protocol. This will also afford more choices for RWIS deployments, including newer devices available on the market.



Bad weather can result in poor visibility on Florida's roadways.

FDOT will also modify SunGuide software to automatically post warning messages on DMSs and to automatically flash beacons on static signs to read “Fog Ahead When Flashing.” While this will happen automatically, the software will utilize the existing alerting and event management subsystems that the TMC operator is accustomed to using. The operator will immediately take over the event, observe the information reported by the device, and fine-tune or terminate the response to motorists as needed.

RWIS devices on the operator map will have a visual indicator when weather conditions have exceeded a configured threshold. This indicates that the device is in an alarm state. Beacons will also have icons on the operator map with an indicator when they are active and flashing.

These modifications are designed in a generic way so that they will benefit other RWIS and intelligent transportation systems applications and deployments. High wind speeds over bridges and portable smoke sensors will utilize configured thresholds to generate alerts and automatically activate response plans. Wrong-way driving detection alarms will also reuse these modifications with a different detection device rather than thresholds.

Automatically activated response plans may allow warning messages to be posted in time for motorists to be warned before entering into dangerous driving conditions. Without automated messages, there is a possibility that warnings may not be posted in time for all potentially impacted motorists to receive the message. Sometimes, a warning message is all it takes to make motorists aware and careful, thus saving lives.

For information, please contact Mr. Derek Vollmer at (850) 410-5615 or e-mail to Derek.Vollmer@dot.state.fl.us.

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Florida Moves Forward with Automated Vehicle Technology

By Tanner Martin, FDOT Systems Planning Office

The Florida Engineering Society, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research, and the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority held the first annual Florida Automated Vehicles Summit in Tampa on November 14-15, 2013. The partnership was formed to bring transportation professionals, academics, and private industry up to speed on the cutting-edge trends regarding autonomous vehicles and connected vehicles. Discussions were held to help these stakeholders begin to address the challenges and opportunities that this technology will present on public roadways in Florida. Autonomous vehicle technology may offer substantial improvements to safety and congestion management, furthering FDOT's vision to serve "the people of Florida by delivering a transportation system that is fatality and congestion free."



The first annual Florida Automated Vehicles Summit.



FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad kicked off the meeting.

Day one of the summit featured national leaders in the industry as speakers. FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad kicked off the day-and-a-half meeting with a thought-provoking statement linking the evolution of the airline industry to the potential path that similar technology could take on our roadways. Dr. Alain Kornhauser of Princeton University followed with the keynote speech on the history and evolution of autonomous vehicles. He suggested that this technology could be the single greatest advancement in addressing a majority of state transportation departments' missions to increase safety and reduce congestion. Tom Bamonte with the North Texas Toll Authority then spoke about managed lanes as the primary approach to use when implementing this technology. He said that there are many skeptics out there and then offered a variety of ways to address and calm their concerns. Finally, Dana Reiding with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles spoke about how her department has begun to address the regulation of this technology from a licensing standpoint. Many issues still exist, she advised, such as liability constraints, insurance unknowns, and machine versus human accountability issues.

Day two of the summit featured leaders from the automotive industry, technology companies, public agencies, and strategic consultants. Anthony Levandowski with Google kicked off the day with a discussion about the development of their self-driving car. He talked about some of the obstacles Google has overcome and the constraints that state transportation departments should address in order for the technology to reach its full potential. He hypothesized what cars may have looked like if computers were invented before the automobile. Dan Frakes with General Motors then presented what GM has done to pursue the technology, and what research and development has looked like from an original equipment manufacturer's perspective. Next, Dr. John Dolan with Carnegie Mellon University discussed their involvement in the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Challenge and the university's activities to date. He then introduced the crowd of 200 to the new Cadillac SRX, which they have outfitted with sensors and computers — the only way to tell that the SRX has autonomous technology is a large red button labeled 'Off.'



Local Tampa auto dealers showcased vehicles that currently offer automation.

