



**Polk County**  
**Traffic Incident Management Team**

*July 15, 2010*  
*Meeting Minutes*

**Attendees:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Bruce Hutcheson	DBI Services	Rick Grube	Lakeland, City of
Ted Smith	Delcan Corporation	Brandy Bocutti	Metric Engineering, Inc.
Ben Skidmore	Eagle - SWS	Shawna Slate	Metric Engineering, Inc.
Chris Birozak	FDOT	Charles Stratton	Metric Engineering, Inc.
Bill Fuller	FDOT	Michael Blaze	Polk County
Patrick Odum	FDOT Central Office	Robert Pitman	Polk County Fire Dept.
Kelly Kinney	Florida Turnpike	Mike McArthur	Stepp's Towing
		Dean Empie	Transfield Services

**Call to Order:** The Polk County TIM Team meeting was held on Thursday, July 15, 2010 at 10:00 AM at the University of South Florida Polytechnic, 3433 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, Florida. Charles Stratton and Ted Smith facilitated the meeting.

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

**Update on TIM Initiatives:**

Newsletter

Charles 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 or any TIM related email news.

Tampa Bay & SWIFT SunGuide Center

No new updates were discussed with respect to the Tampa Bay or SWIFT SunGuide Centers. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise recently migrated the statewide platform software to the SunGuide software, currently being used by other TMCs statewide. This change will help with more effective incident management and other motorist information such as displaying travel time data on the DMS signs. The Turnpike doesn't currently have Road Ranger coverage on the Polk Parkway, but they have migrated to the Vanus software just like the District 1 Road Rangers have done and the NACOM FHP 800 megahertz radio system for dispatching the Road Rangers. The anticipated timeframe in completing their conversion is 2-3 weeks.

### Road Rangers

Computers have been installed in the Road Ranger vehicles in the southern areas of the district. Dispatch has been converted from the Vanus software to the new computer system operable through the SunGuide software and the SunGuide Center. The implementation of the new radios is still in process in the south.

### Towing and Wrecker News

There has been some initiative in some of the TIM teams to update some of the policies as to wreckers and rotation, and what the qualifications are to make them more uniform under a statewide level. As we know, the Open Roads Policy calls for us to constantly review our processes in regards to limiting congestion and adhering to the Policy, so the District will be looking to identify some of the issues requiring standardization statewide. Bill Fuller suggested this probably will need to be looked at regionally prior to enhancing policies statewide.

### Training

The TIM Team watched the fourth module of the video *TIMe4 Safety*, and the team will continue to view one module per TIM meeting. Additionally, copies of the video are being made available to any agency interested. To obtain a copy, interested parties can contact Chris Birosak via email at [Chirs.Birosak@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Chirs.Birosak@dot.state.fl.us)

### Other National, State, and Regional Items to Note:

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is working with Toyota on their recent recalls on many Toyota brands. Toyota is the first manufacturer to do so, but they are starting to make some concessions regarding the data retrieval from the on-board black boxes. They have agreed to provide services and professional help for reading and reviewing data from black boxes from Toyota manufactured vehicles. Because of all the problems they have had, Toyota has agreed to work with law enforcement providing the data they have and then going through training. The black boxes are also vulnerable to hackers and it is being discovered that there is a group of hackers that have been identified around the country that are exchanging information on how to affect the electronic controls on automobiles through software intervention.

Ray LaHood, the Federal Secretary of Transportation, has called the Second National Distracted Driving Summit. Secretary LaHood has made this the hallmark of his administration, to do something about distracted driving. He is adamant about working with a broad spectrum of private and public entities as well as advocacy groups to tackle distracted driving, namely cell phone use.

Secretary LaHood has also gotten involved in an issue to promote the automobile manufacturers and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on developing in-car systems with an alcohol related interlock. Manual systems have been around for a while and are used in instances of DUI convictions as a condition of court probation. LaHood is looking for a more passive system, such as scanners, that inhibit the vehicle from starting if any level of impairment is detected. A \$10 million grant has been secured to fund the research, and 13 automobile manufactures and several universities are getting involved.

