



Collier-Lee Traffic Incident Management Team

*August 15, 2007
Meeting Minutes*

Attendees:

Bill Rippy	FHP	Mike Stone	Collier County Road Dept
E. Les Williams	Collier EMS	Benjamin Abes	Lee County EMS
Paul LeFeure	Bald Eagle Towing	Robbie Brown	Lee County DOT
Dwain M Naftal	Bald Eagle Towing	Krystle Davis	Lee County DOT
Don Popoff	Bald Eagle Towing	William J Clemens	Bonita Springs Fire Rescue
Bud Gruber	Bald Eagle Towing	Frank Gentilquore	Alligator Towing
John Scarpellino	FDOT – RTMC	Glenn Fox	Alligator Towing
Nolan Sapp	Golden Gate Fire Rescue	Kevin Fox	Alligator Towing
Sandy Betts	Collier County Sheriff 911	Linda King	Lee County Sheriff
Doug Leffin	Collier County SO	David Parks	Global-5 Inc.
Chris Gonzalez	Collier County SO	Ted Smith	Delcan Corp
Mike McClead	Coastland Auto Road Rangers	Don Olson	FDOT
BJ Kirby	Coastland Auto Road Rangers	Christina Florez	VANUS
Mike Myers	ICA	Dave Krauss	VANUS
M Perez	JCS		

Call to Order: The Collier-Lee TIM Team meeting was held on Wednesday, August 15, 2007 at Florida Highway Patrol, 4700-3 Terminal Dr., Ft. Myers. Ted Smith and Don Olson facilitated the meeting.

Introductions: Team members introduced themselves and the agencies they represent.

Update on TIM Initiatives:

SLERS

Don Olson attended the Statewide Road Ranger Meeting held on August 13, 2007. At the meeting, the initiative to integrate the Road Ranger Service Patrol on the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) was discussed. A pilot study was successfully performed in District 5, in the Orlando/Deland area. By using performance measures, it was determined that the incident response time was reduced by approximately 10 minutes because the Road Rangers are immediately notified of an incident. A concern of Major Steve Williams was the impact of having the Road Rangers on the system; this study has shown that the Road Rangers would have only a minimal impact on the load capacity of the SLERS system. Should law enforcement approve the implementation of Road Rangers on the SLERS statewide, the two issues remaining are funding and schedule. If FDOT approves the initial funding for the equipment, Major Williams indicated that there would be no recurring fees for FDOT. In the interim, FDOT has spare radios for the District One Road Rangers on the State Maintenance Radio system that will be provided to the Road Rangers. The recent RFP to provide Road

Ranger Service Patrol did not require the contractor to provide radios with the anticipation of FDOT providing 800MHz radios for the SLERS.

Security Clearance

By law, all Road Ranger personnel must be fingerprinted and provided clearance from Law Enforcement to operate under the SLERS procedure. FDOT would like to have all potential Road Ranger personnel fingerprints scanned; unfortunately, FHP indicated they have approximately three fingerprint scanners in the state of Florida. These scanners are moved around as necessary. If the fingerprints are scanned, the security clearance typically takes one day; if the fingerprints are mailed in, clearance can take up to six months. Don Olson of the FDOT is tasked with exploring the idea of finding FDOT funding for one scanner to be placed in a central location for the use of scanning Road Ranger personnel. Lt. Rippy recommended the RTMC as a functional location for FHP, RTMC personnel and Road Rangers.

RED Tags on Abandoned Vehicles

Don Olson displayed the interim High Visibility (orange) Tags printed by FDOT Central Office. The concept has been approved by FHP Col. Knight, with regional procedures to be developed with Troop Commanders guidelines. A pilot study was conducted in District 2 and the FHP Troopers responded favorably. These tags will not replace the legal removal process, but will start the abandoned vehicle time limit clock. The RED tags will allow the Road Rangers to assist the Troopers by checking the abandoned vehicles for people in distress or any crime records associated with the VIN. The Road Ranger Service Patrol sub-contractor expressed his concern about negative publicity; as motorists may accuse the Road Rangers of having their vehicle impounded. Don stated that tags could have verbiage requesting motorists to stay with their vehicles in order to receive assistance, to call *FHP, and to reference the FL Statute. Ideally, the RED Tag procedure will be implemented statewide to support the FHP Troopers and add to the existing safety initiative on the highway. A request was made to ensure that there was a clear and separate data field that documents if the FHP Case Number is initiated by a Trooper or the Road Rangers. Additionally, to put their ID number on the tags so details can be traced back to who placed the tag and started the clock. Don Olson stated that it is up to FHP to finalize and approve the process for the Road Rangers RED tag support for FHP Troopers.