Jim Wright with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials then gave a state department of transportation perspective on ways to address the implementation of this technology and discussed guidance offered by the U.S. Department of Transportation and other federal programs. Chunka Mui of the Devil's Advocate Group introduced the audience to the potential economic opportunities that this technology could have at the national level. He mentioned that the best innovators "think big, start small, and learn fast," alluding to the idea that public agencies could greatly benefit from this amazing technology. Next up on the agenda, Jill Jamieson with Deloitte Consulting talked about various options for public-private partnerships and how the innovative application of resources could help governments do more for less.

FDOT Assistant Secretary for Intermodal Systems Development Rich Biter led a panel discussion with State Senator Jeffrey Brandes, who sponsored Florida's legislation regarding the legal testing of autonomous vehicles on public roadways. Other panelists included Brian Soublet with the California Department of Motor Vehicles, Collin Castle with the Michigan Department of Transportation, Dana Reiding with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and Mark Wilson with FDOT. Their discussion focused on lessons learned from other agencies and how Florida can increase the rate of adoption of autonomous vehicle technology. Additionally information was shared on implementing this technology for military applications and there was discussion on the framework needed to implement pilot projects in Florida. Specific pilot projects have not yet been formulated; however, the premise will be to structure each project using the scientific method to measure the potential safety and efficiency gains with quantifiable data.

Throughout the two-day event, attendees were able to view exhibits. Schools with autonomous vehicle research displays included the University of Florida, Texas A&M

Transportation Institute, the University of South Florida, and Embry Riddle University. A few local Tampa auto dealers showcased vehicles that currently offer levels 1 and/or 2 automation as defined by the National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration, including; Bill Currie Ford, Ed Morse Cadillac, Lexus of Tampa Bay, Mastro Subaru, and Tampa Mitsubishi. These options are largely offered as safety and/or convenience packages by the automobile industry. Level 1 automation includes electronic stability control, adaptive cruise control, and active lane centering. Level 2 automation includes any of the above-mentioned features working simultaneously.

Moving forward, FDOT will continue to pursue the framework for implementing this technology on Florida's roadways by establishing a host of working groups to study the opportunities and challenges presented by autonomous vehicle technology. These working groups will consist of statewide stakeholders and transportation and engineering academics that will be tasked with research and pilot projects to help address potential autonomous vehicle issues firsthand. The pilot projects will help reveal both the opportunities and challenges of introducing autonomous vehicles onto Florida's roadways in order to better guide wide-scale adoption of the technology. FDOT will continue to keep a pulse on what other agencies, states, and countries are doing regarding autonomous vehicle technology and will encourage partnerships to leverage opportunities to help realize maximum safety and efficiency benefits.

The next Florida Automated Vehicle summit is tentatively scheduled for October 2014. Updated information will be available on FDOT's web site (currently under development) in the near future.

For information, please contact Mr. Ed Hutchinson at (850) 414-4900 or e-mail to Ed.Hutchinson@dot.state.fl.us.

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District Four Highlights Another Successful Year in 2013 Annual Report

By Dong Chen, FDOT District Four

It took a lot of strategic planning, strong leadership, and smart budgeting in 2013 for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Unit to start deployment of several major new projects.

