



**Polk County
Traffic Incident Management Team**

*Team Meeting
September 11, 2008
Meeting Minutes*

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Rick Hartrog	Lakeland Fire	Heather Cullaton	ARC Towing Service
Ken Wade	Polk County Traffic	Shawn Collins	Lakeland Police Dpt
Scott Baver	EMS/IMS	Sgt. Tony Lewis	Lakeland Police Dpt
Ken Straub	SWS First Response	Joe Bolton	Bolton's Towing Service
Michael Blaze	Polk County Traffic	Robert Sessions	Polk County Sheriffs Office
Henry Hays	511 Tampa/traffic.com	Mike Meehan	511
Dennis Murray	FDOT	Patricia Kirby	FDOT
Mark Barnes	FDOT	Chris Birosak	FDOT
Robert Pitman	Polk County Fire	Gary Zipprer	DOF
Gary Weiss	ACT	David Tilki	FDOT Turnpike
Ronald Alney	5-A Towing	Rick Grube	City of Lakeland
Dean Empie	VMS, Inc.	Don Nix	City of Lakeland
Cinthya Williams	FHP	John O'Laughlin	Delcan Corp
Paulette Jones-Morris	FHP	Don Olson	FDOT
		Catalina Echeverri	VANUS

Call to Order: The Polk County TIM Team meeting was held on Thursday, September 11, 2008 at 9:30 AM at the Lakeland Florida Highway Patrol Station (Florida Driver License Division) 3247 Lakeland Hills Blvd. (SR 33) Lakeland, FL 33805. John O'Laughlin and Don Olson facilitated the meeting.

Introductions: Don Olson introduced himself and welcomed all the attendees to the Polk County TIM meeting. Don asked TIM team members to introduce themselves and share any news from the agencies they represent.

Update on TIM team initiative:

511

Don reminded the TIM Team that 511 Tampa Bay covers I-4, SR 98, SR 60 and a few other roads in Polk County. There is a tip line to report incidents; the number is 1-877-965-9700 or Nextel 162*19*195. Traffic conditions are updated from the information provided by the microwave detectors along the highways, news broadcasts, and police monitors. Travelers can use this information to decide what routes to take. Henry Hays stated that in the event of

emergencies, 511 can add an alert message for callers and display it on the website www.511tampabay.com.

RISC

The RISC contract is advertised and FDOT District 7/FHP Troop C will be adding a vendor for I-4 soon. Turnpike already has a contract with Stepps on Veterans.

Asset Management Notification

If there is any damage to the roadway or MOT setup is needed, Asset Management must be notified. The Asset Management Contractor for the Polk County Parkway is ICA, for I-4 in Hillsborough County the Contractor is VMS, and for I-4 in Polk County Asset Manager is FDOT. FDOT Bartow Operations Center is the main dispatch service for I-4 in Polk County. To notify FDOT Bartow Operations Center, please call (863) 519-4300 from 7:00am-5:30pm Monday thru Thursday, 8:00am to 5:00pm Fridays. In an emergency, call the same number 24 hours a day and the supervisor will be notified by the answering service.

TampaBay SunGuide Transportation Management Center (TMC) Update

A representative of the TMC was not in attendance. The TampaBay SunGuide TMC monitors all the ITS devices on I-4. Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) can post amber, silver, and emergency alerts based on FDLE/FDOT criteria. The TMC is working on Phase II of the "Single Point of Contact" initiative for I-4 in Polk County. TMC management is working on getting a notification number that is unique and has not yet been published. The TMC has identified over 1000 notification and resource contact points and are now confirming the information prior to publishing it.

Road Rangers

Due to the statewide budget cuts for the Road Ranger program, the hours of operation and the number of Road Rangers has been reduced. There is only one Road Ranger available 12 hours a day from 7:00am to 7:00pm. The Road Ranger FDOT Red Tag sticker for abandoned vehicles has been revised. The new tag includes a reference to statutes allowing the removal of abandoned vehicles from the road within 6 hours. The tags assist the FHP Troopers to address abandoned vehicles on I-4 and are highly visible from the roadway to minimize duplication of reporting. Road Rangers call the vehicle information into the TMC to start the time clock and thereby expediting the removal of the abandoned vehicle to mitigate this road hazard.

Contraflow

Don asked the members if anyone was involved in the I-4 Contraflow exercise that was conducted. Captain Cynthia Williams informed the TIM Team members that the demonstration lasted 9 hours. The intent of the exercise was to be prepared in the event of an evacuation from Tampa to Orlando. The exercise was done as a drill to identify how long it will take to prepare the roadway with proper MOT. Captain Williams stated that pre-designated exits will be available with gas and restrooms. A few weeks ago, as result of Hurricane Fay, the Turnpike started planning on a possible contraflow from Mile Marker (MM) 0 to MM 147 in the Florida Keys. The Turnpike realized that the plan needed another 450 troopers. They put a plan together from MM 0 to MM 272. Over 900 officers were needed for the proper flow of traffic. John mentioned that the contraflow plan in New Orleans covers 23 miles and it goes into Mississippi. When Hurricane Katrina was coming, the contraflow started 60 hours before the weather event made landfall and it was a success. They have done contraflow 6 times and it can be done on I-4 but it is a challenge.

