

# SMART MOVES

FDOT District Four ITS Quarterly Newsletter  
March 2010



## New Signs Offer Drivers a Heads up before Reaching Interstate

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four has recently completed testing and is now actively using 34 new Arterial Dynamic Message Signs along the Interstate 75 and 95 corridors in Broward County. These smaller profile signs are located on feeder roads to the highway and are connected directly to FDOT's SMART SunGuideRegionalTransportation Management Center (RTMC) in Fort Lauderdale.

Similar to the 29 large Dynamic Message Signs on the highways, these new arterial signs will display incident messages letting drivers

know when lanes are blocked on the highway. The advantage of the arterial location is that drivers will have time to choose an alternate route before entering the highway. The signs are located on most of the major arterial routes approaching I-95 and on Pines Boulevard and Miramar Parkway approaching I-75.

As the new signs were installed around the county, FDOT also deployed two sets of Roadway Weather Information Systems sensors, six new Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) transmitter locations and 13 advisory beacons. These devices add to the means of

collecting and disseminating travel information. Motorists can tune to 1660 AM radio to listen to HAR announcements, which broadcasts 24 hours a day. Construction information is updated on a weekly basis and incident information is posted real-time.

"We are constantly improving Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in South Florida, and these signs give even more access to real-time traffic condition reports," said Daniel Smith, FDOT District Four ITS Operations Manager.

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SMART SunGuide TMC  
2300 W. Commercial Blvd.  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309  
Phone: (954) 847-2785



# The 2009 Annual Report Highlights 5 Initiatives

The SMART SunGuide 2009 ITS Annual Report illustrates how the ITS Unit achieved its vision “to be the best TMC in the nation by 2010.” The vision was not only about growth, but also about overcoming challenges and streamlining processes. In this report, you will read how the ITS Unit maintained a relatively consistent Net Present Value despite many “changes,” started expanding ITS into the Treasure Coast, and

developed a new program to improve close to \$14 in return by way of services to motorists. The ITS Unit also had 5 initiatives in 2009, all of which are described in the report.

To read online or download your copy, visit [www.SMARTSunGuide.com/SMARTDocs.aspx](http://www.SMARTSunGuide.com/SMARTDocs.aspx).

## New Power Distribution System

Hurricane season runs from June through November. With that comes the increased chance of losing power due to a storm. Since District Four uses Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras as its eyes on the road and knows power is required for them to function, it has taken preventive measures to eliminate down time due to power outages.

Previously, each device location required a power drop from Florida Power & Light (FPL). Recently, the District installed a power distribution system along the I-95 corridor in Broward County, which includes distribution locations approximately every six miles. Each location has a large generator to provide power when FPL cannot. The District can run the generator while waiting for FPL to address the power outage in the area, keeping the ITS operations running as usual.

With this capability, the RTMC can share information with motorists as they may be returning to the area after a hurricane evacuation. Even under a regional power outage, motorists would see signs displaying information about what roads may be closed and Road Rangers would be available for incident management and assistance. None of this would be possible without the use of the CCTV cameras, dynamic message signs and other devices.

The power distribution system’s main benefit is maximized/continued device uptime during a power loss. However, reduced power drops also save time and effort for FPL and the state in coordinating installation and maintenance. The I-95 corridor in Broward County has recently been completed and the concept has been built into deployments in Palm Beach County and the Treasure Coast.



# The 2009 SMART SunGuide Awards

The SMART SunGuide Awards recognize the dedication and service of those individuals who performed above and beyond the call of duty. Awards are given to employees of the SMART SunGuide RTMC and partnering agencies. The awards ceremony was held on February 15, 2010.

This year, the RTMC received an award from the Florida Highway Patrol, Troop L. It was for “facilitating remote access to the Broward County closed circuit television network along I-75 Alligator Alley, I-95 and I-595. This valuable resource at Troop L’s Traffic Operations Center in Davie makes the highway patrol station one of the only stations in the southern United States with the ability to monitor a one-way evacuation plan from its own building. The CCTV network also allows command staff the ability to remotely monitor incidents, save on response time and improve deployment of FHP and FDOT resources.”