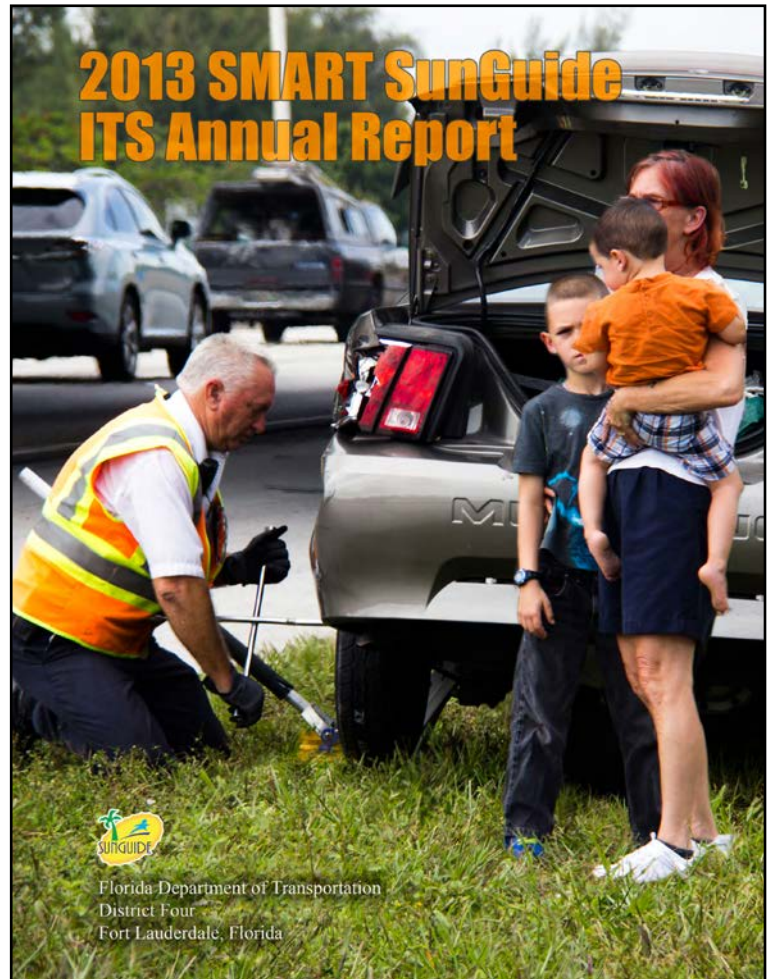
After years of research and development, the Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC) is prepared for the start of deployment of several major new projects, including I-75 Express Lanes, Phase 2 of the I-95 Express Lanes, and I-595 Express Lanes. To support these projects FDOT District Four has decided to design and develop, using FDOT and Federal Highway Administration systems engineering guidelines, a robust and scalable 'next generation' dynamic pricing software platform – a software foundation for the deployment of express lanes across the state. This broad-based platform will address fundamental challenges in traffic operations, enabling new standards of commuting for millions of travelers each day.

In order to keep up with the entire ITS infrastructure for today's and tomorrow's systems, we were also able to boost operational efficiency and agility by virtualizing all infrastructure servers supporting the application servers for SunGuide® software, an advanced traffic management system software that allows FDOT to control and monitor roadside equipment, vehicle resources, and incidents. With this technology, District Four has established a fully portable and highly available backend datacenter to support the dynamic needs of ITS communications.

These and other accomplishments are highlighted in the 2013 SMART SunGuide ITS Annual Report. The theme of this report, quite suitably, is "Committed to Customer Service." This report is available on the SMART SunGuide web site at <http://www.smartsunguide.com/SmartDocs.aspx>.

One of the highlights of the 2013 SMART SunGuide ITS Annual Report is the benefit-cost ratio. This important measure shows the value of the dividends passed along to motorists on FDOT District Four's investments in its ITS. The 2013 benefit-cost ratio was 9.88. This means each dollar spent on ITS improvements generated \$9.88 worth of benefits. Motorists received these dividends primarily in the form of time and fuel savings from various programs within the ITS Unit. Road Ranger service patrols, for example, assisted with traffic control at thousands of incidents—easing delays and restoring normal traffic flow as quickly as possible.

The change in the benefit-cost ratio in 2013 is attributable to the completion of the Dynamic Message Sign Replacement project and the inclusion of its annualized costs. Another significant change in the list of elements that make up the annual benefit-cost ratio was the value of the Palm Beach County I-95 ITS project, which was calculated for the first time this year. Based on the reduction of travel delay, the value of the Palm Beach County I-95 ITS project totaled \$3,287,070 in 2013. With ITS devices on the road in Palm Beach County, traffic can be better managed and any disturbances resolved faster. Traffic information is also collected and shared with the public, allowing motorists to make informed decisions and not lose valuable time sitting in traffic.



