

Georgia Traffic Incident Management Program



Q4 2023 NEWSLETTER

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Livestock Emergency Response Plan (LERP) Training was delivered in Green County on November 7 and in Jackson County on November 8. There were 93 total attendees for these two classes. This class was taught by instructors from the University of Georgia Extension agency, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Veterinarian Medical Association, and the GDOT Statewide Traffic Incident Management Services (STIMS) program.

On November 17, the LERP class was taught to students at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College for future Ranchers in Georgia. There were 38 students that attended as well as three faculty members.

On November 2, the STIMS team hosted the Taliaferro-Warren TIM Team Meeting, where the team facilitated a tabletop exercise for a freight train derailment under an I-20 bridge, which was severely damaged and blocking SR 278.

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first edition of the Georgia Traffic Incident Management Quarterly Newsletter. In this edition, you will find stories from the fourth quarter of 2023 about the regional TIM team of the quarter, innovations happening around the state, and much more. Interested in contributing to the newsletter? Share an innovation your agency is implementing in your local community by emailing TIMteams@dot.ga.gov or scanning the QR code below.



LESSONS LEARNED - AFTER ACTION REVIEWS

Recent After Action Reviews following several incidents showed us that traffic got caught in the queue between the incident and the detour/diversion and required to sit idle for several hours. This can lead to limited access by emergency medical services to patients with medical issues caught in the queue. It can also lead to vehicles running out of fuel/power or other mechanical issues, creating more traffic problems.

- A solution to take into consideration is for incident command to temporarily open a lane or shoulder while keeping diversion/detour in place to allow law enforcement to release vehicles stuck in the queue. This may require a temporary pause in operations to complete.
- Another solution to consider is using contraflow to move vehicles stuck in the queue back to the diversion/detour point to release them to a different route.

Unified command is very important to complete these actions; it ensures that all agencies are aware of the plan. Communication of the plan must be relayed to all responders on the scene and periodic communications must continue throughout this process.

GEORGIA TIM TEAM MEMBER PROFILE

Joe Schulman is the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) District 6 Communications Officer for northwest Georgia. He has been in media and public relations for 18 years, and his background is in journalism. Since joining GDOT in 2019, he has worked hard to keep the public up to date on projects, both in progress and in planning stages. Additionally, he speaks to a wide range of groups, from civic and school groups to first responders, about the dangers of distracted driving. Joe lives in Cartersville with his wife of nearly 17 years and their 13-year-old daughter.

Joe is very active with the Traffic Incident Management Team in District 6, where he updates responders of construction activity details on current and upcoming projects and works to keep team members informed on things that impact TIM in the District. Joe also listens to areas of concern from local stakeholders and is responsive to finding solutions.

He is very good at promoting the safety of first responders and the public at these meetings. A lot of responders in these areas have signed up for the Traffic Condition Updates that Joe pushes out daily via email.

We look forward to working with Joe to continue our effort in increasing the safety of our responders and public in the State of Georgia. Thanks for all you do Joe!



If you have attended any of the meetings where Joe has presented, you will know his love for 80s and 90s music. He frequently has a playlist of music he uses to give the audience a chance to win a few door prizes if they know the song. This has been a fun way of getting the attendees to loosen up and feel comfortable during our meetings.

REGIONAL TIM TEAM OF THE QUARTER: CONGRATULATIONS REGION 12!!

Three cheers for Region 12! Not only do they steadfastly support traffic incident management goals, they also promote first responder education throughout the region. Region 12 consists of Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, Effingham, Screven, Bulloch, Candler, and Evans counties in southeastern Georgia.

Some of the exciting initiatives they have been involved in are:

- Tim's Towing out of Savannah hosted a regional TIM Team meeting showcasing their fleet and equipment. They discussed their capabilities and how they can be an asset at complex incidents involving commercial vehicles. Responders were able to train during various scenarios and tested equipment and capabilities.
- Savannah Fire and Emergency Services also had their rescue crews on site at a regional TIM Team meeting demonstrating extrication techniques utilizing battery powered rescue tools. A representative from Savannah Fire commented that he enjoyed the opportunity to cross train with Tim's Towing and learned that if the situation arises where he knows he needs a heavy wrecker, he can rely on the heavy towers in the region to respond and coordinate efforts to save lives.
- Agencies have been training with CSX Transportation on Operation Lifesaver's Railroad Investigation and Safety Course. This course teaches responders how to work around trains and rail lines as well as what information they need for their reports. They have also been working with Norfolk Southern, and the short-line railroads in the region as well as with smaller railroads to learn their safety operations, points of contacts, and how to deal with locomotive emergencies.

All in all, Region 12 has been dedicated to the statewide TIM concept and continues to strive to keep responders and the public safe, and travel lanes open. Agencies are constantly looking to expand their knowledge and teamwork. They welcome other regions to participate in specialized training and special topic meetings.