As mentioned under the Towing and Wrecker news, one of the parts of the Open Road Policy states that both the Florida Department of Transportation and Florida Highway Patrol are required to continually evaluate their standards, policies, procedures, and protocols to look for any inconsistencies with the Open Road philosophy. One of the areas identified by the towing industry as needing updated is the FHP wrecker rotation, which was established in 1992 as a

part of Florida Administrative Code 15B. Unfortunately this Code does not mandate a qualification based system, and any wrecker response company can be added to the rotation.

Similarly, this has been addressed in the National Unified Goals (NUG). From the Federal level there is an emphasis being placed on certification and training of wrecker operators. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise has been an experimentation test-bed for the implementation of an alternative to the current rotation system, just as they were the test-bed for the RISC program. 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 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. 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. The TARR program has very stringent regulations for the towing company, and they mandate training (tow companies are given six months to train a new driver) and federal certification.

Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP II) is a Federal strategic highway research program developed along with the National Traffic Incident Management Coalition. This voluntary training course is for all disciplines including asset management, fire department personnel, law enforcement, Department of Transportation, and towing operators. The training program is designed to give participants a wide range of experience and certify them as a traffic incident responder. There have been two pilot tests conducted and the program is undergoing the approval process. Training is accomplished through a "Train a Trainer" feature within the course.

Unfortunately, Troop K on the Turnpike has experienced the loss of one of its troopers. During an incident on May 15, 2010, the trooper's Crown Victoria was struck from the rear and was engulfed in flames. The trooper was parked on the shoulder of the road after completing a traffic stop. This particular make and model car is known to have problems with igniting when struck from the rear, and it is not clear whether a fire plate was installed in that particular vehicle. While this is a tragic story, this is the reality of working in one of the most hazardous environments. OSHA has identified a highway worker and a highway responder being one of the top ten most dangerous jobs. Wrecker operators are included in this number and are believed to be near the top of the list, averaging one death per week. In 2009 there were 70 operators killed, and 2008 saw 100 operators killed.

Some of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) have been inquiring about funding TIM training. One of the Lee County area MPOs has inquired about the pathway for getting federal funding from more than one source for TIM training and helping the TIM teams have a pool of money to draw from for training courses or specialized training. There has been some effort by FDOT to encourage the MPOs to be involved and be aware of what the TIM teams are all about, so maybe this is the follow up to that. We've got some questions being asked about what they can do to help support the TIM teams.

### **Review of Recent Major Incidents**

Ted Smith presented information on a series of three incidents that occurred relatively concurrently along I-75 in Lee County.

The first incident involved a septic/sewage truck. The incident's cause isn't known, but the driver lost control near Alico road southbound and overturned. The truck was on top of and entangled in the steel guardrail and cable system. The wreckage blocked the left lane, shoulder, and median, and debris was scattered extensively. The first trooper to arrive felt the activation of RISC was not deemed as necessary.

ICA, the asset management contractors, responded and DBI stopped and offered assistance. After some minor confusion and coordination issues the road reopened gradually; one lane at a time.

Concurrently, as a result of the first incident, a secondary incident occurred with a Coastland road ranger vehicle which was parked inside the cones and in position behind the crash scene using its arrow board. The ranger truck was struck from behind by a tow truck driving past the scene, forcing the unoccupied road ranger vehicle into a Lee County Sheriff's vehicle. Secondary damage was done to a privately owned vehicle with the out of control tow truck. The only injury reported within this crash was to the tow truck operator and was very minor.

Approximately 5 miles further south at Corkscrew Road, a dump truck over turned. Lee County Sheriff's Office was the first to respond, but the TMC manager, Carlos Bonilla, viewed the incident through the cameras and enabled the RISC Program, even without the FHP Trooper on scene. There was some discussion about the proper traffic control devices set up by the responding wrecker company due to the concurrent incidents, but communication and cooperation were evident. The road closure lasted only 59 minutes. A Critical Incident Review was conducted during the June 9, 2010 Collier-Lee-Charlotte TIM Meeting.

