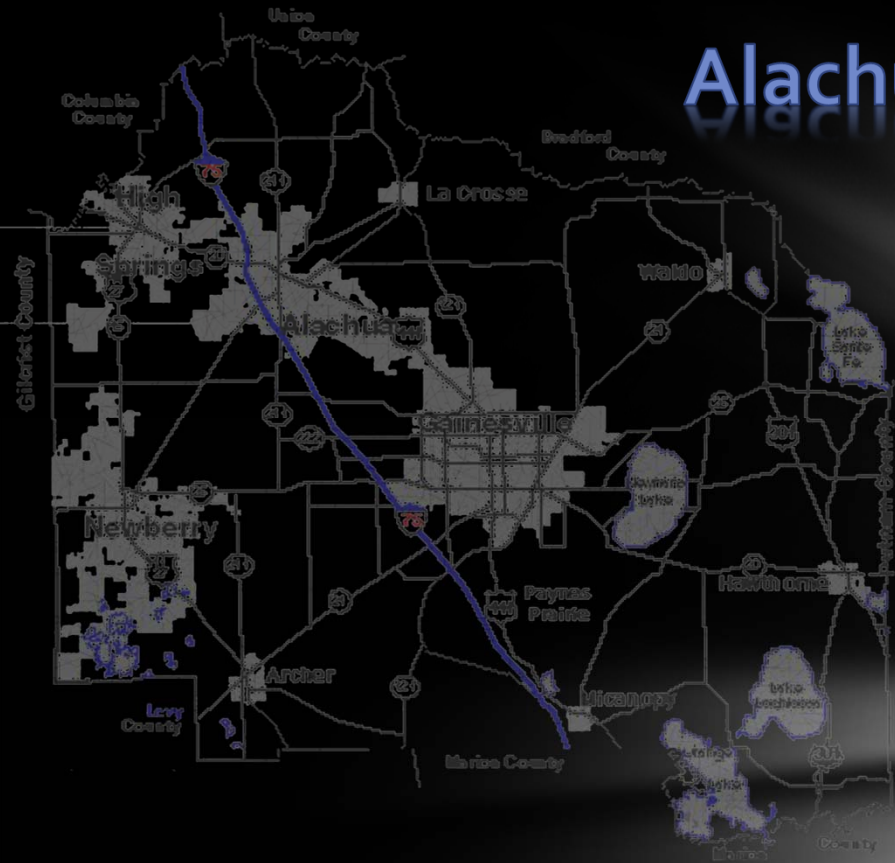


Alachua County, FL



TIM Newsletter

July /August 2011 Edition
Volume 1



TIM Newsletter

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Introduction

Welcome to our first Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team Newsletter!

Since this is the first issue of our newsletter, I wanted to let you know a little of our team's history. In future editions, you will learn more about our team and the members who make it such a success.

Our Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team is one of the greatest in the state and we are continually evolving in our efforts to provide a safe and efficient roadway system for motorists traveling in Florida.

The team started out as the *I-75 Freeway Management Team* under the leadership of Jim Scott on October 14, 1992. Many dedicated responder agencies and personnel worked together to create this team. By 2000, Jim handed the leadership over to Don Drury, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Traffic Operations, and through the years that followed, the name of the Team changed to *Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team*. In February 2004, under the management of Peter Vega, District Two Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Engineer, I was given the honor of leading the Traffic Incident Management Teams.

The Alachua County members voted to include Bradford County as a team member so we now have two counties represented. The Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team is successful because all agencies are very much aware that the key is working together as a

team. It is understood we get more done by working together to assist and learn from each other and are all focused on the goals of quick clearance, remembering the importance of safety for all responders as well as the traveling public.

Our team has many accomplishments to our credit. Along with bi-monthly debriefing of incidents and on-going training, we have developed and implemented many memorandums of understanding and guidelines to include: *Alachua Local Open Roads Policy, Spill Mitigation Guidelines, Move-It Law, Move-Over Law and our District Two Diversion Routes*, to name a few.

Our mission and vision statements are taken seriously.

