Hello from Austin, Texas. I do not want to get too far ahead of myself, but I am cautiously optimistic that we are near the end of the pandemic and will have more opportunities to attend in-person meetings, conferences, and trainings.

We got off to a rough start in January when we lost a roadway worker in Austin on January 11th, a tow operator in Houston on January 22nd, and a Harris County Sheriff Sergeant on January 24th, all at the hands of “D” drivers. After our newsletter went out in December, we lost two roadway workers that were struck and killed in Austin while putting out temporary road work signs.

In light of the recent tragedies mentioned above we all must do our part in training our responders. I am working on creating a training with a focus on roadway workers and the dangers they encounter. Once the training receives all of the necessary approvals, we will be able to teach those who are not responders, yet still face the same hazards of our “D” drivers.

Now for some positive news. Thanks to more champions getting involved we are growing. Last year we saw the addition of our Northeast San Antonio TIM team, and our first rural TIM team created in our Childress District. They have both been very active doing after action reviews, TIM training, and meeting regularly.

More good news on the horizon as well. With the help of my team we have created a TIM Challenge Coin! I am excited to present these to those who have a desire to make a difference and are making a difference. I think everyone will want one, and I can say this as I only approved the design and did not come up with them! They are cool, tight, hip, sick, or whatever slang term you want to use to describe them!

As I close, I want to leave you with this. This sign is posted at the exit gate in the Austin District. It is a stark reminder how dangerous it is on the highway. Please share this with your staff to ensure that Everybody Goes Home!
The Texas TIM Team Challenge Coin

When Statewide TIM Coordinator David McDonald was looking for a way to recognize local TIM programs and champions, he wanted to present them with a sincere, memorable token of gratitude and appreciation. Service and recognition plaques are the timeless go-to for appreciation but seem to fade to obscurity on a wall already adorned with awards and accolades. The exceptional nature of the Texas TIM program needed to be recognized in the same way. Recalling their time in the US Military, the team designed the first Texas TIM Challenge Coin.

Already a staple of many first responder collectibles, the challenge coin is the perfect item to distinguish TIM first responder champions and their programs. This full-color, high-quality coin is two-inches wide and features the Texas TIM logo and slogan, “Everybody Goes Home!” on the front and crossed United States and Texas flags on the back.

The coin will be presented exclusively by the Statewide TIM Coordinator for excellence and outstanding achievement in Texas TIM programs. The recipient will also receive recognition in the statewide quarterly TIM newsletter and have their names placed on the “Texas TIM Wall of Fame.”

Challenge coins have a long history of being used by the military. There is archaeological evidence that the Roman Empire gave challenge coins to their ranks to recognize their achievements in battle or in performance.

The most recognized story is that challenge coins were started during World War I. The story goes that in a squadron of wealthy officers, the commanding officer ordered medallions to be made so that he could present them to his unit. One pilot under his command placed the medallion in a leather pouch that he had around his neck. On one of the patrols, shortly after he received the challenge coin, his plane was damaged and he was forced to... territory where he was immediately captured. The German unit that captured him took all of his personal belongings except for the leather pouch around his neck that held his challenge coin. The pilot later escaped the German unit and was later captured by the French.

The French believed him to be a spy and decided that the best course of action would be to kill the pilot. Since the pilot had no way of proving his identity through conventional means, he provided the French his challenge coin. One of the French officers recognized the squadron logo on the challenge coin and they delayed his execution. The French soldiers later confirmed his identity and the pilot was welcomed home and received a bottle of wine.

When the pilot returned back to his squadron, it became a tradition that all members should carry their challenge coin at all times. They would often challenge each other to see if each carried their challenge coin. This was the start of the challenge coin history.

June 2011, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates toured military bases in Afghanistan before his impending retirement. Along the way, he shook hands with dozens of men and women in the Armed Forces in what, to the naked eye, appeared to be a simple exchange of respect. It was, in fact, a secret handshake with a surprise inside for the recipient—a special Secretary of Defense challenge coin. Not all challenge coins are passed by secret handshake, but it has become a tradition that many uphold.

Today, service members and first responders possess many medallions, or challenge coins, bearing their organization’s insignia. These coins are often presented by officials and high-ranking officers for a job well done, which is a great honor. They are also oftentimes traded between men and women of different units, departments, and responder disciplines.

First Responders Train with Local Utility Companies

Cecil Arient, AECOM

Have you ever had your local utility company brief your first responders on electrical safety? This is an important topic for your next TIM meeting.

Almost every year a firefighter is killed by an energized line. Electrical hazards cause more than 300 deaths and 4,000 injuries each year among the U.S. workforces. OSHA requires greater than 20 feet of clearance from lines that are over 50,000 volts.

According to The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health on February 13th, 2005, a 36-year old fire captain was fatally shocked when he brushed against a fallen 12,000-volt power line while fighting a predawn house fire. The line had fallen into a nearby pine tree and was dangling just above the ground. The 36-year old victim had served as a firefighter for 16 years and had been with this department for the previous six years. He was promoted to Captain two months prior to his death.

