



Sarasota - Manatee Traffic Incident Management Team

October 13, 2009

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
John Brown	City of North Port	John Edwards	FHP
Gilbert Fernandez	City of Sarasota	Thomas Przybylowicz	FHP
Richard Schuldt	DBI Services	Shannon Davis	Lee County EM
Bruce Hutcheson	DBI Services	Shawna Kennedy	Metric Engineering, Inc.
Ted Smith	Delcan Corporation	Charles Stratton	Metric Engineering, Inc.
Jack Smith	Flagship Towing	Dave White	Nokomis Fire Department
Don Olson	FDOT	Aaron Nick	North Port PD
Kevin Salsbery	FDOT	Bob Diezi	FDOT Road Rangers
Thom Scrivner	FDOT	Darrell Seckendorf	Sarasota Cty SO
Cary Strzepek	FDOT	Ruth Terry	Venice PD
		Henry Hays	511 Tampa Bay

Call to Order: The Sarasota-Manatee TIM Team meeting was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at 1:30 PM at the Sarasota County Public Works Office, 1001 Sarasota Center Boulevard, Sarasota, Florida. Don Olson and Ted Smith facilitated the meeting.

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

Update on TIM Initiatives:

Newsletter

Don introduced Metric Engineering, Inc. as the new District One Traffic Operations Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Consultant. Although the previous consultant turned over all the contact lists, Don encouraged all attendees to verify and update, if necessary, all of the contact information on the sign-in sheet in order to ensure that all attendees will receive the newsletters. Don encouraged everyone, even as they have move to higher positions, or if they have move on to different agencies, to stay abreast of what is happening with the Southwest Florida Traffic Incident Management Team through the use of the newsletter. TIM Teams in SW FL are an industry leader, address topics that impact myriad stakeholders and publish valuable information. The most recent newsletter included information about domestic security roles and initiatives with an excellent article about intelligent transportation systems that was submitted by Andy Núñez. TIM Team members are encouraged to submit articles for publication in the newsletter.

511 Next Generation

At this time only two major roadways (I-75 and US 41) are being covered by the current 511 in the Traffic Management Center in Tampa. The next generation of 511 technology was deployed in July 2009. Don stressed the importance of detecting an incident, populating the database, and promptly publishing accurate information. Callers to 511 have the ability to leave feedback regarding the system, and this feedback is transferred to Don via email. This feedback is used to improve the system. There were no updates from 511 Operations.

A South Florida newspaper reporter recently published an article related to perceived “bugs” in the 511 system based on an initial negative experience. Don emphasized that the computer had some problems in detecting the speech patterns from the reporter within the system, which can be influenced by wind noise, heavy accents, etc. After clarification, the reporter was then satisfied with the 511 system, but declined to recant the article.

SWIFT SunGuide Center

The SWIFT SunGuide Center, a regional transportation management center, will become operational late this year, housing many of the essential emergency management personnel across several entities.

Road Rangers

The Road Rangers updated that they have been certified in Maintenance of Traffic (MOT), First Aid and CPR, and they've gone through extensive Service Patrol Training. Road Rangers will be obtaining training in HAZMAT Response Awareness by the December TIM meeting. The primary mission for the FDOT Road Rangers is to promptly respond to traffic incidents and provide scene safety for other emergency responders with temporary MOT. Historically, most traffic incidents occur between 6AM and 7PM with morning and evening peak travel periods.

The Road Rangers will not be moving toward 24-hour a day coverage on I-75. Through increased funding from the District Secretary, the District has enhanced coverage during the peak travel times by using two day-time Road Rangers (12-hours per day) instead of just one in each county. At the request of FHP Troop F Commander, Major Coates, the District will be utilizing all available Road Ranger resources to extend coverage over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC)

Prompt Towing is the current RISC provider for Charlotte, Sarasota, and portions of Lee County, but Don also mentioned there is an open and on-going Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) advertisement for the RISC program should any professional tow operators wish to participate.

The Department's goal by the Thanksgiving travel period is to be fully prepared to activate a Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) response will not be realized. A new goal has been set for February 1, 2010 in concert with the SWIFT SunGuide Center operations plan. RISC contractors will be responsible for clearing the roadway upon notice to proceed by the incident commander on-scene. Although the contractor will be receiving their compensation from the responsible party, they will be entitled to an extra bonus if the scene is cleared within a 90-minute period; a time-frame established by the Open Roads Policy. Until the new SWIFT SunGuide Center is operational, the commander on-scene will be responsible for informing the FHP Communications Center in Ft. Myers for time-tracking purposes. Multiple companies can qualify for the same area of coverage and be on a rotation schedule for activation.