The two major incidents had some similarity, but were handled differently; one with a single class "C" wrecker off of a rotation list, and the second with a full three-truck RISC response. Scene clearance time varied by approximately one hour. The RISC program preformed as it was supposed to in clearing the roadway within the 90 minute goal. There was a total of approximately 4 ½ hours from the time of the first incident to the time that all the lanes were opened. The second incident was clear in approximately 3 ½ hours, which was about an hour shorter.

The TMC communicated with the other local TMC locations in Miami and Tampa, and had ample information provided through 511. The motorist awareness reduced the amount of backup, with many taking alternate routes.

Two RISC program activations occurred in Tampa on July 14, 2010. The first crash involved a box truck on I-4, and a second one involved an overturned tractor trailer at MP 264 on I-75. They were cleared in less than an hour and 35 minutes respectively. Additionally, a secondary incident, a very serious motorcycle crash, occurred on the southbound side of the I-75 incident.

Kelly Kinney with Florida's Turnpike Enterprise reported they didn't have any incidents in the last six weeks, and then in the last two weeks, they have had four RISC incidents. Additionally, Kelly explained during the implementation of their program, they experienced issues with the troopers understanding where RISC was and was not warranted, and this caused some hesitation to activate the program. FHP was given the opportunity to call RISC for anything they felt was necessary. If it was called and unwarranted, then the responding agency received a bonus for arriving on scene. This seems to be working rather well.

## Presentation

Mr. Ted Smith of Delcan Corporation was scheduled to provide a short presentation regarding *The Practical use of Incident Command Systems*. Unfortunately, due to time constraints this presentation was not seen during this meeting, although presentation materials will be available on the TIM Team website located at <http://www.swftim.org>.

## Strategic Direction for TIM Teams 2010

The TIM Self-Assessment's history and purpose were discussed. After this discussion, details regarding the administration of the self assessment were discussed, and the series of 42 questions were answered as a group. Topics included topics such as Strategy, Tactics, and Support. Once Bill Fuller, District 1 TIM Manager, returns, three areas that need improvement and focus will be identified. These items will be provided to the Team members, and will be discussed over the next year of meetings.

## FDOT Construction Update

### Active Construction:

- Road Watch report for Polk: According to the report, the upcoming railroad construction project, there's going to be some survey crews working along I-4 in Polk County over the next week in prep for the high speed rail construction project.
- There's a project from County Road 557, from the overpass there to the Osceola County Line. The work is schedule to begin Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. Lane closures for the east bound work occurring between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. and westbound between 12 a.m. and 4 a.m.
- They're constructing a new interchange at the Polk Parkway at Pace Road in conjunction with the widening project from mile marker 22 to 24. There are no lane closures scheduled right now, but the project will add two lanes to the Polk Parkway between I-4 and Pace Road, and it's also adding Sun Pass only lanes in each direction at the eastern mainline toll plaza which currently does not have Sun Pass only lanes. That's scheduled for completion next fall, and there will be lane closures at some point in this project, just not at this time.

### Completed Construction:

- No Completed Construction projects were discussed.

### Anticipated Future Construction:

- It was mentioned that the High Speed Rail project from Tampa to Orlando has apparently been "fast-tracked" with an anticipated completion in 2015. The construction will be happening in two phases: median clearance and rail construction (at grade, with barrier wall separation). It is anticipated that the project limits are from the Orlando International Airport to downtown Tampa, with a stop in Lakeland.

Additional construction information is available on the FDOT website located at <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/construct/constmap/d1.shtm>.

## Open Forum

No open forum items were presented.

### **Future Meetings**

The next Polk County TIM Team meeting will be October 14, 2010 at 10:00am at the University of South Florida Polytechnic, 3433 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, Florida.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the District One TIM Team Manager, Mr. Bill Fuller at (239) 225-9815 or via email at [William.fuller@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:William.fuller@dot.state.fl.us).