According to the CDC’s NIOSH, the construction industry comprises approximately eight percent of the U.S. workforce, yet it accounts for 44 percent of job-related fatalities.

Ensure first responders maintain a safe distance from energized electrical hazards, such as downed power lines, until the conductor is de-energized. Keep yourself and the public at least 30 feet away from fallen power lines. Fallen transmission lines from large towers require 100 feet of clearance.

Tips from the pros:

• Call the utility company right away and give them an assessment of the area.
• Assume that ALL downed electrical lines—even phone or coaxial cable lines are live and energized.
• Secure the area immediately.
• Look for concealed parts of the lines in foliage and debris, and look farther down the line for other section that may have fallen.
• Look for parts of the downed lines that may be resting on metal objects, such as signs and guardrails, which may be energized.

Contact your local utility company for more safety tips around electrical and gas hazards. Invite your utility company to speak/present at your next TIM meeting or present a live “Arc and Spark” demonstration if they have the equipment. Most utility companies will have a full-time employee whose priority is public safety and education. They will also offer live demonstrations at your request.

Beard’s Towing’s James Bennett, Jr. Named 2022 Towman Of the Year

No one in Texas will forget the storm of February 2021 now known as “Snowmageddon.” The Fort Worth motoring public will never forget the 135-vehicle crash on I-35W Express Lanes. However, there is a name that first responders throughout North Texas will always remember. That name is James Bennett, Jr. It is unusual for tow operators to be the Incident Commander of such a large operation. But when there is a man with the experience and TIM expertise such as James Bennett, the choice is crystal clear.

Bennett is the owner/operator of Beard’s Towing. He has been an outspoken and deeply-involved TIM champion, not just for Texas but nationally. In 2019, Beard’s Towing hosted (the company paid for the training and provided meals and water) a live TIM training that featured overturned commercial vehicles, wrecked cars of all sizes, and entangled victims (mannequins). He invited dozens of first responder agencies throughout North Texas for this free training. The result was a seamless, unified effort between 150 police officers and firefighters, and eight tow companies using 90 wreckers.

On behalf of David McDonald, the statewide TIM team and Texas First Responders we express our most sincere appreciation and congratulations on this prestigious, and well-deserved award.
The El Paso District will be hosting four TIM First Responder Training Courses in May

- **May 10th, 2022** at the TxDOT West Area Office, 4201 Hondo Pass Dr., El Paso, TX. 79904
  A morning class from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and afternoon class from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

- **May 11th, 2022** at the TxDOT East Area Office, 1430 Joe Battle Blvd., El Paso, TX. 79936
  A morning class from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and afternoon class from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

For registration and information email: Alonso.Hernandez@txdot.gov

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**Available Classes**

**NCTCOG First Responder & Manager’s Course**
2020 Class Schedule
616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, TX, 76005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>First Responder</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 24 and 25, 2022</td>
<td><strong>In-Person</strong> (Day 1, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Day 2, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCTCOG 616 Six Flags Dr. Arlington, TX 76005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21 and 22, 2022</td>
<td><strong>In-Person</strong> (Day 1, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Day 2, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCTCOG 616 Six Flags Dr. Arlington, TX 76005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16 and 17, 2022</td>
<td><strong>In-Person</strong> (Day 1, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Day 2, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCTCOG 616 Six Flags Dr. Arlington, TX 76005</td>
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</tbody>
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**Executive Level Course - A two-hour course designed to give department executives a general overview of the TIM program.**

- **May 5, 2021**
  (Virtual) 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. RSVP to Barb Walsh
  bwalsh@nctcog.org

- **Nov 3, 2022**
  (Virtual) 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. RSVP to Barb Walsh
  bwalsh@nctcog.org

Please contact NCTCOG to verify the above classes will be held

For SHRP2 TIM Train-the-Trainer Classes

Off-Site Classes Available

Contact Camille Fountain: cfountain@nctcog.org

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**DFW TIM Training**

**Fort Worth TIM Train-the-Trainer Class February, 2022**

The statewide TIM team taught the two-day FHWA Train-the-Trainer Course at the Fort Worth Police and Public Safety Training Center on February 22nd and 23rd. Instructors David McDonald, the Statewide TIM Coordinator and Cecil Arient, San Antonio TIM Coordinator, Trained 21 new TIM instructors that will continue to carry the TIM program to first responders across the state.

The two-day, 12-hour training reviews the fundamentals of TIM policy and procedure, proper incident blocking, equipment and PPE, and incident command. It also gives suggestions for incorporating local, county, and state laws and regulations into the teaching programs. McDonald also provided flyers, PDFs, and other customizable training material that can be tailored to each individual TIM training.