RISC

The Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) Program has been approved and funded for \$2 million statewide. From the \$2 million, a \$100,000 work program fund will be provided to each FDOT District, with the remaining funds to go to a bonus pool. This pool will be available for Districts to tap into if their initial fund is depleted or exhausted. The current plans call for the concept of operations to be developed over the coming months with implementation of the RISC program to begin in July 2008. A detailed plan is being developed that will clearly defined the processes, roles, financial recovery methods, contractor incentives, qualifications and program implementation. After a year of implementation, the FDOT Executive Board will review the program and determine at what level the program funding should continue with dedicated funds for the outer years. Similar programs are in effect in other states, and on the Florida Turnpike, which has recovered approximately 80 percent of the costs from motorist's insurance companies. In the event of a major traffic incident, pre-qualified contractors are dispatched to the scene with appropriate equipment to clear the scene safely and rapidly; to open traffic lanes and reduce the negative impact of traffic incidents. State statistics have shown that clearing the scene will reduce the secondary crashes often associated with initial traffic incidents.

Vehicle Positioning and Scene Safety

Ted Smith provided attendees with two handouts, the Temporary Traffic Control Checklist and Typical Scenarios. The handouts are attached for integration into TIM Team member agency documents. The Ad Hoc committee for Vehicle Positioning and Scene Safety developed these recommended guidelines depicted in the virtual scenarios for use by TIM Team member agencies to enhance scene safety traffic control procedures and better facilitate each responding agencies mission achievement during incidents.

The Temporary Traffic Control Checklist (TTCC) allows the responders to use the equipment that is available at the incident; as team resources; and as more equipment arrives, the MOT layout can be expanded. The standard guidelines are not dependent on who is the first to arrive; however, it does detail a scene re-evaluation every 15 minutes, with guidelines for vehicle re-positioning, and anticipated support roles as the lead agency status changes during the incident management. The guidelines will set the stage for all responders to be using the same guidelines, thereby increasing the safety of all the responders, and working with increased cooperation to facilitate the mission achievement of each agency. The TIM Team envisions the checklist to be used for training and employee orientation purposes. The Checklist concisely covers many aspects of Temporary Traffic Control, including:

- The Checklist emphasizes queue protection including advanced warning signs instead of just vehicle emergency lights. The Task Group recommends a minimum of two signs. These collapsible signs should be placed in as many responder vehicles as possible.
- A taper length of 300 feet can be achieved with 12 cones, allowing 25 foot distance between cones. As more cones arrive, the taper should be extended, thereby moving the turmoil and hazards away from the incident scene and displacing the danger zone.
- The placement of responding vehicles plays a critical part. The Law Enforcement vehicle should be on the shoulder, not in the travel lanes. The Fire/Rescue Apparatus should be used to help protect the scene by parking at a deflection angle across the affected lane(s). The Fire/Rescue Apparatus operator should be conscientious to only block the lanes that are absolutely necessary and should be repositioned to a single lane or shoulder once the scene is cleared. The EMS vehicles are very vulnerable at the incident while addressing the incident victims, and should be parked downstream from the crash for patient/responder protection and allowing for an obstructed path to leave the scene during ambulance activity. The Tow Vehicle should be parked downstream from the EMS truck. Once the EMS truck leaves the scene, the Tow Truck can safely back up to clear the disabled vehicles.
- The fifteen minute rule applies at every incident. Traffic control and scene safety should be re-evaluated every 15 minutes and upgraded or de-escalated as required by Federal Standards.

The Scenarios that were provided show specific incidents. These should be used for training and orientation purposes for all responders, to communicate conceptual ideas. It is realized that each traffic incident will present unique challenges with diverse priorities. In the future, FDOT would like to evolve these guidelines and develop Standard Operating Guidelines that would be adopted statewide.