Benefits are being seen in similar programs with Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (showing a 97% incident response goal achieved) and in the Atlanta, Georgia area (94%). Don also reported the benefits to the traveling public which includes, but is not limited to: a reduction in pollution through the reduced vehicle idling time, fewer secondary crashes and breakdowns, and the economic benefits to increased amount of productive time people have to conduct business. Reducing the clearance time also lessens the exposure responders experience at the scene, thus increasing safety.

A Team member reported that the Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida, Inc. is working with Florida Legislature to help in funding major incident road clearance response.

Training

Ted mentioned the need for training regarding response to tank-truck incidents. Previously AmeriGas was working to provide this workshop and training exercise on MC-331 Tank (hauls liquefied natural gas or propane), but this may not be possible at no cost and will potentially require funding. A different company offers "Emergency Tank-Truck Training," a two-day workshop covering all tank-truck varieties, but this training costs about \$8,000. Ted will be working with Don to seek out the possibility of obtaining additional funding through the I-95 Corridor Coalition – an FHWA-subsidized program providing resources to states from Maine to Florida. This training would be open to all responders, not just fire fighters and HAZMAT teams, to increase their knowledge regarding tank-truck emergencies.

Ted mentioned the Statewide TIM Team is looking at developing a certification program for all responders. A similar program is set up in Virginia. Virginia Department of Transportation, in conjunction with Virginia Tech, has set up the Transportation Emergency Response Institute (TERI) – an intensive seven-day training program for Department representatives. The TERI certified personnel then become qualified as a Duty Officer, a single-point of contact for any transportation emergency (situation awareness) in their assigned region. Once all Department representatives are trained, they are looking toward training fire and police personnel.

As a part of the TIM in '10 Initiative, the North Florida TPO has partnered with law enforcement, fire rescue, transportation and towing entities in north Florida to jointly develop a module-based training DVD and handbook named *TIMe4 Safety*. This training contains five modules, approximately five to ten minutes in length. Topics include Traffic Control, Scene Safety, and Incident Management. The TIM in '10 Initiative goal is to have every responder go through this video and text-book training. Desire has been expressed to facilitate production of training material funded through cooperation with the local District MPO organizations similar to that of North Florida's. The TIM Team watched the Introduction module of the video, and Don would like to continue to have each TIM Team view one module per TIM meeting.

Other National, State, and Regional Items to Note:

By the State Legislature developing Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, and their subsequent direction to run the Enterprise as a business, the Enterprise has become an experimentation test-bed for the future implementation of policies. The Enterprise has the ability to step outside the standard rule-making process. The RISC program is a direct result of such experimentation. Currently the Enterprise is seeking to test and alternative to the current rotation system for tow provider response. Beginning in June 2009, the Enterprise rolled out the Towing and Roadside Repair (TARR) system that, through the competitive bid and qualification process, designates a tow company for assigned sections of roadway. The company's individual performance is being monitored in conjunction with law enforcement and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. If the selected towing firm is not performing to acceptable standards, their designated road section

contract is re-advertised. The TARR program has already seen an 84% on-time response rate, and is a follow-up program to the previously developed RISC program. After meeting certain selection criteria and submitting their firm's proposal for permit fees and response times, the tow company becomes the single point of contact for the designated section of roadway, for both the Turnpike and AAA. Ted anticipates providing a presentation at the December TIM meeting.

The State of Washington has implemented guidelines similar to Florida's Vehicle Fluid Spill Guidelines. Additionally, Washington has begun using a program similar to RISC in the larger metropolitan areas, that they call *BlockBuster*.

October 26th and 27th will be the dates for the Metro Atlanta TIME Task Force Conference in Lake Lanier, Georgia. This conference is free to public agency employees. Additional information may be found at www.timetaskforce.com.

