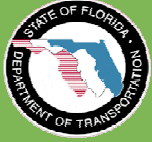




26th Edition

Polk County Traffic Incident Management Team

May 2009



Road Ranger Service Patrols See Positive Change in Operations

FDOT District One will invest additional funding into the Road Ranger Service Patrol program this year to include enhanced training, improved communications devices, and increased hours of service.



Efforts to win a sponsorship will continue. Careful research projects and TIM Team member experiences have resulted in revealing positive benefits to society which warrant continued funding of the program. On May 21, 2009, FDOT Secretary Kopelousos signed the updated Road Ranger program procedure with a purpose to establish a uniform and consistent statewide Road Ranger program that supports Florida's **Open Roads Policy**. This program provides incident management response services and limited, no-cost highway assistance to motorists to improve highway safety for emergency responders and the motoring public. The mission of the Road Ranger Service Patrol is to respond to traffic incidents in order to mitigate negative impacts to motorist safety. Simultaneously, Road Ranger Service Patrols work to enhance incident scene safety with a focus on temporary maintenance of traffic and quick clearance. These incident response vehicles are specially outfitted to complete this mission, and the Road Ranger Service Patrol operators receive specialized training to become certified. The Road Ranger Service Patrol program has evolved over the years to add value to the benefits of all stakeholders. The first class of Road Ranger Service Patrol operators will be certified this year in District One by Anchor Towing.

Bob Diezi has been promoted to Road Ranger Service Patrol supervisor for operations in Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee and the Sunshine Skyway Bridge. Bob has many years of experience in Service Patrol operations and team leadership. – Don Olson

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.

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Upcoming Events:

TIM Team Meeting – June 11, 2009

The Dori Slosberg and Katie Marchetti Safety Belt Law



Governor Crist sign Senate Bill 344 on May 6, 2009 mandating the use of seatbelts in motor vehicles, effective June 30, 2009. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates primary enforcement

will prevent 142 fatalities in Florida each year. Florida is the 27th State to lawfully require seat belt use and authorize primary enforcement of safety belts in automobiles. According to the NHTSA, seat belt use is the most effective protection against serious crash injuries, reducing risk by 50 percent. Primary seat belt laws enable police officers to stop a driver and write a citation if they see a violation, similar to other traffic infractions. Additionally, NHTSA estimates that, with the passage of this primary law, Florida will prevent 1,733 serious injuries, and save \$408 million in associated costs each year.

– Don Olson



HURRICANE SEASON **09**

BE PREPARED

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), reviewed and assessed Federal and State evacuation plans for catastrophic hurricanes and other catastrophic events impacting the Gulf Coast region and reported its recommendations to Congress. Some of the recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop regional plans for mass evacuations in connection with catastrophic incidents
 - I-4 One Way Evacuation Plan handout is attached:
2. Conduct Regional exercises to test plans and decision making structures
 - The FDOT Evacuation Plan field exercise was held in 2008
3. Review the National Response Framework
 - See: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/>
4. Engage State and Local DOT agencies in evacuation planning and implementation
 - TIM Teams are an excellent forum to discuss evacuation issues
5. State and Local agencies should develop systems to provide information to evacuees and emergency managers during the course of evacuations on the status of traffic, shelters, fuel, and other services along evacuation routes
 - FL511, PIO Media Releases from State and Local Emergency Operations Centers

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. The new FEMA Administrator is Craig Fugate, formerly Florida's Director of Emergency Management. During hurricane season, residents of coastal Florida are particularly vulnerable to the storm threat. One of the main responsibilities of the **FDOT** in emergency situations is to assist with planning and carrying out evacuations using the state's highways. These evacuations can potentially involve relocating millions of people from a threatened area and seeing that they reach shelter in a safe, timely manner. – Don Olson

- Florida Division of Emergency Management
<http://www.floridadisaster.org>
- Florida Highway Patrol traffic information
<http://www.fhp.state.fl.us/traffic/>
- Florida Department of Transportation
<http://www.dot.state.fl.us>
- Statewide 511 Traveler Information
<http://fl511.com>
- Florida's Turnpike
<http://www.floridasturnpike.com>
- National Hurricane Center Forecasts
<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>
- National Weather Service Radar Sites
<http://radar.weather.gov>



T I M TEAM NEW WEBSITE!

www.swfltim.org

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, or would like to submit an article, please contact Don Olson at don.olson@dot.state.fl.us.

The Polk 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 bi-monthly.

