



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

*October 15, 2009*  
*Meeting Minutes*

**Attendees:**

| <u>Name</u>      | <u>Agency</u>      | <u>Name</u>      | <u>Agency</u>            |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Henry Hays       | 511 Tampa          | Jim Hilbert      | FTE                      |
| Heather Cullaton | ARC Towing Service | David Tilki      | FTE                      |
| Joe Bolton       | Bolton's Towing    | Karl Menne       | ICA –Maintenance         |
| Bruce Hutcheson  | DBI Services       | Rick Grube       | City of Lakeland         |
| Ted Smith        | Delcan Corporation | Shawna Kennedy   | Metric Engineering, Inc. |
| John Burke       | FDLE               | Charles Stratton | Metric Engineering, Inc. |
| Chris Birozak    | FDOT               | Michael Blaze    | Polk County              |
| Don Olson        | FDOT               | Mike McArthur    | Stepp's Towing           |
| Dennis Murray    | FDOT               | Erika Wiker      | Tampa Bay RPC            |
| Kevin Salsbery   | FDOT               | Dean Empie       | Transfield Services      |
| Bruce Surrency   | FDOT               | Warren Weedon    | US Coast Guard           |
| Joseph Smothers  | FDOT               | Steve Webb       | Webb's Towing            |
| Greg Hennis      | FHP                |                  |                          |

**Call to Order:** The Polk County TIM Team meeting was held on Thursday, October 15, 2009 at 10:00 AM at the University of South Florida Polytechnic, 3433 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, 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 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.

511 Next Generation

The next generation of 511 technology was deployed in July 2009. Don explained that tracking has shown that the system is being used more than before. Don stressed the value in posting and dispersing accurate incident and construction information. Because the system is internet and telephony based, users are able to have alerts regarding their personalized travel routes sent as text messages to their cellular telephones.

A member asked about the 511 website camera video feeds. In response, it was mentioned that a project is in the initial planning stages at Central Office to be able to provide more video aggregation, as opposed to the handful of feeds that are currently available.

#### Tampa Bay SunGuide Center

Chris Birosak updated that the installation of additional ITS devices along I-4 has been completed. They are currently in the process of integrating all of those devices into the Tampa Bay SunGuide Center. No anticipated completion date was available.

#### Road Rangers

No Road Rangers were present for the meeting. Don reviewed the primary basis for having the Road Rangers Service Patrol program. In response to a Team member's question, it was mentioned that the Road Rangers are not responsible for activating a RISC response, but could provide communication support to the Tampa Bay SunGuide Center as well as responding law enforcement. The Tampa Bay SunGuide Center is responsible for activating a RISC response in Polk County.

It was also mentioned by Don that the Road Rangers recently have completed extensive Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) training that included incident scene safety, vehicle positioning, and MOT at a crash scene. Additionally, recent training included First Aid and CPR certification.

#### Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) & Tow Industry News

Currently, there is not an established RISC provider for Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) Polk Parkway, but the Enterprise has established the RISC provider for the Hillsborough County FTE roadways. A RISC solution for the Polk County Parkway may become a reality in the future.

Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida, Inc.'s (PWOFF) next show will be in April 2010. Further information will be provided to Don directly, and provided to any interested members of the TIM Team at a future meeting.

Additionally, one of the towing industry associations (PWOFF) is working with the Department and Motor Carrier Compliance regarding axle weights on the large response trucks. Ted followed up that there is legislation being proposed for increasing axle weights, but that the towing industry is only one component of the requests for legislation changes. Several other heavy haulers like refuse and sand/gravel are also lobbying for higher axle weights. Ted emphasized that there is a delicate balance between the infrastructure capabilities and the desires of the participating industries. Even within the FDOT there are conflicting views because large, very heavy tow truck like 'Rotators' are needed to clear major traffic incidents quickly, in order to meet the Open Roads policy.

#### Training

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. The video will also be available on the TIM Team website located at <http://www.swfltim.org>.

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

Ted and Jim Hilbert of Florida's Turnpike Enterprise reviewed a program that began in June 2009 on the Turnpike Mainline roadway that seeks to test an alternative to the current rotation system for light-duty tow provider response called the Towing and Roadside Repair (TARR) system. The program is a revenue-neutral program that, through a 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, the designated contractor for that road section is not selected for renewal and that sector 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. The TARR program has already seen an 84% on-time response rate, and is a follow-up program to the previously developed RISC program.

The State of Wisconsin is conducting extensive computerized alternative route studies. A computerized copy of all of the alternative routes for a given region, a copy of the local agency contacts for the region, and a copy of the procedures for using the alternate routes is presented to each regional law enforcement agency.

The State of Washington has begun using a program similar to RISC in the larger metropolitan areas, that they call *BlockBuster*. Although Washington doesn't have a Road Ranger or Service Patrol program, they have trained in TIM and provided fully-equipped vehicles to volunteer State Traffic Operations employees.

The State of Missouri has become the first state to receive funding for a separate "Truck Only Highway" on I-70 in central Missouri east of Kansas City. A video regarding the "Truck Only" lanes constructed in the median of I-70 was presented and will be available of the TIM Team website located at <http://www.swfltim.org>.

**Review of Recent Major Incidents**

I-4 Incident, Sunday, September 27, 2009

Several members of the team discussed an incident that occurred on I-4 through Polk County that included 23 separate vehicle crashes involving 131 vehicles, mostly in the westbound direction. Heavy rains contributed to the secondary crashes. There was minimal road blockage, but heavy on-looker delays were experienced on both east and westbound travel lanes. RISC was not required. The team recognized the limits of the I-4 Road Ranger Service Patrol and considered the role that could be played by the Bartow Maintenance Yard. The FDOT Maintenance staff at the Bartow Operations Center have on-call personnel and MOT resources to contribute to the scene safety and temporary MOT set-ups at traffic incidents.

**Presentation**

John Burke of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement provided a presentation regarding Domestic Security. Presentation materials will be available on the TIM Team website located at <http://www.swfltim.org>.

In response to the presentation, 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. Don discussed the desire for a regional cooperative training event.

**Strategic Direction for TIM Teams 2010**

Don welcomed ideas regarding the future of the TIM Team website. "Move-IT Laws," "Open Roads Policy," "Move Over Law," and the Tampa Bay SunGuide Center were all mentioned as a possible links. Also, Don would like to add a "Flash" of pictures of response vehicles. Don requested participants advise him of any incidents, training opportunities, or other materials that can be communicated Team-wide. Future TIM Team meetings will continue bi-monthly, as will the Newsletters.

Members of the Polk County TIM Team agreed to hold future meetings at the USF facility.

**FDOT Construction Update**

No construction updates were provided by the FDOT Bartow Operations Center.

**Open Forum**

Don also stressed, per Federal regulation, that all responders are required to wear the Type II or Type III approved safety vests. Ted supported the dialog with statistics regarding the deaths of tow operators during response. Additionally, Ted mentioned that there is a video called "Everybody Goes Home" available through the Towing and Recovery Association of America (TRAA) <http://www.towserver.net/products.htm>.

Ted mentioned that construction companies are experiencing losses with battery theft from the portable message signs. It has been requested that law enforcement be vigilant in monitoring the signs within their area.