



Newsletter Prepared by MDOT ITS Integrator Team

Spring 2013

# NEWSLETTER

## GRITS Fall Workshop Focuses on Active Traffic Signal Operations



The Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society (GRITS) held its Fall Regional Workshop on November 15 at the Transportation Training and Education Center (TTEC) on Louisiana

State University's campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The workshop focused on Active Traffic Signal Operations.

The workshop was open to members and non-members, and included both students and industry professionals. As an incentive, attending non-members received a complimentary GRITS individual membership for 2013. In addition to an assortment of snacks, a lunch buffet was provided courtesy of sponsor Trafficware.

In order to offer attendees a fresh perspective on the topic, workshop organizers reached beyond the Gulf region to invite ITS professionals from around the country. Brian Hoelt, Director of FAST (Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation) Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, shared his experience with managing the regional traffic system in Las Vegas. Peter Eng from Tyler, Texas, presented an overview of the ACS Lite system. Charlie Wetzel traveled from Seminole County, Florida to share his knowledge of Trafficware's SynchroGreen Real-time Adaptive Control System. Tony Tramel and Warren Abadie, both with Lafayette, Louisiana's Consolidated Government, presented "Blue Tooth Magic, Data Collection, Data Mining and Other Real World Applications – Lafayette Traffic Signal System."

To conclude the workshop, elected 2013 Officers and Board of Directors were announced. Immediately following the workshop, a GRITS Board meeting was held.

The 2013 Spring Workshop occurred March 28 at the Center for Logistics, Trade and Transportation on the University of Southern Mississippi campus in Hattiesburg. The workshop focused on Weigh-in-Motion Technology and Interagency Coordination. Visit the GRITS website to view presentations from the workshops as well as view the 2013 Officer and Board of Directors.



## TMC Expands Operations to 24/7

The Mississippi Department of Transportation recently expanded operations at the Statewide Traffic Management Center (TMC) in Jackson, Miss. The Statewide TMC now operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week, monitoring and managing incidents. January 19 marked the first day for around-the-clock operations.



Previously, emergency response partners had to remember the TMC's operating hours and the different numbers to call at certain times of the day. According to Statewide TMC manager John Gilligan, previous meetings with Traffic Incident Management (TIM) partners had indicated a strong preference for establishing one MDOT number to be used for incident reporting and assistance requests at all times of day. "We ask our emergency response partners to inform us of any and all confirmed traffic incidents and work with us toward implementing incident response best practices in order to improve both safety and mobility," said Gilligan. "In return, being available anytime and providing one point of contact will allow us to improve interagency cooperation on our end."



## Employee Spotlight

This quarter's Employee Spotlight is on Henry Lewis, Field Maintenance Technician. He has been employed by MDOT for four years and was previously employed with the City of Jackson.

Lewis started at the City of Jackson as an equipment operator and later became a traffic signal technician. After seven years, Lewis transitioned to an ITS technician before coming to MDOT.

He has experience with a wide range of responsibilities, including operating utility pole trucks, concrete saws, and trenchers. As a traffic signal technician in Jackson, Lewis was involved in installing, troubleshooting and repairing traffic signals, building signalized intersections, troubleshooting and repairing signal communications, and installing as well as splicing and terminating fiber optic cable. As an ITS technician, he was involved in building camera sites which consisted of camera installation, fiber optic equipment installation and camera site planning. He is now successfully applying those skills in his Field Maintenance Technician role at MDOT.



"Henry does an outstanding job completing his assigned service tickets in a thorough and timely manner," said John Gilligan, Statewide TMC Manager. "He's always on the lookout for potential future problems and exercises initiative to correct those issues before they can escalate."

## MSRITS Project Moving Right Along

Final plans for the innovative and collaborative Mississippi River Bridges project were completed March 1 by Neel Schaffer, the selected consultant for the design phase. The construction phase of the project was advertised in April and awarded to McInnis Electric Company. Construction is expected to begin this summer and complete by next fall.

The project includes the implementation of an integrated system of ITS applications and technologies for highway and river monitoring at four rural highway crossings of the Mississippi River. The project will connect rural communities in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas, creating a highly efficient multi-modal transportation monitoring and management system.

The project is being funded by 100% federal funds awarded under the United States Department of Transportation's TIGER III Grant. Additional information is available on the project website.