Review of Recent Major Incidents

Sunshine Skyway Bridge, October 12, 2009

Don discussed an incident occurring October 12, 2009 where there was a vehicle fire on the shoulder of the northbound lanes of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge. Heavy on-looker delays were experienced. Road Ranger and emergency response personnel experienced some miscommunication with the TMC regarding the exact location of the incident. This scenario emphasizes the value of available CCTV cameras. In District One, many CCTVs will be going up in the near future to enhance incident verification and accurate communications. Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) are also slated to be installed in the future just North of the bridge for SB traffic. Additionally, response personnel had difficulty in getting to the scene due to travelers parking in the emergency lane. Don stressed the importance of Asset Management in relieving the Road Ranger so that they can assist motorists in the queue experiencing breakdowns, relay motorist breakdowns to the TMC, and have rotation wreckers dispatched to assist when needed. Prompt response to facilitate response vehicle access to incident scenes and to keep traffic moving remains a critical priority for FDOT Road Rangers.

Highway 70 Tractor-Trailer Over-turn

A recent incident involving the spilling of fertilizer, presumed to be ammonium nitrate. A more thorough review of this incident will be discussed at a future TIM meeting. The focal topic at December meetings will be Hazardous Materials response at a traffic incident.

Presentation

Shannon Davis of the Lee County Emergency Management provided a presentation regarding Domestic Security. Presentation materials will be available on the TIM Team website located at <http://www.swfltim.org>.

Ted followed up after the presentation and emphasized the importance of domestic security with respect to the local region, especially the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and other local bridge structures. Ted additionally reviewed some of the current preventative measures that are in place, including fire-retardant paint now used on some critical or high-risk structures. Also emphasized were the economic and commercial impacts of these domestic transportation infrastructure losses.

Additionally, the Team discussed the use of 800 megahertz radios for use in emergency response. Legislature opened the ability for other agencies (like Road Rangers) besides law enforcement to use these radios during response.

Strategic Direction for TIM Teams 2010

Don welcomed ideas regarding the future of the TIM Team website. “Move Over Law” was mentioned as a possible link, as well as the new SWIFT SunGuide Center. Future TIM Team meetings will continue bi-monthly, as will the Newsletters. Don requested participants advise him of any incidents, training opportunities, or other materials that can be communicated Team-wide.

Major initiatives for 2010 include the Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) and Florida’s Interoperability Network (FIN). The vision for Interoperability in Florida is to provide secure interagency and interoperable communications for Florida’s entire community of public safety users with dissimilar systems, enabling more timely and effective emergency responses to critical daily events.

FDOT Construction Update

Skyway Bridge Closed Wireless Sign Activation Project

As a result of previous TIM meetings, it was identified by FHP and FDOT that cross walks in Manatee County were inadvertently being activated when the Skyway Bridge “Bridge Closed” signs were activated wirelessly. The resulting project has been recently completed and included updating the hardware and software for the “Bridge Closed” sign system. The revamped system is now operational.

Other Construction Includes

Active Construction:

- I-275 from Manatee County Line to SR 19 – Anticipated Completion: November 2009
- I-75 Milling and Resurfacing from Moccasin Wallow to North of Mendoza Road – Anticipated Completion: November 2009
- I-275 Bridge Deck Replacement – Anticipated Completion: February 2010
- I-75 from Mendoza Road to Kay Road – Anticipated Completion: January 2010
- I-75 Milling and Resurfacing from SR 70 to University – Anticipated Completion: between January and April 2010

Completed Construction:

- I-75 from Bee Ridge to SR 681 – Completed Summer 2009

Anticipated Future Construction:

- I-75 Widening from SR 681 to River Road – Anticipated Construction: April 2010 through April 2012
- I-75 and US 301 Interchange Improvements – Anticipated Construction: June 2010
- I-75 and SR 70 Interchange Improvements – Anticipated Construction: June 2010
- I-75 and University Interchange Improvements – Anticipated Construction: June 2010
- I-75 and Fruitville Interchange Improvements – Anticipated Construction: June 2010

At this time, all active construction is being completed at night.

Open Forum

Ted also stressed, per Federal regulation, that all responders are required to wear the Type II or Type III approved safety vests when working at a traffic incident scene. This requirement is to enhance safety and mitigate risk of personal injury. FHP indicated that they are not able to be remove towing and recovery operators from rotation for this infraction. The LE community does not anticipate an initiative to request non-compliant responders to leave the incident scene unless further direction is provided from Tallahassee.