Mission

The Florida Department of Transportation District Two's Traffic Incident Management Teams through partnering efforts strive to continuously reduce incident scene clearance times to deter congestion and improve safety. The Teams' objective is to exceed the 'Open Roads

Policy' thus ensuring mobility, economic prosperity and quality of life.

Vision

Through cooperation, communication and training the teams intend to reduce incident scene clearance times by 10 percent each year through 2015.



I am very proud of the Alachua Traffic Incident Management Team and as you read these newsletters you will see why. Again, Welcome!

**Donna Danson - FDOT District Two
Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team
Project Manager**

Emergency Management Update

By the time you read this article, we will be two months into, or a third of the way through, the 2011 hurricane season. The storm prediction from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for this year is as follows:

- ✓ 12 to 18 named storms
- ✓ Six to 10 of the named storms could become hurricanes
- ✓ Three to six of the hurricanes could become major hurricanes (Category 3 or greater)

Dr. William Gray from Colorado State University (the most well-known hurricane prognosticator) has the following predictions for the 2011 season:

- ✓ 16 named storms
- ✓ Nine of the named storms will become hurricanes
- ✓ Five of the hurricanes will become major hurricanes (Category 3 or greater)

The main problem with the annual storm predictions still remains the fact that we do not have the technology to predict where the storms will go. Once a storm forms, NOAA and the National Hurricane Center can predict with a good degree of accuracy where the storm will go. However, there is no way to predict pre-season/pre-storm, how many storms will make landfall or where they will make landfall.

I have been saying for many years that it doesn't matter how many storms there are, it only takes one to ruin your day. If one hurricane hits us, we will say we had a bad year. If there are 20 named storms, 12 hurricanes and six major hurricanes, but they all stay out in the Atlantic and don't make landfall, we will say we had a good year.

So, don't get caught up in the numbers. Only worry about the one that comes our way. Having said all that, please don't get so complacent that you fail to prepare. We must be prepared for the worst. Make sure you and all your co-workers have a personal preparedness plan. It's too late to start planning when the storm hits. Plan now!

Since January, and up to the time of this writing, there have been 3,851 wildfires in Florida, which have burned a total of 200,462 acres. There have been two fatalities (both Division of Forestry workers in Hamilton County) and 14 injuries directly related to the wildfires. The entire state is still under the Governor's Wildfire Executive Order 11-128.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) responded to a request from Bradford County to help with dust control on a local road. The road was being used by the Division of Forestry and Bradford County vehicles to fight the Santa Fe II wildfire. The dust being created by the large firefighting equipment was unbearable for the residents and a day care center located along the road.

The request was for FDOT to provide milling material to completely cover the 2-mile long dirt road. To do this, it would have taken more than 500 dump truck loads of milling and would have taken us more than two weeks to



complete delivery. This was just not a realistic request.

We finally settled on covering the limerock road with a product called Lignin LS-50. We contracted with a company to apply the chemical to the entire two miles of lime rock road. The product was completely applied in one day. The product, so far, is working great. The fire is now 100 percent contained and they have an almost dust-free road. The Lignin LS-50 will continue to keep the dust down in the area for another month.



Photo of Lignin LS-50 being applied

Many counties had burn bans in effect that cancelled the Fourth of July fireworks in some of our local communities. As we are now beginning to get some much-needed rain, the burn bans will be lifted. We still need to be “fire wise” even in the less dry times.

As the summer draws to a close, we turn our focus back to school. Students from the University of Florida, Santa Fe College and Alachua County public schools will be back in class on August 22. This will definitely affect our traffic. The college students will most likely begin arriving a week or two early.

Our next major holiday will be Labor Day on Monday, September 5. This is just a few days

short of the peak of hurricane season. Please make sure you have contact information for all your response team members. For some reason, emergency events seem to occur on holiday weekends. Please remember to always buckle up and don’t drink and drive.

Ed Ward, CEM FPEM
FDOT District Two
Emergency Coordination Officer

City of Gainesville TMC Update

The Traffic Management Center (TMC) was created as a jointly funded project by the City of Gainesville; Alachua County; University of Florida; and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The TMC is operated by the City of Gainesville.

