

Mississippi River Bridges Project Receives Funding Through TIGER III Grant



The Mississippi Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, was recently awarded

\$9.8 million in TIGER III Discretionary Grant funds for the Mississippi River Bridges Incident Management, Freight Movement and Security project. The funds support the installation and integration of an active monitoring and information dissemination system at four Mississippi River rural crossings connecting communities in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

Leveraging a system-wide approach with the ITS applications and technologies used in advance of and at these river crossings, the project will improve safety, mobility, security and efficiency and promote interstate and waterway commerce as well as job creation/retention. The project will also help to improve incident and emergency management by providing travelers, commercial operators and maritime carries with critical information that will aid in accident prevention and avoidance.

When the bridges are restricted or closed due to planned or unplanned incidents such as traffic crashes, lane closures, flooding or strikes from passing barges, roadway and river traffic may experience extended and costly delays. These locations are critical to the region's transportation network, serving interstate commerce and east-west travel that, when disrupted, creates economic, safety and mobility problems system-wide.

"We are excited the TIGER III funds allow us to move forward on a project

- "Bridges Project" continued on page 3



GRITS Regional Workshop set for April

The GRITS chapter will be holding its first regional meeting of the year on April 3 at the University of Alabama's Ferguson Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The meeting will focus on event management.

Special event operations are gaining prominence in the everyday transportation environment. The goal is to facilitate safe and efficient travel to and from events while also minimizing congestion-related problems for other motorists. Advance planning – including emergency preparedness, partner agency coordination and public communication – is vital to successful event management. Several presentations on event management will be given throughout the meeting on the following topics: Auburn University and University of Alabama game days, Talladega, Sugar Bowl, BCS Championship, Cullman County Monastery and the Super Bowl in New Orleans, Louisiana.



The meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a catered lunch. Presentations will be given until the meeting's conclusion at 3:30 p.m. A GRITS board meeting will immediately follow. The meeting is free for members and students. The fee for non-members to attend is \$25 and will include a one-time complimentary individual 2012 GRITS membership. Meeting participants will receive 2.5 PDH credits.

The event management workshop is one of a series of regional workshops hosted by GRITS each year. Two regional workshops are held in the non-host states of the upcoming annual meeting. This year's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual NRITS meeting September 16-19 in Biloxi, MS. The next regional workshop will be in late fall in Louisiana.

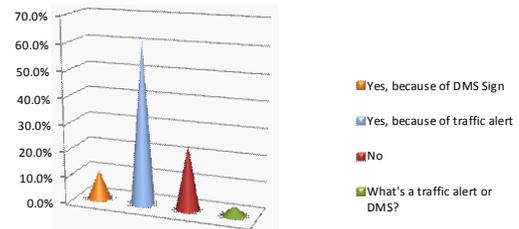
To learn more about the upcoming regional meeting and to register, visit the GRITS website.

A Peak at User Responses to msTraffic How's Your Drive Survey

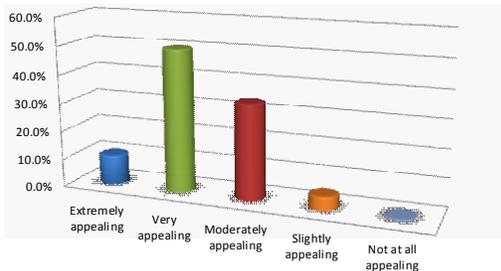
In August 2011, a new and improved msTraffic website was unveiled. Enhancements were made to the website, including an updated interface and added tools to allow users a more customized website experience. Recently, a survey was sent to all msTraffic.com subscribers in an effort to gain feedback regarding the new website improvements. A sampling of the results are provided below.

"It's fun and easy to use. I really like to use it around folks who don't know about it. It's like showing them lights for the first time!"

Have you ever changed your route based on a DMS (sign) message or traffic alert?



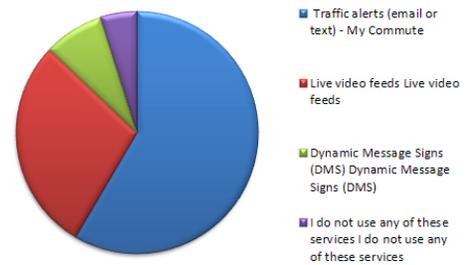
How visually appealing is our website?



"It could use a link to local weather radar."

"Categorized well by area."

Of all the services offered, which do you use the most?



Deployment of Advanced Traffic Management System in Progress

The Mississippi Department of Transportation is implementing an Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) software solution. Delcan has been selected as a sub consultant on the MDOT Statewide ITS Integrator contract to develop and deploy a statewide traffic management platform for MDOT. The system, designed to assist with the collection, dissemination, and management of ITS systems, will provide freeway and arterial traffic management capabilities at the Statewide Traffic Management Center and the Regional Traffic Management Centers. Once fully installed, operators at the Statewide and Regional TMCs will be able to manage incidents more seamlessly and efficiently. They will be able to monitor and control ITS equipment and view roadway information in real-time.