A key performance measure of any ITS program is incident clearance time. Once again, District Four continued its record of continuous improvement with an average clearance time of 53.4 minutes, a one percent improvement from 54.8 minutes in 2012.

The District Four ITS Unit's "no challenge is too great" attitude attracted the attention of national and state partners throughout the year. The Intelligent Transportation Society of America recognized the District's Wide Power Distribution System and Maintenance of Communication Plan with their Outstanding Achievement Awards. Because of District Four's eyes on the road, CCTV cameras as well as other devices, are dependent on power, the District took preventive measures to eliminate downtime due to power outages. This also benefits the public by maintaining traveler information services along key corridors. Additionally, the Maintenance of Communication Plan has pre-defined operational procedures, directing how FDOT and its contractors will handle the ITS infrastructure before, during, and after interstate construction projects. The plan also benefits the public by maintaining traveler information services and incident management from the RTMC along key corridors.

For information, please contact Dong Chen at (954) 847-2785 or email to Dong.Chen@dot.state.fl.us.

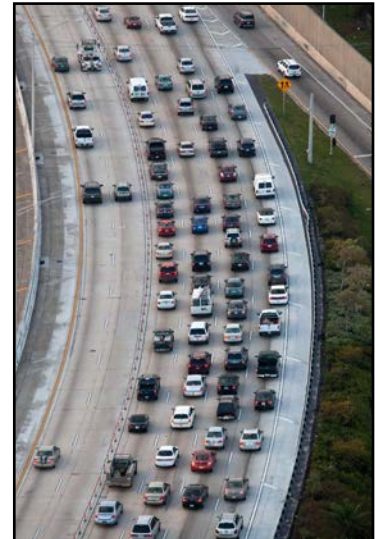
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District Six Reconfigures Communication System, Reduces Program Costs

By Javier Rodriguez, FDOT District Six

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Office recently finished a device improvement project, which included enhancements to its communications system in southeast Florida.

District Six looked into the existing dynamic message sign (DMS) communications infrastructure along various cross streets approaching I-95 in Miami-Dade County with the goal of leveraging its resources to improve the system's operational efficiency and reduce recurring costs. This effort required careful analysis on behalf of District staff since the system serves as the main conduit between the field devices and traffic operators at the SunGuide® Regional Transportation Management Center. Any disruption to this system could potentially impact traffic operations for I-95 and 95 Express, which carries approximately 300,000 vehicles per day.



I-95 in Miami-Dade County.



Operator at the SunGuide Regional Transportation Management Center.

Upon completing the analysis, the District disconnected leased telephone based communications circuits at eight strategic locations along the highway. It replaced these circuits with wireless communications devices to maintain the system reliability and avoid dependency on a third party utility. This reconfiguration is allowing the District to save approximately \$49,000 annually resulting in a 61 percent reduction in utility costs. The ultimate goal is to eliminate leased circuits. This improvement will allow the District to invest these savings on other projects to continue its goal to expand and enhance the ITS program in southeast Florida.

For information, please contact Mr. Rodriguez at (305) 470-5757 or e-mail to Javier.Rodriguez2@dot.state.fl.us.

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Android App Joins Suite of FL511 Traffic Resources

By Gene Glotzbach, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) recently introduced a Florida 511 mobile app for Android devices to its suite of 511 traffic resources. The new app, along with the iPhone app, 511 phone call, web site, and Twitter feeds, allows FDOT to provide traffic information to residents and visitors in the manner that best fits their lifestyle.

The Android app was highly anticipated after FDOT released its 511 iPhone app in 2011. With the launch of the Android app, the majority of smartphone users now have the capability to have traffic updates at their fingertips. The Android app can be downloaded for free at the Google Play store.