Currently, the TMC is working with the FDOT and FHP on peak hour congestion on the I-75 northbound off-ramp at SR 26/Newberry Road reconstruction project. TMC staff is monitoring traffic on the ramp in both the morning and evening peak hours. When traffic backs up tol-75, the traffic signal timings are modified on the off-ramp in an attempt to facilitate traffic exiting the interstate.

Additionally, work continues on the implementation of the system. Various fiber optic cable runs are being constructed throughout the area to bring additional traffic signals and devices on-line. The segment of Main Street recently completed by the FDOT has been tied into the system and is operational in the TMC. Soon, the segment that is under construction by Alachua County will also be brought on-line. Also, replacement of two existing signals and installation of fiber



optic cable from North Eighth Avenue to North 23rd Avenue is in the scope for that project.

Finally, TMC staff continues to work with FDOT staff and Alachua County Public Works Department staff on the Town of Tioga traffic signal. This project is being constructed by the developer under a permit from FDOT. The contractor is having issues with video detection and the signal is on recall. Additionally, the developer is in the process of contracting with the City of Gainesville to install the required fiber optic cable on SR 26 / Newberry Road between NW 122nd and NW 143rd streets and will interconnect the three traffic signals.

If you have questions, please call the Traffic Management Center at 352-393-7960, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., or visit us at www.gac-smartraffic.com; on Twitter at @gacsmartraffic or you can like us at Gainesville / Alachua County Smartraffic on Facebook.

Phil Mann
Traffic Operations Manager
City of Gainesville

FDOT Construction Update

The construction project at the northbound Interstate 75 exit ramp onto Newberry Road (State Road 26, Exit 387) is well underway. The project calls for adding two additional turn lanes. The additional left turn lane will be accomplished by widening. The second right turn lane will require construction from the ground up where currently there is a very steep ditch.

These improvements are necessary to help handle the growing number of vehicles that



Aerial photo showing the I-75 at SR 26 Ramp

travel I-75 and Newberry Road in Alachua County. Traffic data shows approximately 9,200 vehicles exit I-75 onto Newberry Road each day to join another 48,500 vehicles already traveling on Newberry Road.

As you can imagine, these numbers are compounded during morning and afternoon rush hours and special events such as the University of Florida home football games and the holiday shopping season.

In an effort to help ease some of the congestion, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Traffic Operations and Construction engineers continue to explore different ways to make it safer for the traveling public and the work crews.

Most recently, the speed limit was reduced from 70 to 60 mph for northbound traffic in the work area. Truck restrictions for semi-trucks have also been lifted, allowing and encouraging semi-trucks who are traveling through the Newberry Road interchange to move into the center or left lane. Law enforcement has also been hired to patrol the work zone during key times and discourage speeding.



The semi-truck restrictions are lifted from just north of Archer Road (SR 24, Exit 384) for about three miles to north of Newberry Road. Numerous variable message boards provide the message to motorists traveling north.

D.A.B. Constructors, Inc., of Inglis, is doing the work for the FDOT and has until next summer to complete the \$2.2 million project. Sandy Chitwood is the project manager and is assisted by inspectors Jeremy Baker and Clay Allen.

Laurie Windham
Public Information, Atkins

FDOT Maintenance Update

The Incident Management Team's main focus has always been incident recovery and clear roadways. We collectively have made significant strides in this area, but a recent incident made me look at things from a different perspective.

Our Construction Office is performing much-needed safety improvements to the northbound off ramp at Newberry Road (SR 26, Exit 387). While under construction, the paved shoulders on the interstate and ramp have been closed with concrete barriers, preventing a driver from pulling onto the shoulder when the off-ramp traffic backs up onto the main line. This has reduced the chances of a stopped vehicle from being rear ended by a higher speed vehicle.

