12th Edition | Heartland Traffic Incident Management Team | March 2024

Going Above the Call of Duty

Recognition for Our FDOT District One Road Ranger

While all of our responders from our District One TIM teams risk their lives every day, and our members are more successful when they work as a team, individuals are recognized for actions that go “above the call of duty.”

On February 26, 2024, Road Ranger Teddy Figueroa encountered a distressing situation while driving along I-75 at Mile Marker 58. Approaching a stranded motorist, he witnessed an unknown woman expressing a desire to end her life, stepping dangerously close to oncoming traffic. Reacting swiftly, Teddy intervened, narrowly averting a collision with a passing truck and ensuring the woman's safety. Despite Teddy's intervention, the woman's distress persisted, leading to a struggle as she attempted to approach the traffic again. With quick thinking, Teddy called for help, and a passerby joined in to restrain her until authorities arrived. Subsequent investigation revealed the woman's need for psychiatric evaluation, highlighting the importance of Teddy's heroic actions.

Teddy Figueroa's bravery and compassion exemplify the critical role of individuals like him in ensuring the safety of all travelers on the road. With 15 years of dedicated service as a Road Ranger, his quick actions undoubtedly saved a life, underscoring his commitment to public service and safety.

If you or your agency wish to commend a first responder for their extraordinary dedication beyond the call of duty and would like to acknowledge their efforts, please forward your request to Brandy Boccuti, TIM Coordinator, at bboccuti@metriceng.com.

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Upcoming Events:
Next TIM Team Meeting
Tuesday, **April 2, 2024**
1:00 pm

To join the meeting virtually, please click on the following:
Meeting Link

Or call in:
(786) 648-4335
Conference ID: 233 128 802

April Alert: It’s National Distracted Driving Month

April is National Distracted Driving Month, shining a spotlight on a peril that grows on our roads. Distracted driving looms as one of the foremost safety concerns today, presenting not only a danger to the drivers themselves but also to the dedicated first responders laboring along our highways and the general public. To access campaign materials to raise awareness within your agency, please visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Institute at: https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving

FDOT District One Road Ranger Assist

The Road Rangers play a vital role in assisting first responders on the roadways. They collaborate closely with emergency personnel, providing a valuable support system during incidents. Their seamless coordination ensures that the response time is optimized and the overall effectiveness of the emergency response is enhanced, ultimately saving lives and minimizing the impact of incidents on the roadways.

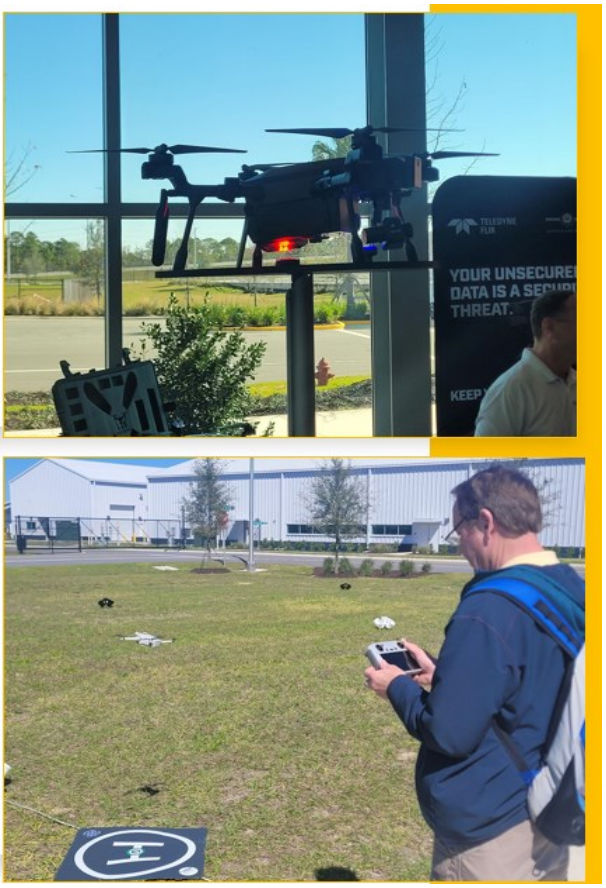
Their tireless efforts and unwavering dedication have undoubtably made a significant impact on improving the safety and efficiency of the Florida's roadways. See the graph to the right which provides the 2024 February District One Road Ranger Statistics.