Recently in Houston's Airport, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) mandated evacuation for its employees and people could not get through security. John asked if the plan for Tampa includes the airport. None of the members knew of a plan for the airport. There is no full contraflow exercise planned in the near future. If contraflow is implemented on I-4, FHP will be in charge of notifying any agency that needs to be involved.

Vehicle Positioning and Scene Safety

Don attended the MOT training for first responders in CUTR and share pictures with the TIM Team. The training included how the responder's vehicles and temporary traffic control devices must be placed while they are on the scene. Emergency vehicles with activated lights must be aware that drivers can be distracted by them, especially on-coming from the opposite direction. Emergency lights at the incident scene can be distracting to drivers and compete with MOT devices designed to channel traffic correctly and enhance safety at the incident scene. If possible, lights should be amber and shifted to the rear. When the training material is finalized, Don would like to go through the content during a future meeting. Chapter 6 of the MUTCD covers the minimum standard on temporary traffic control for construction zones. John recommends them to carry some MOT devices in the vehicles as a safety practice.

Effective November 24, 2008, all responders working at an incident on a Federal Highway must wear a Level II vest. John showed a video from www.respondersafety.com. The video shows the new safety vest which is geared for law enforcement and fire rescue with features like slits for weapons, pockets for radio, and five point break away shoulders. John mentioned other successful programs in different regions. Louisiana just passed the open roads law which mandates 4 hours of traffic management training for all responders. Training starts January 2009. Arizona has a radar system for speed enforcement. The system test was performed for one year on highway 101, and the accident rate was reduced by 54%.

Hands-free Cellphones

John stated that the TIM Team should take the lead to promote the use of hands-free devices. Laws have been passed in several states to ban people from using cellular phones while driving, but the law exempts law enforcement. The Turnpike has a policy in place that employees can not be on the phone while driving; not even using hands-free. Heather Cullaton stated that ARC Towing will be implementing a hands-free policy for all employees.

Other Initiatives

The paper prepared for AAA was distributed in the TIM Team meeting. "Crashes vs. Congestion – What's the Cost to Society?" which evaluates the costs of crashes versus the cost of congestion to society. The study was designed to raise awareness of the magnitude of a traffic crash. Billions of dollars are lost from our economy ... thus, traffic safety initiatives and quick clearance practices are more important than ever.

A TIM Team initiative from the first meeting for the Fire Department is the installation of Opticom at a specific intersection. FDOT is willing to assist in any way they can, and an anticipated official request has to come from Polk County Traffic Operations to install the Opticom units. FDOT's Don Cashdollar is the point of contact for Polk County, (863) 519-2553.

Incident Review:

The incident discussed in the meeting was a hit and run pedestrian fatality on SR 60. The incident was well handled during full lane closure for investigation. Traffic was re-routed to the opposite side of the split highway and flowing well with a well designed MOT set up.

Other Team Issues:

- Asset Management is requesting responders to record the mile marker of incidents on their crash report to facilitate the repairs and cost recovery. New signs have been affixed to the guardrail every 10th of a mile to identify the Mile Marker. FHP is equipped with GPS in the vehicles and in the future the coordinates will be included in the reports. Currently, this practice is also being pursued on I-75 where the cable barrier is installed. Another issue from asset management is to get the responders cooperation in keeping debris under control when they clear the scene.
- The Notification and Agency Resource Guide (NARG) includes all the contacts but is typically outdated by the time it is published. Don proposed to have a web based NARG as a resource for agencies. The TMC in District 7 is putting together a guide for the I-4 roadway. Don will have to work on the Polk County information. If any of the TIM Team Members want to be included please send information to Don.
- Weekly Construction/Maintenance updates can be found on the FDOT website: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/construc/district1pio/polk.shtm>
- Binders with TIM Team information are completed to take to agencies. If any agency would like Don to attend and talk about TIM Team initiatives, philosophy, and principles please contact Don. Agency's TIM Team representative will receive a binder.
- For the Super Bowl 2009, many of the sponsors will be staying in Orlando and Lakeland. Tampa Bay SunGuide Center had a meeting with the Super Bowl committee and were informed that over 800 buses would be arriving from the south and 300 buses will be coming from the Orlando Airport. 511 will be giving constant updates on traffic conditions. Four TMCs will be involved for this event. Possibly the Road Ranger shift will be moved from noon to midnight on Super Bowl Sunday. Tow companies should be prepared with adequate equipment to assist disabled buses. Most Commercial Vehicle Traffic (CVO) will occur during the three days preceding the event.

Useful web sites:TIM Teams: www.swfltim.orgTraining Material: www.respondersafety.com**Scheduled 2008 Meeting Dates:**

Thursday, December 11, 2008

Meeting Notes by Catalina Echeverri and Christina Florez, VANUS, Inc. (305) 823-5662