When the Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) on this project was originally set up, FHP's Lt. John Gourley and Capt. Coby Fincher raised concerns about the safety of the existing conditions. Working with the Construction Office, several improvements were made

including better advanced warning of the construction, reducing the speed limit to 60 miles per hour and lifting the left lane truck ban for three miles approaching and through the construction zone. They have also coordinated with the Gainesville Traffic Management Center to monitor and try to keep the off ramp traffic from backing up onto the main line. These coordinated efforts have helped the situation, but couldn't overcome the effects of rain and a distracted driver.

About 5 pm, July 7th there was a seven vehicle incident in the construction zone, fortunately with no major injuries. FHP and the towing company responded very quickly to clear the vehicles from the roadway and reopen all lanes. Even while the crash was clearing, questions were being asked about what else we could do to further improve the conditions. These recommendations are being reviewed and implemented when possible.

My "moment of enlightenment" was that because of the contacts and relationships we have fostered on the Incident Management Team, we are using those in our daily work. We aren't just being reactive to an incident; we are being proactive in identifying and reducing/eliminating potential problems.

Thinking back, this situation probably isn't the first time this has occurred, but it is a great example of the benefits of proactively working together. I look forward to continue working with you in the future.

Steve Scanlan
FDOT District Two
Gainesville Operations Maintenance
Engineer



FHP Update

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL RELEASES RESULTS FROM HOLIDAY ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Col. David Brierton, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol, today announced the preliminary results from the Patrol's Independence Day holiday enforcement effort. During the four-day heightened enforcement period, FHP increased the number of troopers patrolling Florida's roadways. Auxiliary troopers augmented FHP's force.

Troopers issued nearly 8,600 traffic citations and made 90 arrests for Driving Under the Influence of alcohol or drugs. They cited more than 3,200 drivers for speeding and nearly 1,100 for failure to buckle up. Troopers also investigated more than 900 crashes during the holiday period, including 12 crashes that resulted in 13 fatalities. Additionally, troopers assigned to commercial vehicle enforcement conducted 232 safety inspections on trucks.

"Our troopers worked hard to help our residents and visitors have a safe and enjoyable holiday weekend," said Brierton. "Motorists who operate their vehicles in an unsafe fashion are a danger that puts innocent lives at risk. The men and women of the Florida Highway Patrol did their part to identify the unsafe drivers and take the steps necessary to decrease that risk."

The members of the Florida Highway Patrol would like to remind everyone that it is the law to move over when approaching any authorized emergency vehicle or wrecker displaying rotating or flashing lights stopped on

the side of a roadway. Also, remember that *FHP (*347) dialed from your cell phone contacts FHP should you need to report an aggressive driver or require roadside assistance.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The Department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit www.flhsmv.gov, follow us on Twitter @[FDHSMV](https://twitter.com/FDHSMV) or find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FDHSMV).

Preliminary Enforcement Results: July 1 – July 4, 2011

Total Citations = 8,541
DUI Arrests = 90
Speeding Citations = 3,257
Safety Belt Citations = 1,060

FDOT District Two TMC Update

There are two main goals the District 2 Transportation Management Center (TMC) focuses on: 1) assisting in Traffic Incident Management and 2) providing accurate, timely information to the public. As the TMC strengthens its grasp on the Greater Jacksonville Area the focus has turned more to



the rest of the District and improving on the goals mentioned above.

With no ITS devices (cameras, speed sensors, etc) deployed outside of the Greater Jacksonville Area several challenges are posed to the TMC. The most critical parts of this equation are communication and the partnerships that are being strengthened. District 2 covers a lot of roadway miles so the help of the Alachua TIM Team Members is very much appreciated. Without the information provided by the Team members the TMC would not succeed.

The Florida Department of Transportation has provided the motorists (and responders) with two new tools that can help the Alachua Area. INRIX and the new iPhone Application will help motorists and responders avoid slowdowns and make adjustments on the fly. Alternate routes can be utilized while time (and money) is saved.