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**To host an in-person First Responder TIM Training or TIM Train-the-Trainer class for your organization, contact:**

David.McDonald@txdot.gov or call (512) 506-5105

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**North Central Texas Council of Governments**

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**TIM Meetings**

**Texas Statewide TIM Webinar**

April 20, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

June 15, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Aug. 17, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Every third Wednesday, every other month.

The cities of Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio all have local TIM meetings that discuss local TIM operations.

Contact David McDonald for Meetings and Webinar information: david.mcdonald@txdot.gov or (512) 506-5105.

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For registration and information email: Alonso.Hernandez@txdot.gov
These “heroes of highways” do much more than change tires! They are an integral part of everyday traffic management and safety for the motoring public AND for emergency, TxDOT and public utility workers on Texas roadways! Their dedication and hard work save hundreds of lives each year and save millions of dollars in commercial, private and municipal revenue by keeping our highways open and moving safely.

Austin HERO
CL miles covered.........................142
Incidents....................................6,727
Service to public.........................8,189

North Texas Tollway Authority
CL miles covered.........................156
Incidents....................................NA
Service to public.........................11,178

Dallas Courtesy Patrol
CL miles covered.........................260
Incidents....................................6,033
Service to public.........................14,228

El Paso HERO
CL miles covered.........................212
Incidents....................................4,315
Service to public.........................11,669

Fort Worth Courtesy Patrol
CL miles covered.........................462
Incidents....................................162
Service to public.........................5,467

Houston Motorist Assistance Program
CL miles covered.........................244
Incidents....................................4,959
Service to public.........................14,564

North Tarrant TEXpress
North Tarrant TEXpress 3
LBJ Tollway
CL miles covered.........................211
Incidents....................................232
Service to public.........................1,820

October -December 2021
Texas Totals
Total Lane Miles – 1,906
Incidents – 33,411
Services to Public – 88,021

Texas has the most Total Lane Miles (TLM) in the United States at 683,533.
The state with the closest TLM to Texas is California with 396,540.

Texas has more than 53.14% Total Lane Miles than California!
The January 13 Childress TIM meeting started with “TIM Shoutouts” recognition of great jobs done by TIM first responders. This was unsolicited recognition given to Ms. Tyler prior to the meeting. The next order of business was a reminder of what these meetings were for and what the TIM goals will be for 2022. This reminder will be announced at the beginning of each meeting. To round out the meeting introduction, a “safety refresh” was given on the topic of visibility and conspicuity.

Commercial load condemnation was mentioned at the first Childress TIM training session by several first responders. The Childress TIM team researched the topic and brought in an expert to discuss the topic with the first responders.

A Department of State Health Services representative presented on policies and regulations on load condemnation at crash scenes and a method for improvement in the dissemination of information to the group. The group then discussed traffic data on statewide fatalities, district fatalities, and general crash data. The collected data was available for each of the attendees. For the final item, TxDOT discussed upcoming roadway projects. Because these major projects would have an impact on response, this gives first responders time to plan alternate response routes for emergencies in those areas. The meeting then covered an open forum discussion for anyone to discuss topics of concern with the group.

The focus of the meeting then moved to a local After-Action Review (AAR). The group was reminded that the AAR was to be solution-oriented, not problem-oriented and this direction applied to not only speaking but to listening. This was a proactive approach to improve TIM policies and procedures to increase safety and awareness when responding to traffic crash scenes.

There were two AARs covered in the discussions. Each AAR shared the traffic count for that day to show how many cars were coming by that scene.

AAR 1 was a double fatality involving a CMV, parked car, and pedestrians and occurred the Sunday after Thanksgiving. It was after a curve and down a hill. There was a documented secondary crash involved. Total TIM Time: 8 hours, 22 minutes. The group discussed what went well and several items for improvement. Topics discussed were: congestion, limited resources, extended scene time, staying in your safe zone, better notification of towing and recovery, and ICS.

AAR 2 A commercial car-hauler with five cars on the shoulder and number one lane. In the crash, several cars became detached from the trailer. The incident occurred at night in a bridge construction area at the pinch-point of a taper down to one lane of traffic. This bridge was downhill after a curve. Total TIM Time: 4 hours, 21 minutes. The group discussed several issues and presented solutions: better traffic control and early warning of the traveling public, re-positioning emergency vehicles based on scene changes, and ICS.

All participants agreed that, despite issues on crash scenes, the TIM training and the relationship-building have had a significant impact on the efficiency of operations on crash scenes. They expressed sincere appreciation for the program. The group decided to have regular quarterly meetings.

**Faces of the Fallen - Remembering Our Comrades**

**HCSO Sgt. Ramon Gutierrez**
End of Watch: Jan. 24, 2022

Sgt. Gutierrez was struck and killed on Beltway 8 in east Harris County by a suspected drunk driver that fled the scene.

**Tow Operator Timothy Perkins**
Incident: Jan. 22, 2022

Around 2:00 a.m., Tow Operator Timothy Perkins was assisting a motorist on Hwy 290 near Pinemont in NW Houston when he was struck and killed.