February 2024 Road Ranger Assist	
Abandoned Vehicles	224
Crash	308
Debris on Roadway	296
Disabled Vehicles	1,334
Emergency Vehicles	6
Other	4
Pedestrian	4
Police Activity	5
Vehicle Fire	9
Wildfire	3
Wildlife	5
Total	2,198

Traffic Incident Response: Utilizing Drones for Traffic Incident Management

Recently, Tom Arsenault, FDOT District One TIM Program Manager, attended the 2024 Florida Public Safety Drone Operations Conference (FLOCON) which showcased the integration of drones into traffic incident response. The 3-day educational training conference hosted *by first responders for first responders* using Drones for Good®. FLOCON 2024 featured classroom-style training, outdoor flight operations, and networking/fellowship opportunities for law enforcement, emergency services, and other government users of small, uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) for life, safety, and emergency response missions.

In the realm of first response, where every second counts, the integration of cutting-edge technology is paramount to improving efficiency, safety, and ultimately, saving lives. One such technological advancement that has been gaining momentum in recent years is the utilization of drones for traffic incident management. These UAS offer a plethora of benefits that are reshaping the way first responders' approach and mitigate traffic incidents.



At the forefront of drone deployment in traffic incident response is the unparalleled situational awareness they provide. Equipped with high-resolution cameras and advanced sensors, drones offer a comprehensive aerial view of incident scenes, enabling responders to assess the situation swiftly and accurately. From congested highways to remote or hazardous locations, drones provide real-time data and imagery, empowering responders to make informed decisions and formulate effective response strategies.

A key advantage of drones in traffic incident management is their ability to enhance responder safety. By eliminating the need for personnel to enter potentially hazardous environments, such as busy highways or unstable crash sites, drones mitigate the risk of injury and ensure the well-being of responders. This remote reconnaissance capability not only safeguards responders but also expedites the response process, allowing resources to be deployed more efficiently.

Moreover, drones play a pivotal role in optimizing traffic flow and minimizing disruptions during incidents. By monitoring traffic patterns and congestion from above, drones enable responders to identify alternative routes, implement traffic diversions, and coordinate emergency services more effectively. This proactive approach not only reduces the impact on commuters but also mitigates the risk of secondary incidents, enhancing overall roadway safety.[1]

As the technology continues to evolve and become more accessible, the integration of drones into first responder operations is poised to become standard practice. However, to maximize the potential of drones in traffic incident response, ongoing training and education are essential. By investing in drone proficiency and incorporating UAVs into standard operating procedures, first responders can leverage this transformative technology to enhance their capabilities, improve response times, and ultimately, save lives on the road.

In conclusion, if your agency is interested in exploring how drone technology, like the one utilized by Tom Arsenault in FDOT District One, could enhance your response to traffic incidents, ***we encourage you to reach out to Tom Arsenault at tom.arsenault@dot.state.fl.us.*** Additionally, we invite you to attend our upcoming Traffic Incident Management (TIM) meeting, where you can engage with first responders in person to discuss the advantages of this technology and its potential to further aid traffic incident response.

(1) Unmanned Aircraft Systems for Traffic Incident Management. Next-Generation Traffic Incident Management. Florida Highway Administration. Respondersafety.com. Web November 2023. https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/tim/docs/EDC6_Factsheet_TIM_UnmannedAircraft_v2_508.pdf

Article submitted by Brandy Boccuti, TIM Coordinator, Metric Engineering, Inc.

T I M TEAM WEBSITE!
www.swfltim.org

*The **Heartland County TIM Team** is committed to implementing the Quick Clearance principles of Florida's Open Roads Policy through the "3 Cs" of TIM: Communication, Cooperation and Coordination, and providing the public with the best real-time Motorist Information available. Team membership draws from state, regional, and local transportation agencies, public safety providers, and other organizations and companies that service the traveling public. The Teams, sponsored by the FDOT, meet quarterly*

Mission

The TIM Team Program brings together all agencies involved in clearing the roadway crashes with the objective of improving detection, verification, response, and clearance times to expeditiously remove a motor vehicle crash or incident from the roadway while providing the best real-time information to motorists, resulting in a safer highway environment for both incident responders and motorists