

TMC Operations and Staff Expansions Currently Underway

In response to growing demands and expansion of the ITS system, MDOT is increasing its operations and maintenance staff as well as the operational hours of its statewide and regional TMCs.

In the coming months the Statewide TMC in Jackson will operate seven days a week from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. An additional full-time TMC operator will be hired to cover the extended hours. The Hattiesburg Regional TMC is scheduled to go live later this summer, operating five days a week from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. A TMC manager was brought on board to oversee operations at the Hattiesburg facility and is currently being trained at the Statewide TMC. Operations at the Northwest



Operations room at the Statewide TMC

Mike Stokes, MDOT's ITS Program Manager, explained that with the additional staff and hours, MDOT is keeping up with the growth of the ITS program and better serving the needs of the public for traffic information throughout the state. "The ITS program has been growing rapidly throughout the state causing the need for expanded operations and additional staffing at the Statewide and Regional Traffic Management Centers. With the current ITS systems, projects in construction and planned expansions, it has become clear the current schedule and staff would not be enough to handle the increasing demands. The public has become more aware of the benefits of ITS, placing higher levels of expectations on the systems. Other departments and agencies have also become reliant on the timely and accurate travel information provided through MDOT's ITS

- "TMC Operations" continued on page 3

MDOT Awarded for msTraffic/MED-COM Project

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) has been awarded the Institute of Transportation Engineer's 2010 Transportation Achievement Award for Safety for the msTraffic/MED-COM Project: Saving Lives through Innovative Partnerships.



The project is a collaboration between MDOT and the Mississippi MED-COM center, which serves as a statewide hub for emergency management information. The two groups have worked together to integrate the msTraffic travel information system to further enhance the center's ability to provide safe and efficient emergency response services.

"Mississippi has the only state trauma center tied directly into the Statewide Incident Management System," said Mike Stokes, MDOT ITS Program Manager. "Through the unique partnership, the MED-COM center has interactive access to all the travel information available through the msTraffic system, allowing the center to more effectively provide emergency response throughout the state."

The Transportation Achievement Award for Safety recognizes organizations that excel in advancing transportation to meet human needs. The award will be presented to MDOT at the annual ITE meeting, which will be held in Vancouver, BC, on August 10, 2010. For more information on the msTraffic/MED-COM project, visit <http://gomdot.com/Divisions/ITS/Home.aspx>.

Projects Spotlight

Signal and ITS Improvements on Lakeland Drive

A project to ease congestion along Lakeland Drive in Jackson is currently under construction. The 1.1 million dollar project, awarded to APAC – Mississippi, Inc., began in February and is scheduled to be complete by September of this year.

Improvements are being made at intersections along approximately six miles of Lakeland Drive to aid in relieving motorist traffic delays. The surrounding areas in Hinds and Rankin counties, which the corridor passes, have experienced considerable commercial and residential development over the past few years. Consequently, the number of motorists traveling in the area has rapidly grown causing increased congestion and delay.

Improvements include the addition of signal heads to existing signalized intersections from the I-55 ramp intersections through the Airport Road intersection, along with replacement of loop and probe detectors. CCTV cameras will also be added at Treetops Boulevard and River Oaks Drive, providing TMC operators and the public additional access to traffic conditions along this heavily traveled corridor.



Traffic flow on Lakeland Drive

Railroad Crossing ITS

Jackson area motorists may soon find additional relief from long train delays at railroad crossings due to a train warning system that is currently in the final design stage. The project will add dynamic train warning signs and flashing beacons in the metro Jackson area alerting motorists when a train is crossing ahead.



“Expect Train When Flashing” signs are planned for I-55 Northbound at the State Street exit and I-55/I-20 Eastbound at the State Street exit, in advance of the State Street/CN-IC Railroad Crossing. “Train Ahead” LED signs will be placed prior to the State Street/KCS and Parkside Place/KCS railroad crossing at the State Street and South Street intersection and at the Parkside Place and West Capitol Street intersection. These signs are to be strategically placed prior to decision points, alerting motorists of the presence of a train so that they may alter their route and thus, avoid delays.

Vehicle Detection Stations Along I-10 and I-110

In addition to existing video vehicle detectors MDOT has installed at intersections along US 90 on the Gulf Coast, the department is now adding spot radar detection stations on interstates I-10 and I-110 in Gulfport and Biloxi.