Following is a list of individuals that were recognized for their outstanding service during 2009:

**Road Ranger: Newcomer of the year**

Richard Roberts

**Road Ranger: Continued Excellence**

Wanda Williams

**Road Ranger: Dedication to Motorist Assistance**

Theo Seneck

**TIM: Participation and Contribution in meetings**

Captain Terry Gartner

**ITS Operations: Customer Service and Mentoring**

Robert Meisinger

**ITS Management: Innovation and Leadership**

Dee McTague

**ITS Maintenance: Dedication to System Availability**

Carl Smith

**Road Watcher: Dedication to Motorist Safety**

Patrick Freiwald

**Public Partnering: Commitment to Teamwork**

State Farm Insurance

**Outstanding Achievement: “SunGuide” Award**

Florida Department of Transportation District

Four Procurement Unit



L-R: Lt. Gene Hingson, FHP Troop L; Dong Chen, FDOT District Four ITS Program Manager; Sgt. Mark Wysocky, FHP Troop L

# Silver Alert Resolved by Broward Road Ranger and Transportation Management Center

On December 23, 2009, SMART SunGuide RTMC operators received one of the last Silver Alerts of the year. It was for a man from Hernando County, hundreds of miles away from Broward County. Fortunately, an alert operator who was monitoring a disabled vehicle on I-75/Alligator Alley was able to quickly put the pieces together.

SMART SunGuide RTMC Operator Robert Meisinger was routinely handling a car that had pulled over to the shoulder. He dispatched Road Ranger Richard Roberts to the scene. Roberts arrived soon after being dispatched, identified the vehicle and provided the motorist a gallon of gas to get on his way.

Moments later, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) issued a Silver Alert from Brooksville, Florida, with the same license plate number. Meisinger was entering this data into the SunGuide system and immediately realized it was the same tag number as the motorist Roberts had just assisted.

Meisinger instantly called Roberts on the radio but the motorist had already left the scene. Electronic message signs throughout South Florida displayed the Silver Alert message and the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) and local police were notified of the information the RTMC knew.

While Roberts and law enforcement looked for the vehicle on the ground, Meisinger was checking the closed-circuit camera network along I-75. He spotted a disabled vehicle on the shoulder at Miramar Parkway just as Road Ranger Roberts was pulling up to the scene. Roberts confirmed it was the same vehicle with Michigan tags. FHP was dispatched to the scene, and contacted George's family for his safe return home.

Both Meisinger and Roberts were commended by their co-workers for their quick work as well as recognized at the Broward County Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team. Success in resolving vehicle alerts of any kind is truly a team effort.



L-R: Bob Murphy, TIM Team Project Manager; Rob Meisinger, RTMC Operator; Richard Roberts, Road Ranger; Guy Francese, FDOT Freeway Operations Manager.

## Strategic Business Plan



In 2006, FDOT District Four prepared an ITS Strategic Business Plan with a vision to “become the best TMC in the nation by 2010.”

The plan provided a roadmap that included specific actions to support this vision. Many of these actions were completed during the first three years of the five-year plan. The “2015 ITS Strategic Business Plan Update” provides strategies that extends the time frame of the plan to the year 2015. The vision is to continue to “be the best TMC.” Furthermore, the mission is “to continuously provide outstanding ITS services to internal and external customers” based on the following central mobility themes: managed lanes, Transportation System Management & Operations (TSM&O) and being a service provider. Visit [www.SMARTSunGuide.com/SMARTDocs.aspx](http://www.SMARTSunGuide.com/SMARTDocs.aspx) to review the 2015 ITS Strategic Business Plan.

# **TIME 4 SAFETY DVD Offers No-Cost Training**

TIM in '10. If you haven't heard about it, you soon will. The statewide training initiative is a joint project between the FDOT and FHP in coordination with our other TIM partners. The goal is to train every first responder in TIM by the end of the year 2010. The effort includes all state, county and local law enforcement agencies; county, municipal and volunteer fire-rescue agencies, and towing service companies. To accomplish this goal, first responder agencies in FDOT District Four are receiving a copy of a training video, TIME 4 SAFETY, to incorporate in their training programs. The video, which was produced by the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization with the help of first responder agencies in the Jacksonville area, highlights the importance of understanding other agencies' roles and procedures at a crash scene, so everyone can work together as a team to clear incidents faster and safer. The video contains information on such topics as proper parking at incident scenes, the use of emergency lighting to avoid distractions to passing motorists, the use of safety equipment and how to set up Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) for different scenarios.

The Treasure Coast TIM Coordinator, Chuck McGinness, personally

delivered TIME 4 SAFETY DVDs to 14 law enforcement and fire rescue agencies and 2 towing companies (RISC contractors) in Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties. Three agencies – St. Lucie County Fire District, Port St. Lucie Police and the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office -- received DVDs at the November TIM meeting. Among these 19 agencies and companies, there are approximately 2,300 personnel who are slated to receive TIM training.

The agencies are using different strategies to disseminate the information. Martin County Sheriff's Office and Fire Rescue are located in the same complex and will show the video during their joint training sessions. Indian River Fire Rescue posted the video on its intranet training site for employees to watch as their schedule permits. Indian River Sheriff's Office plans to show it during roll call training and include corrections officers from the county jail.