Cable Median Barrier Project

Don Olson gave an overview of the presentation given by Jason Lyle and Kent Dauderman at the Charlotte-Sarasota-Manatee TIM Team Meeting on August 14, 2007. The cable barrier system “catches” vehicles and slows them down to a stop, and does not bounce them back into the travel lanes. Since the installation of the cable median barrier, there has been no median crossover accidents at cable barrier locations and only minimal damage and injury at incidents.

The cable barrier system is an “old idea resurrected”; these systems are being installed throughout the country. The cable median barriers are located approximately one mile on either side of the selected interchanges. This was determined by reviewing crash data. Most crashes occurred due to lane changes approaching or leaving the interchanges. This was a Design/Build project with a six month time frame. Approximately 33 miles of cable barrier was installed at a cost of approximately \$5.3 million. The cost for cable barriers is approximately half the cost of typical metal guardrail. This is the first cable median barrier project within the District. There are five cable systems approved for use; the Nucor 3-strand system was chosen. The barrier is a high tension cable system that “catches” a vehicle and slows it down to a stop, instead of bouncing the vehicle back into the travel lanes. Cable poles can be removed from the anchor sleeve to relax tension on the cable and allow it to lie on the ground, usually for emergency extrication of accident victims or tow truck operations to remove damaged vehicles. FDOT is beginning to collect performance measure data. Don stated that if the cable had to be cut, for patient extrication or other response related reasons, that there was no need to worry about recoil. The cable would just hang from the adjacent posts. Concerns were brought up by the FDOT Asset Maintenance contractor that there were special brackets that had to be attached to the cable prior to cutting the cable according to the manufacturer. Don Olson stated that he would confirm that information.

- It offers a range of deflection options from 5 feet to 9 feet.
- If a post is knocked down, the system will still function, such as multiple vehicle strikes.
- It is an attractive alternative.
- It is approximately half the cost of standard metal guardrail.
- It is easier to repair and maintain than guardrail solutions.
- It is NHCRP-350 approved.
- First responders should NOT cut the median cable barrier unless absolutely necessary
- By removing 8-10 line posts, the cable will lay on the ground. This should provide enough capacity for emergency personnel to perform their duties. The same goes for the wrecker crew. This should only be done at a crash scene when necessary and should never be done to just cross the road.
- If the first responders find it necessary to cut the cable, they should cut the cable in the center between line posts. Do not cut the cable near the entangled vehicle; move down the longitudinal barrier away from the impacted vehicle and bystanders since the cable is under high tension – thousands of pounds. The cable should be cut perpendicular to the cable. Making sure no bystanders are near the cable section being cut.
- When the cable is cut the system is compromised and will not perform as designed. A cable splice fitting will have to be installed at the cut and the system placed back under tension.
- Once again, we do not recommend cutting the cable but to remove line posts as needed. This is a safer than cutting a cable under high tension plus the repair is much simpler and cost effective.

Action Item: Don to request that the manufacturer or project design team of the cable median barrier system come down for a presentation at a future TIM Team meeting.

Alligator Alley Rotation Lists

Participants requested that the wrecker rotation list be revisited. A suggestion to station wreckers instead of relying on rotations lists was brought up. It was stated that the FL Statutes state that there must be a system and that rotation lists are one option. Any modifications must come from the Troop Commander. Historically, there have been traffic incidents where wreckers show up at the scene even though they are not on the rotation, in an attempt to gain business at an unfair advantage to other tow businesses. Complaints have come in regarding

some wreckers. There are only a few companies or independent operators who have not performed safely, effectively or professionally, and have caused difficulties for the majority of professional wreckers. The objective for the TIM Team will be to work together to ensure that the correct equipment is dispatched promptly to the scene for effective clearance in the safest manner possible.

Some wrecker personnel have expressed concern that they are often left alone to clear the scene or with minimal support, once the FHP trooper gives the "OK" that the scene can be cleared. One suggested solution is to dispatch the wreckers immediately after the initial scene assessment and within the first 15 minutes of the incident response. Then they can reach the incident before traffic congestion causes them major delays and unsafe roadway conditions. They will position their vehicles per the Vehicle Positioning and Scene Safety Guidelines and be on site to clear the scene while additional support agencies are still at the scene. Don Olson stated that this would have to be a procedural adjustment developed in cooperation with the FHP and FDOT Regional Traffic Management Centers.