Traffic counter stations will be installed on I-10 at Country Farm Road, US-49, and D’Iberville Road, and on I-110 at Bayshore Drive and at Bayview Avenue. The stations are intended to provide additional vehicle data for monitoring routine traffic as well as congestion during hurricane evacuations.

The project was let in April and was awarded to Lamey Electric with the lowest bid of \$103,000. Construction of the project is scheduled to be completed in December 2010.



Radar Detection System

- "TMC Operations" continued

program and the mstraffic network. With the appropriate levels of staff and expertise to effectively respond to traffic incidents and emergencies, we will continue to utilize this system to serve the public and agency needs," Stokes commented.

In addition to the operations staff and increased hours, MDOT has also hired maintenance staff to better manage equipment and network issues. "As more ITS components are implemented and operated, the need for the proper maintenance staff is critical to ensure that systems and software behind the scenes remain updated and operational at all times," explained Mr. Stokes. A Network Administrator has been hired to manage the overall maintenance of the networking systems. An ITS Software Database Specialist has been hired to assist with msTraffic.com database and 511 integration. Additionally, an ITS Specialist has been hired to oversee ITS field equipment, troubleshoot any system problems, and document maintenance activities.

With the additional staff in place to cover the increase in operations and the support of maintenance behind the scenes, the Traffic Management Centers will be able to better serve the traveling public by providing earlier detection of traffic incidents, enhanced coordination with other public agencies, better dissemination of traffic information, and less down time of field equipment.

"With the appropriate levels of staff and expertise to effectively respond to traffic incidents and emergencies, we can better serve the public and other agency needs."

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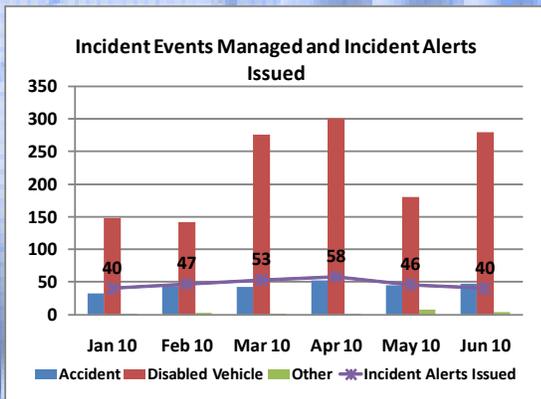
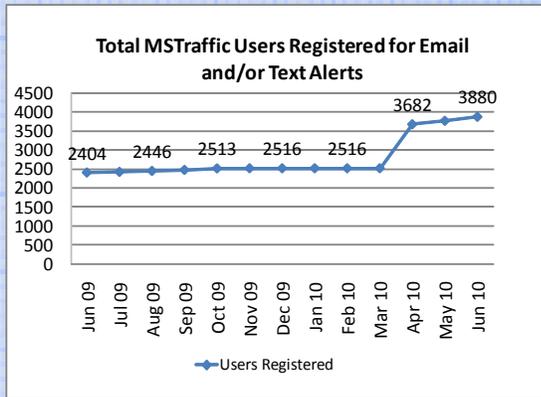
Ask Mike

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

**Do you have a
question for Mike ?**

**Email them to us at
[mstraffic@mdot.
state.ms.us](mailto:mstraffic@mdot.state.ms.us)**

MDOT Statewide Traffic Management Center & MStraffic.com Quick-Stats



Hurricane Season is Here

MDOT is encouraging residents of Mississippi and surrounding states to be prepared and stay up to date with traffic information for evacuation routes during the 2010 Hurricane Season. MDOT has created six separate Twitter feeds that will provide route-specific traffic information to evacuees traveling Interstates 10, 20, 55, 59 and U.S. Highways 49 and 98. Additional information provided includes traffic delays, contraflow information, fuel availability, and roadway openings, all on a real-time basis.

In addition to releasing updates on Twitter, MDOT has released a Hurricane Evacuation Guide to assist residents in preparing for the hurricane season. Along with a detailed map of alternate routes and contact information for road conditions for all southern states, the 2010 Hurricane Evacuation Guide also includes updated information on lodging, animal shelters and radio stations for storm coverage. The guides have been distributed through local newspapers and made available at libraries, welcome centers, chambers offices and visitor's bureaus. Get your copy of the 2010 Hurricane Evacuation Guide [here](#).

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