The Florida Department of Transportation's Florida 511 iPhone application is now available for free download on iTunes. The app is available for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch in the [iTunes App Store](#). The new app provides the same real-time traffic and travel time information as the 511 phone system and [FL511.com](#). The 511 app uses iPhone's GPS tracking to provide users with traffic information within a set number of miles of their location (you set your own radius up to 200 miles). An audible recording plays when an incident is inside of your radius, keeping you ahead of the game. Now instead of waiting until you're stuck in traffic you can stay one step ahead. This new feature also provides an On-Screen list of incidents, a map view displaying the incidents

and the opportunity to leave feedback and report an incident!

INRIX, the vehicle probe system, fuses data from various sources to present a comprehensive picture of traffic flow. That traffic flow data has been imported into SunGuide and pushed out to 511 providing travel times for the entire length of I-10 and more importantly for the Alachua TIM Team, I-75 throughout the entire District. Whether it is by phone or web, travel times can be accessed by motorists and responders to see what troubles may lay ahead.

Thank you for the role you play in the Alachua TIM Team. Without your help the TMC would not be able to reach so many people. With more resources becoming available we look forward to intensifying our efforts throughout the entire district. Any information that can be forwarded to the TMC about road closures or openings (no matter the incident type) would be much appreciated. Too much information is better than too little. You can contact the TMC at their new number, (904) 359-6842 or dial *FHP and ask for the TMC. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me.

Ryan Crist
FDOT District Two TMC Supervisor



TIM Team Spotlight



Donna Danson grew up in an idyllic setting in the little community of Dinsmore on Jacksonville's northside. Born fourth in a family of seven children (six girls and one boy),

her father believed in equal opportunity for all, especially when it came to running the family's chicken farm.

"Daddy believed his daughters were liberated and offered us the opportunity for 'equal employment,'" said Donna. "We put out feed, gathered and prepared eggs for delivery and kept the farm mowed."

But along with the hard work came the added blessing of being a part of a close-knit and extended family. Lots of uncles, aunts and cousins were always on hand as well as the animal family for which they loved and cared.

"We had enough acreage to raise cows, hogs, chickens and horses and our other pets included dogs, cats, rabbits, raccoons, squirrels, skunks, deer, otter, fox and even a jackass!" Donna recalls fondly.

But Donna's mom also made sure her seven children had a life outside the family farm. "Mama saw to it we were involved in the church choir, community and school theater, piano lessons, etc.," said Donna.

Donna was once crowned Duval County Queen and even sang in a couple of clubs around town, hoping to be "discovered."

"I knew Loretta Lynn had been discovered in a small club," she said. She actually had a chance to audition before Tammy Wynette and George Jones but had to decline due to family issues. "I always wonder *what might have been?!*" she said, borrowing lyrics from the famous song.

Instead, destiny led her to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) where she started as a permit inspector for maintenance. She later became the first engineer to work for the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) in 1996 where she used DOS software to run eight Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) and three cameras from her office computer.

Today the program has grown to include 35 DMS and 86 cameras. Donna is now over ITS Operations, which includes leading the First Coast and Alachua Traffic Incident Management teams. Donna has received two Davis Productivity Awards, one in 2004 for her work with the Road Ranger Service Patrol Training Team and another one in 2006 for hurricane relief efforts. In 2009, she also received the "Golden Shovel Award".

"I love my job, as I work with outstanding and dedicated co-workers and team members. My job affords me the opportunity to constantly learn and advance. It has been very exciting to be involved in the growth of our Incident Management Teams and the complete ITS Program," Donna said. "I feel we do make a difference and save lives."



Before Donna began her career with FDOT, she was a stay-at-home mom for 23 years, teaching piano lessons from her home studio while raising her five children. Donna says the birth of her children defined and shaped her life. "That's when I learned the real meaning of love," she said.

In addition to her five children, Donna has nine grandchildren. She enjoys reading, dancing, horseback riding and working in the yard.

Upcoming Events

**Next TIM Team Meeting:
August 10, 2011 @ 10:00am**

**NIMS and NUG Training
September 20, 2011 @ 10:00am
FDOT D2 Urban Office Training Facility
Jacksonville**

If you have any upcoming events you would like highlighted in the next newsletter (September 2011), please contact:

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Donna Danson - donna.danson@dot.state.fl.us

Craig Carnes - ccarnes@metriceng.com