Android App Functionality

The 511 mobile app uses global positioning system (GPS) tracking to provide users with traffic information within miles of their current location. Users can set the app to provide information for a range of up to 200 miles, view traffic in a select city or county by typing in a desired location, or receive traffic information based on their registered My Florida 511 custom routes. Travel-time information is also available based on location and direction of travel.

The Android app design is based on the iPhone app, and the functionality is very similar. Users can navigate the app by selecting one of four icons: Settings, Traffic, Travel Times, and Feedback.

Settings

The settings menu allows the user to customize the app. The user can enter their My Florida 511 primary phone number and link to their account. This allows them to receive information based on their profile and customized routes.

The user can also modify the mileage range for updates, whether to receive construction information, and whether to have the events within their set range play

Bowl Game Fans Turn to 511 for Game-Day Traffic Updates

Florida hosted six bowl games at the conclusion of the 2013 college football season—more than any other state. Football fans from across the nation traveled to Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, St. Petersburg, and Tampa to cheer on their teams—many of which traveled by auto or rented a vehicle upon arrival and took to the state's major roadways.

To help fans navigate game-day traffic, the Florida Department of Transportation conducted outreach to visiting universities and bowl game organizers to provide Florida's 511 advanced traveler information systems marketing toolkit that included customized video public service announcements, web site copy, newsletter articles, and social media posts. News releases encouraging fans to use 511 also were distributed to the media prior to each bowl game.

The outreach effort was successful with 16 web site and social media posts about 511, resulting in nearly a half million impressions from the universities' athletic departments, alumni associations, and communications departments as well as the bowl game organizers. Sixteen television news broadcasts also encouraged viewers heading to the games to use the 511 system, resulting in a television audience of 363,681 with a publicity value of \$12,906.





automatically through the mobile device's speaker. They can also choose whether to share their GPS location when providing feedback.

Traffic

Traffic information can be viewed from a list of events or on an interactive map. Information will be presented within the range the user selects, or they can type a city or metro area in the search box at the top of the screen to see incidents in that area.

Users can see detailed information, including a map of the incident's location, by selecting the incident. Traffic camera images can also be viewed if there is a camera near the incident.

Travel Times

Users can view a list of segments and travel times in the selected range. A compass icon allows them to view alternate directions of travel.

Feedback

Users can record feedback about a traffic incident or provide a general comment by selecting the Feedback icon. The recording can be up to two minutes long. Once the user is satisfied with their recording, the feedback is sent to FDOT.

The Latest on the App

FDOT continues to improve upon the Android app to provide users with the same real-time traffic information as the phone call, web site, and Twitter feeds. The Florida 511 mobile apps will continue to be updated as necessary to ensure users are provided with reliable real-time traffic information that will help keep them moving safely and efficiently.

For information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or e-mail to Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.

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ITS Florida: President's Message

By Gregg Letts on behalf of ITS Florida

It is with much pride and an equally heavy heart that I write this year's Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITS Florida) President's message. I am so honored and humbled to have been elected president of our professional society for 2014. It will be a year of new partnerships and events, which we encourage anyone with ties to intelligent transportation to be involved with and participate...but more on that later.

ITS Florida, the state of Florida, and the intelligent transportation systems (ITS) industry, as a whole, lost a champion and a dear friend this past December—and way too soon. Erika Ridlehoover-Birosak was as dedicated to ITS (and ITS Florida) as they come. Her knowledge of what was going on statewide and unparalleled, outgoing spirit made her one of the most well-known faces in our industry. Below is just a glimpse of Erika's tremendous advocacy of ITS (as taken from her obituary):

Erika dedicated her sixteen year professional career to the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) industry and developed strategic partnerships and friendships at every stop of her professional journey. Erika began her career with PB Farradyne, where she provided support to FDOT's Central Office ITS contract. Many of Erika's friends first met her at the FDOT ITS Working Group meetings that she coordinated all over Florida, a fitting assignment for a social butterfly like Erika. She joined TransCore in 2002, where she utilized her excellent communication skills and commitment to excellence over the next eleven year. Erika's dedication to the ITS Industry and her ability to touch people will leave a lasting impression.



