



Polk Traffic Incident Management Team

*March 12, 2009
Meeting Minutes*

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Dean Empie	Transfield Services Inc	Micky Harrison	FDOT
Mike McArthur	Stepp's Towing	Michael Moran	Traffic Supervisor
Robert Pitman	Polk County Fire	Jim Hilbert	TMC Program Manager
David Tilki	FDOT Turnpike	Gregg Losey	FDOT
Randall L. Barfield	A-C-T	Greg Hennis	FHP
Cynthia Williams	FHP	Ted Smith	Delcan Corp
Robb L Knight	FHP	Don Olson	FDOT
Kevin Salsbery	FDOT	Catalina Echeverri	VANUS

Call to Order: The Polk TIM Team meeting was held on Thursday, March 12, 2009 at 9:30 AM at the Lakeland Florida Highway Patrol Station (Florida Driver License Division) 3247 Lakeland Hills Blvd. (SR 33) Lakeland, Florida. Ted Smith and Don Olson facilitated the meeting.

Introductions: Don Olson introduced himself and welcomed all the attendees to the Polk County TIM Team meeting. Don asked TIM team members to introduce themselves and share any news from the agencies they represent. Don announced the Polk County's TIM Team 1 year anniversary.

Update on T I M Initiatives:

Southwest Florida 511 System

The next generation of 511 is anticipated to be coming out in the spring of 2009. The 511 databases are populated by the ITS devices along I-4 for increased accuracy. Automatic messages from the 511 database with traffic times will be posted on the new website and operators will post on dynamic message signs over the highway. The next generation 511 will have customization features to program routes and receive notifications by text message or email when incidents or delays are reported. Also, billboards are going up along the highways to publicize 511. The goal is that people will recognize the 511 as a household name, similar to the 911.

Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC)

Stepp's Towing is the contractor for RISC in Polk County. RISC has been activated 4 times from the Tampa Bay SunGuide Center. A similar program is currently active in Atlanta, Georgia

called the Towing and Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP). Statistics show that the average time for roadway clearance was reduced from 269 minutes to 106 minutes (on average) between 2007 and 2008. FHP and FDOT developed a RISC training disk with the anticipation that the training will be available online in the future. Don reiterated that RISC contractors will set up fluorescent pink warning signs designated by the MUTCD at a crash scene.

Road Rangers

The funding for 2 Road Rangers on I-4 is approved within the current fiscal budget between January 1st through June 31st. They are covering I-4 in Polk County for 12 hours during the day. Both Road Rangers have been busy responding to incidents, making extensive use of their specialized equipment. District 5 and District 7 Road Rangers pick up the coverage at the county lines for total Road Ranger coverage on I-4 in Florida. I-275 in Pinellas and Hillsborough County is covered by District 7 Road Rangers on the North end of the skyway bridge. The coverage on the South end of the bridge was abandoned due to inactivity. Don stated that the Road Ranger originally dedicated to the Southern I-275 roadway between MM 00 and MM 17 seemed to have little activity based on his experience and computer analysis. When program budget cuts were implemented, this Road Ranger coverage area was one of the beats that were cut. FHP suggested that one Road Ranger could work the evenings up to about 10PM and work the weekends. It was also noted that on Saturdays and Sundays I-4 starts to back up from theme park traffic around 9:00AM and remains heavy most of the day. Don will explore the possibility of alternate hours for 1 of the 2 Road Rangers.

The new 800MHz radios are in and the Road Rangers have a 2 channel talk group for dispatch communication and also have access to the mutual aid channels. The statewide mutual aid channel could be used to communicate with on-scene Troopers and Fire/Rescue.

Additional Topics

The "Open Roads Policy" local document was distributed in the meeting as an example of local agreements between FDOT Secretary Cann and a local agency leader. This document explains the agreement between the FDOT and the Florida Highway Patrol to expedite the removal of vehicles after an incident. It establishes a 90 minutes or less goal for opening all travel lanes when possible. An agreement like this demonstrates commitment to clearing roads as safely and quickly as possible to reduce congestion and the potential for secondary incidents.

Table Top Exercise

The following table top exercise was completed in order to assist in opening the lines of communication and interaction between agencies. The TIM Team members in attendance were divided into 2 teams. From this exercise, it was determined that the participants agreed on the process for notification and Incident Command. The differing perspectives allowed the participants to view the incident and response from different aspects (i.e. some considered the importance of notifying the media, diversion routes, asset management, environmental agency, State Warning Point). The consensus was that a Unified Incident Command is a necessity and that constant communication is critical. Notification of incidents to TIM Team member agencies is paramount.