INNOVATION OF THE QUARTER

Advanced Warning: Is There More Than One Way?

By Byron Sutton
Asst. Chief of Administration, Gordon County



Recently, I was sitting in my office contemplating the end of another school year. I began thinking about how this would decrease the number of cars on the road in the early morning hours; how that volume would shift to late morning, afternoon, and evening. This volume would now be spread throughout the day as students began their commute to their summer jobs and parents began driving their kids to fun summer events like recreational sports, play dates at friends' houses, and numerous other opportunities that would be out on the roadway. I began to think of how this increase in traffic being spread throughout the day would increase our calls regarding motor vehicle accidents. This inevitably led my emergency responder mind to wander off into the practice of mitigating such incidents.

As I mentally began to run through the practice of establishing an emergency work zone for a motor vehicle accident on the highway, my mind settled on providing the necessary advanced warning to the motoring public traveling toward our emergency work zone. As a long-time veteran of the fire service, I can remember a time when emergency responders relied on little more than rotating emergency lights. We considered this an acceptable form of early warning of the crash ahead. Today's responders know that is simply not near enough. Today, we are using an array of early warning gadgets.

We have added reflective chevrons and cones for placement in the roadway. Some use flares or light sticks, others use some sort of portable warning lights, and, of course, actual signage. With all this, drivers still find their way into our work zone. So, I ask myself, are we doing enough?

Most days, manpower is limited in a small department, thus accomplishing all tasks that need to be addressed at an emergency scene must be prioritized. Many times, we find ourselves first on the scene and patient care is the immediate priority. Unfortunately, as part of the fire service, we typically do not have someone on scene to deploy an advanced warning sign, thus we have had to come up with various ways to handle advanced warning.

When possible, law enforcement may assist and provide advanced warning. We have tried utilizing a police officer car backing up to try to stay ahead of the end of the queue. Other times, we have provided advanced warning with a lighted message board sign mounted on the back of a ¾-ton truck. This message board serves us until a Coordinated Highway Assistance & Maintenance Program unit from GDOT can arrive and assume the duties of advanced warning. With that, we recently discovered a device called HAAS Alert Safety Warning System that can not only provide advanced warning while we are on scene, but it can also provide advanced warning prior to our arrival. This device can provide a digital alert 'inside' vehicles of the approaching motoring public.

Drivers Alerted

28,132

YTD: 103,480
TOTAL: 227,213



HAAS Alert Safety Cloud Administrator Dashboard

Events

387

YTD: 4,802
TOTAL: 7,474

Time-to-Scene

4.6 min

YTD: 5.1 min
TOTAL: 4.9 min

Time On-Scene

12.5 min

YTD: 13.8 min
TOTAL: 14.6 min

The Safety Cloud platform provides an Administrator Dashboard to monitor devices in our fleet. We are able to name, group, and track all our assets in an organized inventory with the ability to see the location and status of any vehicle in our fleet at any time. We also receive a monthly activity report where we are able to see information about our fleet, incident data, and alerting activity for the prior month. In general, this gives us an overview of how devices have benefitted us from month to month.

If your staff must operate on a major roadway and you have limited ability to provide the required advanced warning, I highly recommend looking into the HAAS Alert Safety Warning System. This is one form of advanced warning we do not even have to think about. We simply engage our emergency lights and roll.

If you would like more information, visit <https://www.haasalert.com/>.



Byron Sutton is a 36-year veteran of the fire service and is currently assigned the position of Asst. Chief of Administration within his department in Gordon County. He leads his department in their TIM efforts, actively supports the Georgia Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (TIME) Task Force, and regularly attends and supports TIM Team meetings in the northwest Georgia Area.



UPCOMING EVENTS

For the latest information on training in your area, please check the TIME Task Force calendar located at <https://timetaskforce.com/events/> or scan the QR code below to visit the website. NOTE: all dates, times, and locations are subject to change. Monitor the website calendar to verify before you travel to a meeting.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN A TIM TEAM

There are many ways to be active in TIM around Georgia. Interested in getting involved and attending a meeting? Visit <https://timetaskforce.com/time-initiatives/tim-teams/> to find your regional TIM Team and area analyst and contact TIMteams@dot.ga.gov for more information.



LMS INFORMATION

GDOT's learning management system (LMS) provides a free online centralized hub for registered users to have full access to and manage their training content. You can do things like view the course catalog, course enrollment, progress tracking, and view and download your course completion certificates.

We invite first responders and the TIME community to experience the platform firsthand. We have 4,000 users, 39 courses available, and 24x7 access.

The LMS portal has training content in the areas of TRIP, NIMS, SHRP2, Managed Lanes, HERO, CHAMP, Safety Service Patrol, TMC, TIM, professional development training, and much more. These will be readily accessible to you by a quick login to the LMS platform after your user profile has been created.

To enjoy user benefits and create your account, please email us at TIM_Training@dot.ga.gov.