Erika was a leader, advocate, and friend of ITS Florida for many years. She served on the Board of Directors from 2003 to 2006, and again from 2010 to the present. She served as Secretary, Treasurer, and was recently elected Vice President. Erika served as Chair of the organization's Outreach Committee and was responsible for providing an article to the FDOT's monthly ITS publication, for ITS Florida's website, and for managing the annual awards and scholarships programs. But nothing was more important to Erika than the annual ITS Florida calendar. Through much hard work and persuasion each year, Erika procured the necessary photographs and sponsors to produce a calendar that was a large part of why ITS Florida is named an Outstanding Chapter by ITS America each year. Recently, Erika was a member of the team that is planning the 2014 ITS 3C Summit, and a huge advocate for the partnership of the chapters and the success of the event. Erika's dedication and commitment to this volunteer organization was matched by few.

I repeat, Erika's dedication and commitment to ITS Florida was matched by few. The ITS Florida Board of Directors (Board) and I recognize the void left behind by Erika's untimely passing, and it will take many of us to step up and champion her long list of volunteered responsibilities for ITS Florida. Erika will be honored in many capacities, not only this year, but for many, many years to come. First and foremost, her elected position for 2014, Vice President, will be upheld as an act of appreciation and recognition. However, since the position cannot remain vacant, the Board and I would like to thank Ken Jacobs of Pinellas County, a past President of ITS Florida, for graciously volunteering to fill the role of Vice President for 2014. Ken, welcome aboard and thank you; you are a superstar.

As stated in my opening, 2014 brings many new partnerships for ITS Florida—primarily with regards to our events. Here are the major events ITS Florida is participating in this year, and we look forward to seeing each of you at ALL of them!

- May 8-9 – Joint Meeting with the Transportation and Expressway Authority Membership of Florida (TEAMFL) (Bonita Springs, FL)
- June 25-27 – Joint Meeting with the Florida Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (FSITE) (Clearwater Beach, FL) *To be confirmed
- September 7-11 – ITS World Congress (Detroit, MI)
- September 14-17 – Joint Meeting with Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society (GRITS) and ITS Georgia – ITS 3C Summit (Mobile, AL)
- November/December 2014 – ITS Florida Workshop and Annual Meeting (Location to be determined)

Across these events, participants will be provided with direct access to industry leaders, along with best practices, initiatives, and state-of-the-art technologies. However, I would like to see the greatest Florida representation as we can get at the ITS 3C Summit in Mobile, Alabama, in September. This first-of-its-kind, joint state chapter meeting is a four-day event filled with many opportunities for us to learn about ITS, network with fellow conference attendees, and have fun in a relaxing, yet educational environment. A series of sessions will be offered featuring informative presentations and challenging discussions. Industry experts will share best practices, lessons learned, and new strategies to ensure further success of ITS. In addition, training and professional tours will be available to provide participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively plan and deploy ITS technologies in their own jurisdiction. For more information and registration, please visit www.its3csummit.com.

If you wish to get the most out of these events, and possibly save some money in the process, join our great list of member organizations. If you are not yet a member, write to us and let us know why! Or, if you wish to benefit from all we have to offer, *become a MEMBER of ITS Florida*...we are dedicated to providing benefits to our members. Go to www.itsflorida.org to learn more and register your organization.

In closing, for not only these events, but for whenever networking opportunities arise for you, let's follow Erika's passion for connecting people. Let's continue to build bridges across our ITS specialties by learning as much as we can and by introducing folks who may be an asset to one another. I look forward to seeing each of you at our events this year and hearing you all quote our dear friend, Erika, "C'mere...I want you to meet someone!"

Thank you and have a GREAT 2014.

Please contact Sandy Beck at ITSFlorida@ITSFlorida.org for additional information or if you would like to contribute an article.