Incident

A truck tractor pulling a tank trailer loaded with 7,900 gallons of unleaded gasoline was traveling westbound on Interstate 4 near Polk City, Florida. The truck driver swerved to miss a slower vehicle that had changed lanes to avoid some debris in a travel lane. The trailer impacted the left barrier wall on the approach to a small bridge over a creek. The creek flows into a lake

about ¼ mile to the South. The rear compartment ruptured and the spilled gasoline was ignited. The truck driver managed to steer and brake the rig to a stop and run from the vehicle as it was totally engulfed in flames.

- Burning fuel spread across the westbound lanes and flowed into the roadway catch basins and bridge drains. The smoke and heat quickly became so intense that traffic in both directions stopped completely shutting down the entire interstate.
- Some of the concrete pavement in the area of the fire began to pop and explode leaving numerous pot hole sized craters in the surface.

Questions

1. *It is 3:15 PM, on a Wednesday. How will this incident be detected and how long after the crash?*
2. *Who would likely be the first agencies notified?*
3. *What should be their initial actions?*
4. *What additional agencies and resources would be notified?*
5. *Who would be responsible for making both the primary and secondary tier notifications?*
6. *Ideally what role would each of these agencies play in resolving this incident?*
7. *Estimate the expected duration of the incident. Would both directions of travel remain closed during this entire period?*
8. *Considering all the specifics of the incident, the team now needs to develop a detailed Traffic Management Plan based on the impact and duration.*

Construction/Maintenance Update:

Weekly project information can be found on the FDOT website:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/construc/constmap/d1roadwatch.htm>

Incident Review:

1. The first incident occurred last month on 2/4/2009 impacting Interstate-4. The Polk County Sheriff's Office is working a homicide investigation in the Polk City area. As a result, officials were forced to close I-4 Westbound to traffic for an indefinite period of time during Wednesday morning's rush hour. I-4 WB is shut down at Exit 44 in Polk City. Traffic heading westbound is being diverted to get off at Exit 44 onto C.R. 559, then to S.R. 33, and then back onto I-4 westbound from S.R. 33.

After a murder took place in Polk City the night before, a suspect was spotted and followed by deputies along I-4. A deputy deployed stop sticks, and the suspect's vehicle stuck a deputy's marked patrol car. The suspect abandoned the vehicle and ran into a lake, was later spotted by the PSO helicopter, however; then refused to come out to surrender, and unfortunately drowned according to the news article. The team identified prompt communications between PSO 911 and FDOT TMC as a future process improvement that will benefit the Tampa Bay SunGuide Center (FHP TBRCC and FDOT TMC) and will work to build the TMC into the communication flow chart. The TMC will notify FDOT Maintenance crews to set up temporary MOT and also be able to post messages on 511, DMS and through the FDOT PIO. These improvements will add safety and enhance TIM Team functionality. Tampa Bay SunGuide Center operates the I-4 roadway in Polk County from a state-of-the-art Traffic Management Center (TMC) in Tampa.

2. The second incident occurred on March 6, on SR 60 just West of Lake Wales near Alturas Rd. The involved vehicles were traveling Eastbound on SR 60. One of the vehicles was pulling an empty agricultural trailer. The crash caused the vehicle with the trailer to overturn in the

median of the highway and across the Westbound lanes. The other vehicle also rolled an unknown number of times coming to a rest in the median. Both eastbound and westbound lanes of SR 60 were closed to bring in a medical helicopter and ground transport ambulance. This crash occurred at about 11:39AM closing the highway for several hours Friday afternoon as deputies conducted their on-scene investigation and cleared the wrecked vehicles. The FHP is grateful for the traffic incident management support that the Polk County Sheriff's Office provided at this crash scene. Traffic was diverted around the crash scene on a local detour road and SR60 lanes were opened to traffic once the scene was secure. A secondary crash was reported in the traffic queue about 4:49PM. Two vehicles were involved traveling Eastbound on SR 60. One of the vehicles with a boat in tow rolled over twice after steering to avoid the crash. Additionally, the trailer became disconnected and the boat in tow became unsecured from the trailer. The boat trailer crashed into the other vehicle in front. One TIM Team member thought that a Medical Helicopter was dispatched to this incident also.

The TIM Team discussed the benefits that could be realized by the development of pre-planned diversion routes for major roadways in Polk County. The Southwest Florida TIM Teams have adopted the next phase of the diversion route project for 2009. This is an initiative that began in TIM Teams during the 2005 meetings. A report was generated which details the map standardization and diversion route planning requirements that will result in a comprehensive plan for FDOT District 1 roadways in all twelve counties. Additionally, FDOT stressed the benefits they bring to the TIM crash scene and detour routes in terms of MOT devices. The Bartow Maintenance Yard is ready, willing and able to provide MOT at long-term crash scenes and detour routes and desires prompt notification so they can mobilize in a timely manner. The 24/7 notification number and helpful information is: [Call \(863\) 519-4300](tel:8635194300) and explain the situation including locations, severity, current status and what will be possibly needed onsite immediately.

Scheduled 2009 Meeting Dates:

June 11

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