Another concern is for who has the authority to request a wrecker. There is an approved policy in Troop F that allows any Public Safety agency to call and request a wrecker (from the FHP rotation list); this action expedites the clearance process. At an incident in Lee County, the Fire Department called for a wrecker but dispatch, which is Lee Control, stated that the Fire Department did not have authorization; and must wait, because only law enforcement can make the request. Participants requested that Lee Control attend the meetings to help with the communications problems and to help develop mutually beneficial clearance protocols. Participants also indicated that Lee Control occasionally sends out the wrong equipment. A copy of the policy is attached for TIM Team agency review.

Move - Over Law

Don Olson applauded FHP and SO for enforcing the Move - Over Law. FHP Troopers periodically station themselves downstream from an incident in order to cite motorists who do not move over when able to do so. In some scenarios, the Troopers have not issued citations specifically for not adhering to the Move Over law, but for other infractions (i.e., seat belt, speeding, etc.) and used the opportunity to raise public awareness of the Move - Over Law infraction. The local news media has reported on the campaign. FHP Lt. Rippey stated that they have been giving citations to violators, but that some County judges are not enforcing them. They are now going to magistrates and having better success with enforcement.

511 Cards

Don provided the 511 tip cards. These cards will be distributed by all members of the TIM Team to give to co-workers and the general public. The tip cards help new users navigate the Southwest Florida 511 Traffic Information system. There are currently five traffic detectors installed on I-75 and 17 more planned to enhance the Southwest Florida 511 system. These detectors communicate via wireless technology to the Traffic.com 511 operations center. Once the RTMC is operational, the information will be sent to the RTMC. The 511 system in Southwest Florida was launched in April and there are near-term plans to integrate this system with the "Next Generation" Statewide 511 system enhancements.

Alligator Alley Fire EMS Substation:

There was an article in the newsletter regarding the EMS substation developments. Ted Smith and Don Olson had a meeting with the Big Cypress National Preserve management at the Big Cypress Headquarters. The preferred location is in the Recreation Access area near mile marker 63. The Park Service Department is considering building a permanent multi-use

operations structure. This structure could have space for a public safety station. This would be ideal and EMS would have a presence in the central area where none currently exists. Unfortunately, there are no funds in the near future to build the structure. As an interim solution, Don is looking into designating one of the three FEMA trailers that Collier County Emergency Services has requested. A well will have to be drilled for fresh water, a connection to the pump station will be needed and power will be provided by Lee County Electric.

TIM Team – Quality Management/Future Direction:

Meeting Topics and Incident Reviews

Don Olson stated that while the FDOT sponsors these valuable meetings, it is for the benefit of all team members. The TIM Team members should “drive” the meeting topics and future direction of the TIM Team so that it best serves their interests. TIM Team agencies are encouraged to submit a topic or issue to be included in future meeting agendas to ensure continual incident management improvement and effective communication between the many member agencies.

Newsletter

Don Olson asked for member participation in the newsletter article content and meeting presentations. John Scarpellino of Telvent volunteered to write an article about the new RTMC.

Lee County Sheriff’s Office would like to have access to video feeds once the RTMC is in operation. A presentation about the RTMC operations, capabilities and authorities would be beneficial to TIM Team member agencies and build positive regard for the RTMC implementation.

Unified Incident Command and NIMS Training

E. Les Williams indicated that he would be willing to develop a shorter class that can be provided in addition to the TIM Meetings. This would be a hybrid course for people not mandated to take training. He asked if the TIM Team meeting would be an acceptable forum or if he should schedule a separate date and time. The TIM Team agreed a regularly scheduled TIM Team meeting would be fine.

Information Distribution

Ted Smith asked the members if and how they were distributing the information discussed in the TIM meeting. Some members indicated that they pass out the handouts and minutes. EMS stated that they were in the process of adopting the traffic control policies and will be implementing them in training. Other TIM Team member agencies expressed the various means of disseminating this important information and conceptual developments.

Construction/Maintenance Update:

Don stated that Lee County has passed a resolution for tolling the additional lanes under construction on I-75. These tolls would pay for the 10 lane expansion. They are still waiting for Collier County to agree. Both Lee and Collier counties have given \$150 thousand dollars to the tolling authority. The authority is requesting that both counties give an additional \$600 thousand a piece.

Other Team Issues:

- Don Olson expressed his positive opinion and respect for FHP Trooper Pope for earning Trooper of the Year recognition. Trooper Pope has an amazing story of overcoming obstacles and making great achievements.