The system features a scalable architecture customizable for unique operational environments and adaptable for small and large-scale ITS deployments. The software is a web-based modular ITS software in which the system is configured based on desired system modules and customization needs. It will enable the sharing of information between MDOT centers to facilitate improved traffic management functions. The ITS Integrator team will deploy the new statewide MDOT ATMS utilizing a phased approach that provides a smooth transition to the new platform. The transition will include major software releases initially deployed in Jackson to provide core product functionality and integration with the various ITS devices. Immediately following each successful release in Jackson, the system will be deployed in the Hattiesburg Regional TMC.

"The new software solution combines traffic management functions into one integrated system, which will allow for better incident management, and ultimately, an improved travel experience for the public," said Mike Stokes, MDOT ITS Program Manager. "The ATMS will help MDOT to continue providing ITS solutions that address evolving travel demands."

- "Bridges Project" continued

that will benefit many residents and businesses in the Delta region," said Mike Stokes, MDOT ITS Program Manager. "Better traffic management and real-time traveler information will allow motorists and commercial-vehicle operators to make more informed pre-trip decisions and could also reduce the traffic demand on the bridges."

The project builds on a previous ITS installation in early 2011 at the US 84 Natchez, Mississippi Bridge which proved extremely beneficial to emergency operations during Spring 2011's historic flooding event. Additional ITS will be installed at the Natchez bridge and at each of the other locations including CCTV to capture traffic on and below the bridge, new vehicle detection devices, dynamic message signs, highway advisory radio, and communications infrastructure. The intent is for each bridge to serve as a detour route should a closure occur and allow for better management and travel information dissemination. Each river crossing will function as a discrete subsystem with integrated devices connected by communications infrastructure. Real Time River Current (RTRC) data sensors will be installed and will be able to transmit important data to barges concerning the river currents. This information will eliminate some of the barge incidents by providing advance information that will allow barges to determine the most appropriate crossing location based on the current stream velocities.



The project will include the necessary software and system integration to local transportation management centers (TMCs) and Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) in all three states to provide real-time incident response and traffic management. The system provides monitoring capabilities enabling motorists the ability to avoid congestion, incidents, emergencies, and scheduled maintenance activities surrounding the bridges and rivers below. The system will allow agencies to better maintain and operate the critical infrastructure, providing users with the real-time information they need to make informed decisions while traveling through the area.

According to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, the USDOT received an overwhelming 848 project applications from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington D. C., requesting a total of \$14.9 billion, far exceeding the \$511 million made available for grants under the TIGER III program. Funds were distributed to only 46 transportation projects in 33 states and Puerto Rico. For a comprehensive look at the MSRTIS project, visit the website. You can also stay up date with project news and progress on the facebook page.

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TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT CENTER

December 2011 Performance Measures

US 98 W Hattiesburg

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHT

During the month of December we managed 435 incidents which included 128 accidents. The number of accidents in December were significantly above average compared to the same month in previous years although we did not have any large scale weather events during the month unlike past years. We had 13 incidents during the month that resulted in complete road closures. The most notable road closure was a gas leak in downtown Jackson that resulted in the closure of several exit ramps on I-55 and evacuations in the vicinity of the gas leak.

During the year we managed 4,380 incidents compared to 3,418 incidents last year. We began TMC Operations in Hattiesburg, MS in February 2011 which has increased our incident detection capabilities and added to our incident numbers. In response to traffic incidents there were 1,005 traffic incident alerts, 1,453 road work traffic alerts, 309 weather alerts, and 4 special event alerts.

We recently conducted a survey of our alert subscribers and learned that 61% of the respondents have altered their commute as a result of receiving a traffic alert. Additionally, 34% of the respondents visit the mstraffic.com website several times a week with just over 11% visiting everyday. Based on the information received from the survey respondents, we will continue to look for ways to improve upon the services offered to our subscribers.





Employee Spotlight

Mike Hinricks is a Control Room Operator at the Hattiesburg Regional TMC. His primary responsibility is to perform incident management and provide traveler information for the region. He also assists in the maintenance of network and field equipment by identifying system problems.

He is a retired 20 year Cold War veteran of the United States Air Force with an extensive career in the military. He began his career as an Aircraft Maintenance Specialist on C-5A Galaxy cargo aircraft for the 436 Military Airlift Wing (MAW) Military Airlift Command (MAC) at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. He later went on to schedule maintenance on various aircraft and missiles in four different commands.

"I enjoy working in the Traffic Management Center as we strive to efficiently study and monitor traffic flow to improve public safety," said Hinricks. "The technology and people are top notch, and it is great to be a part of this evolving system."

Mike lives with his wife Sue in Petal, Mississippi and enjoys gardening, "tinkering" around the house, and reading in his spare time.



Ask Mike

Q&A with Mike Stokes, MDOT ITS Program Manager

Question: What's new at msTraffic.com?

Answer: We recently added nearly 100 cameras to the website with most being in Hattiesburg and along the Gulf Coast. Also, we just sent out a survey to all msTraffic.com users, and over 240 responses were received and are being used to determine how well the new website is doing and what, if any, significant changes are needed. Overall, we have found that the redesigned website has been well received by the public. Many are using it more than ever and are changing their commute based on receiving alerts. Public feedback is a valuable component in our process to improve MDOT traveler information services, and we will continue to improve the website to ensure public satisfaction.



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