Interest in the training program was extremely high among smaller agencies that are not regular members of the Treasure Coast TIM Team. Fort Pierce Police is moving ahead with roll call training for all road patrol officers and community service aides. Capt. Frank Amandro, head of

the Administrative Services Bureau, said Police Chief R. Sean Baldwin considers traffic incident management training "an important issue." In Jupiter Island, where vehicles and golf carts share town roads with speed limits of 20 mph, Public Safety Chief Ted Gonzales said he also feels TIM training is important for his officers.

Budget cutbacks may prevent agencies from acquiring new equipment, but not from receiving TIM training. Sebastian Police Chief Michelle Morris made TIME 4 SAFETY mandatory viewing. Officers admitted to having a chuckle while watching the video. "When's the truck with all of the cones going to show up?" they asked themselves. Sebastian officers often only have a couple of orange triangles to use for Maintenance of Traffic on minor incidents. In Fellsmere, a small residential community in northern Indian River County, Police Chief Scott Melanson said his officers don't encounter a lot of the scenarios depicted in the video, but the importance of safety on all traffic calls cannot be stressed enough.

If you would like to receive a copy of the TIME 4 Safety DVD, please contact Guy Francese at Gaetano. Francese@dot.state.fl.us.

## **2009 "ITS Cares" Bear Collection**

The annual "ITS Cares" SMART SunGuide RTMC brought in over 600 stuffed bears and animals. These stuffed bears and animals were presented to Sergeant Mark Wysocky, Public Affairs Officer from FHP Troop "L" for their Care Bear program. FHP Troopers keep these stuffed animals in their patrol cars to give them to children who may be involved in a traumatizing event.

The stuffed animals that are too large to fit into the FHP patrol car will be donated to the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, Chris Evert Children's Hospital in Fort Lauderdale and the Dan Marino Children's Hospital in Weston.

This year's effort was successful thanks to partner agencies placing donation boxes in their building.

Donations came from I-595 Express, LLC, AECOM Sunrise, Broward County Traffic Engineering Division, FDOT District Four, Highland Wireless, Palm Beach TMC, and Transcore.

If you would like to be involved in 2010 collection, please contact Sarah Stanley at Sarah.Stanley@smartsunguide.com.

## Indian River State College Hosts TIM Meeting

The Treasure Coast TIM Team held its first meeting of 2010 on Jan. 21 at Indian River State College's (IRSC) new Public Safety Training Complex. About 30 TIM Team members gathered in Room 112 of the Robert Burroughs Fire Station and Training Center for the meeting, which included a Post Incident Analysis on the January 8 truck fire on Interstate 95 under the St. Lucie West Boulevard overpass. Northbound lanes on I-95 were closed for nine hours and the fire caused significant damage to the bridge, which was shut down for nine days for repairs.

Following the meeting, team members took a tour of the \$40 million, 50-acre complex, getting an up-close look at the virtual reality use-of-force training simulator, emergency operations center, three-story tactical shoot house, state-of-the-art indoor firearms range, fire suppression lab and six-story fire training tower among other facilities. IRSC is seeking funding to expand the complex to include a mock disaster village on an adjacent parcel. The Treasure Coast complex is one of the most complete public safety training centers throughout the country, offering degrees and specialized training for local, state and federal officials in criminal justice, fire science, emergency management, paralegal studies and homeland security and defense. The TIM Team presented Stephen Huntsberger, IRSC's associate dean of public service education, with a copy of the TIME 4 SAFETY training DVD for inclusion in the law enforcement and fire science curriculum.



## Over 85 Attend D4 Quick Clearance Workshop

The FDOT District Four TIM Team along with the I-95 Corridor Coalition hosted the "I-95 Corridor Coalition Quick Clearance Responder Workshop" on Tuesday, February 23, 2010.

As a result of an earlier study on Quick Clearance and Move-It Best Practices, conducted by I-95 Corridor Coalition, they developed a TIM/QC Toolkit and a Responder Workshop to present these best practices and lessons learned. The workshop provided a detailed presentation of TIM and Quick Clearance (QC) policies and procedures that are essential to improve incident management and public safety. The successful implementation of a Quick Clearance program is a tremendous benefit to the movement of individuals and freight throughout our nation's highways. All the attendees were given an entire TIM/QC Toolkit, which covered responder roles and suggested responsibilities in detail.

Many of the attendees who participated in the workshop were District Four TIM Team members from Broward, Palm Beach, and Treasure Coast. Other TIM Teams in the South Florida area, including District Six Miami-Dade, District One Southwest Florida, and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, were also represented.

If you would like additional information regarding the TIM Team, please contact Guy Francese at Gaetano. Francese@dot.state.fl.us.



L-R: Guy Francese, FDOT District Four Freeway Operations Manager; Chuck McGinness, Treasure Coast TIM Team Coordinator