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Editorial Corner: FDOT — Helping to Find the Missing

By Gene Glotzbach, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations

Florida has a significant number of assets that can be utilized to get information out to the public. These assets include almost 700 dynamic message signs (DMS) installed along the state's limited-access facilities, strategically placed highway advisory radios (HAR) systems, and the state's advanced traveler information system with its various options of disseminating information.

Traditionally these assets are utilized to provide information to the public regarding traffic conditions to help drivers navigate their way around traffic problems. These assets have tremendous exposure to the public, and the Florida

Department of Transportation (FDOT) relies on this exposure to maximize its ability to get traffic information out to the greatest number of drivers. Millions of drivers pass by these DMSs in a day and thousands more are within range of a HAR system. FDOT's advanced traveler information system, also known as FL511, is available to anyone with a phone or who has access to a computer with Internet service.

Because of this exposure, these assets are a great tool for providing information to the public regarding the missing. Information can be pushed out to the public about missing children and also about missing adults who are cognitively impaired. The criteria for posting information about the missing on FDOT assets requires that the missing person be known to be in a vehicle, a description of the vehicle, and at least a partial license plate number has to be available. That information is then posted on FDOT's dissemination assets for the public to see.

Although the recovery of a missing person based on information provided on a DMS or other dissemination method is remote, the effort has produced results. Information provided by FDOT has been attributed with assisting in locating and returning several missing persons to their families.

Two instances where FDOT assets aided in locating a person come to mind. One was an America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alert and the other was a Silver alert. Several years ago an AMBER alert was issued and signs along I-95 were providing information. A family returning home from vacationing in Florida saw the AMBER alert information on signs in the Jacksonville area and in South Carolina. They noticed the vehicle and called the sheriff. The sheriff stopped the car, rescued the two children and returned them to safety. Recently another rescue was made of a woman with cognitive impairment. A motorist recognized the vehicle after reading the description on a DMS. They called *FHP. The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) asked FDOT's District Seven operators to attempt to locate the vehicle while the Trooper was responding. District Seven operators found the vehicle and tracked it utilizing closed-circuit television cameras until FHP made a stop and identified the missing person.

These two rescues are examples that we have a very high level of confidence that the rescue was directly related to the information on FDOT's signs. Although rescuing the missing based on information provided through FDOT's various means of information dissemination to the public may be the exception, providing that information serves an important purpose in that it heightens the public's awareness of the need to be vigilant in order to find the missing. This improves the chances of returning the missing to their families unharmed.

For information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or e-mail to Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.



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Announcements

Welcome David Heupel!

Please join us in welcoming David Heupel to the staff of FDOT's ITS Telecommunications General Consultant.

David joins us in management and operations of the ITS wide area network (WAN) and the overall statewide telecommunications networks. David will collaborate with the Districts to optimize their use of the ITS WAN and engineer the provisioning of the network as needed to serve District needs. David will also develop, design, and implement projects to upgrade, enhance, and reinforce the ITS WAN with redundant and upgraded links.

Upcoming Conferences

World Congress

Detroit is the scene for the 21st World Congress on September 7-11, 2014. Information on registering and/or participating is available at <http://itsworldcongress.org/>.

Make Plans to Attend NRITS

Now is the time to make plans to attend the National Rural ITS conference on August 24-27, 2014, in Branson, Missouri. More information is available at <http://www.nrityconference.org>.

3C Summit

Registration is now open for the the 2014 ITS 3C Summit, a joint annual meeting between the Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society, the Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida, and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Georgia. The meeting will be held September 14 - 17, 2014 at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center in Mobile, Alabama. More information is available at <http://www.its3csummit.com>.

FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Mission and Vision Statements

Mission:

Provide leadership and serve as a catalyst in becoming the national leader in mobility.

Vision:

Provide support and expertise in the application of Traffic Engineering principles and practices to improve safety and mobility.

FDOT Contacts

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