

MEMORANDUM

To: Traffic Incident Management Group and Interested Parties

From: Julia Dawson, Senior Transportation Planner

Date: March 6, 2009

RE: Meeting Notes from Traffic Incident Management Group on March 6, 2009

Those in attendance included: Kathy Beem – Gray Dispatch Center; Julia Dawson – SMRPC; Stephen DuBois – Portsmouth Police Department; Gary Eaton – Kittery Police Department; Gil Emery – Portsmouth Police Department; Ruth Farnsworth – Wells Police Department; David Feeney – Cumberland EMA; Nicholas Higgins – Kennebunk Police Department; Tim Hamilton – Gray Dispatch Center; R.J. Leger, Sanford PD; Lieutenant Arthur Murdock, Maine State Police; Lt. Louis Nyitray, Troop A, Alfred; Dale Peabody, MaineDOT; Tom Reinauer – Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission; Sgt. Rochford – Saco Police Department; Gregory J. Stone, Maine Turnpike Authority.

The meeting was held at the York Public Library.

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Recent incident review

Tom opened the discussion with a brief overview of the five traffic incidents that have occurred on the Turnpike and/or major routes in the region since the beginning of the year. He reminded the group that there is an official post incident review process that has been used in the past. He opened up the discussion for comments

Route 9 Wells: Ruth Farnsworth gave a brief update on the incident involving a fatality on Rte 9. She reported no major problems with re-routing traffic even though the road was closed for around four hours.

Route 111 and the Turnpike: Greg Stone reported that there have been three fatal traffic incidents; one on Route 111 at the Arundel/Biddeford town line, and two on the Turnpike. Rte 111 was closed for approximately five hours. The variable message sign at mile marker 42 was used to warn motorists of an accident on Route 111, but the sign to the south of Biddeford was not working at the time. The February accident on the Turnpike closed south bound lanes for approximately one hour.

Sarah Long Bridge Closure: Kittery PD called it into York Dispatch and activated the call tree. The bridge was stuck in the up position for little over an hour. Kittery PD put in place the detour routes as developed, however Portsmouth PD did not. Portsmouth did use a portable variable message sign to warn motorists of the closure.

3. Pre-planned road closures

Tom informed the group that the scheduled road closure for Route 236 was no longer going ahead. The MaineDOT will build a temporary bridge ahead of time to be used while they remove and replace the old structure. Julia notified the group that there will be three scheduled road closures in York this year to replace bridges on Route 103. The first closure is expected sometime between July and September, the second will be between September and November, and the final closure will be starting in the winter of 2009 and should be closed till the spring of 2011. Regional traffic impacts should be minor. She has copies of the official detour map developed by the MaineDOT if any one is interested.

4. Updates

MaineDOT: Dale Peabody mentioned that Cliff Curtis is looking at a feasibility study to use 911 information to determine statewide incident levels. Tim explained that getting that information would be difficult; they (911) are very protective of their information. Greg has had discussions with Cliff about talking to dispatch and getting second level information from them instead. Tom mentioned that there is a lot of information on SWIMS and if anyone needs a password to contact him.

Dale gave the group an update on the Statewide Incident Management Group.

- An MOU has now been signed.
- Training ideas that can be covered at a regional level are being identified. Pete Coughlan from the local roads department at DOT is willing to help out on this.
- Quick Clearance Model Legislation is being worked on; they are looking at what NH has in place. A brief discussion followed about what currently goes on in Maine. Lt. Murdock explained it is done on a case by case basis. If there is a fatality involved nothing can be moved because it is a crime scene, but if it is a simple truck rollover or jack knife then a local tow truck is called in to move the stranded vehicle to the side of the road asap. The problem is that more often than not, the owner of the immobile vehicle wants to use there regular towing company (many are out of state), this delays reopening the road and increases safety concerns.

Maine Turnpike Updates: Greg Stone mentioned that the Turnpike has a new building (will also house the State Police). They have some ITS money available and are looking to upgrade their communications capabilities along the I-95 corridor.

New Hampshire DOT Updates: Not present.

Action Plan Updates: Julia gave the group an update on the call tree and detour mapping. It appears the call tree, although only a draft at this point, is taking on a life of its own. Some agencies have already used it and others have suggested that it could have been used during the incidents described in item one. She explained that the communications sub-committee has been working on developing a how to guide/policy document that ties the call tree and routing maps together. The final product will cover call tree protocol and procedures, and include all the

detour maps developed by participating municipalities. The document still needs refining but when it is done it will be distributed throughout the region to police and fire departments.

Julia also gave a brief update on the recent CONOPS training. Two sessions were hosted by York County EMA. One in at their facility in Sanford and one at the Kittery Fire Station; approximately 13 people attended both sessions. She reminded the group that if they sent any staffers to the classes that are eligible for reimbursement that they should invoice SMRPC. Tom explained that there is still some grant money available to host more training. He is looking into whether or not we can host a session on radio protocol. Gill Emery expressed interest in this class; Tom said he would check into the implications of NH personnel attending such a session.

Tom gave an update on the programming of radios. He has given the consultant the go-ahead to program the radios (of participating communities) using the following frequencies.

York County EMA frequency
Statewide Car-to-Car (CONOPS)
Statewide Fire (CONOPS)
Nationwide Car-to-Car (CONOPS)

A brief discussion followed regarding coverage across state lines and between bi-state agencies. Tim asked if the York County EMA Frequency was repeated. Julia said it was.

5. **Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement:** It is currently going through legislative action. As it is written, all communities in the State would fall under the agreement, unless towns specifically chose to opt out.
6. **Next Meeting** – May 15. York Public Library. Gary Eaton said he would provide lobster rolls for lunch. Thank you Gary.