# MISSISSIPPI

## TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT CENTER

### March 2013 Performance Measures

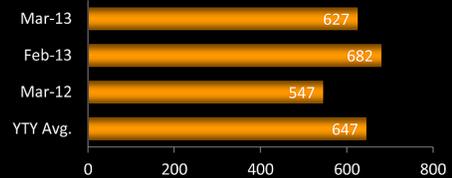


### MONTHLY HIGHLIGHT

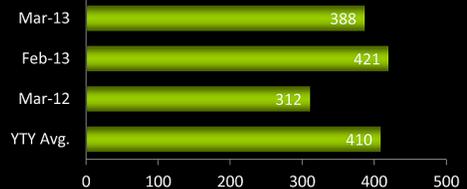
Above is a vehicle fire, at I-55 ramp to I-20, resulting from an accident during the 5 PM Rush hour. This caused major delays for nearly 90 minutes while crews work to put out the fire and clean up the road ways. We average 3 vehicle fires every month.

Mdottraffic.com continues to show strong growth with adding 77 additional subscribers. This pushes the number of registered subscribers above 7500. This resulted in 212,054 emails being sent and 35,524 text messages.

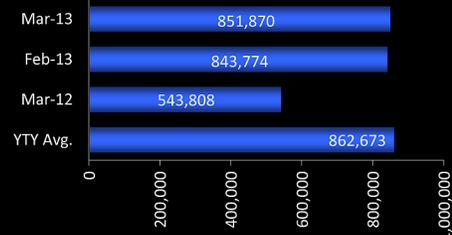
#### Total Incidents



#### Total Alerts



#### Total Web Site Page Views



# Project Enters Burn-In Period, Creates Buzz

The Mississippi Department of Transportation is one step closer to transforming U.S. Highway 78 into Interstate 22 with the project's approaching completion. The project recently entered the burn-in period, and testing of communications and control of ITS devices is underway.

The project includes a 16-mile stretch of roadway appropriately dubbed the "Future I-22 Corridor" between the Coldwater and West Holly Springs exits in Desoto and Marshall counties. Lehman-Roberts Company is the prime contractor on the \$40 million project.

The ITS technologies installed along the segment include two Digital Message Signs (DMS), eight Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) cameras, 24 CCTV fixed cameras, 16 Radar Detection Systems (RDS), and approximately 93,000 feet of fiber optic cable. The DMS are located near the I-22/HWY 309 interchange in order to alert travelers of highway conditions ahead towards Memphis, Tennessee (northbound) and Tupelo (southbound).

Control of all devices will be maintained by operators at the Statewide Traffic Management Center (TMC) in Jackson. Operators will be able to monitor cameras

and collect incident information. In turn, operators can alert motorists of important roadway conditions via the DMS and MDOTTraffic.com.

With the DMS now in place, the project has created significant buzz in the area. News Channel 3 in Memphis recently featured a story about the DMS, providing an overview of the technology and its benefits to travelers. Future construction projects in the area were also highlighted.

The project is part of an overall effort to upgrade U.S. Highway 78 to interstate standards. The highway will officially become I-22 once construction of all improvements are complete. The new interstate will run from Memphis to Birmingham. It connects with I-20 and I-65 outside Birmingham and also with I-55, I-40 and I-69 around Memphis. It will provide a more efficient route between the two metropolises. For Mississippi, the improvements increase economic opportunities available to communities, businesses, and individuals in the northern area through increased mobility and better access. The project is scheduled for completion this June at which time devices are expected to be fully operational.





# MDOT FACEBOOK NEWS

MDOT recently completed the process of integrating all MDOT-related information onto the main MDOT Facebook page. Everyone is encouraged to "like" the MDOT page at <http://www.facebook.com/MississippiDOT> so you'll continue

to receive important MDOT information. As of January 1, all individual division sites were deactivated, and all roadway information is now published on the main MDOT Facebook page.

Did you know? MDOT also has a Youtube channel in addition to the Facebook page and route-specific Twitter feeds. View videos and see everything that MDOT is up to at <http://www.youtube.com/MississippiDOT>.



## Ask Mike

**Q&A with Mike Stokes,  
MDOT ITS Program Manager**

**Question:** How important is ITS to commercial vehicle operations?

**Answer:** Commercial vehicle operators are significant users of the transportation system. Travel is a key component of commerce, and commercial vehicle operators rely on just-in-time deliveries. Traffic congestion costs time and money for trucking companies. The efficient operations and regulation of commercial vehicles is vitally important to the state's economy. ITS technologies allow for improved traffic management. Commercial vehicle operators can make more informed pre-trip decisions with the real-time traveler information provided via [MDOTTraffic.com](http://MDOTTraffic.com), DMS, and HAR.



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