MESSAGE FROM THE STATEWIDE TIM PROGRAM MANAGER, DAVID MCDONALD

Heroes. I think everyone has held someone, either real or fictional, as a hero in their life. They truly come in all shapes and sizes. I love using sports analogies, as I find them easy to understand. Oftentimes, when we see a football running back having a record-setting rushing season and getting all of the “glory,” it often happens due to their running behind a great offensive line. These people behind the scenes are the real “Heroes.”

National Superhero Day was on April 28th, and though none of our HERO or Courtesy Patrol Operators wear capes, they are an integral part of the Traffic Incident Management Team. When I think about all of the great HERO and Courtesy Patrols operating in our state, and the dangerous working environments in which these folks spend their entire shift operating, many times they are called Heroes by those they have helped to get back on the road from a vehicle breakdown. They are out there on the streets, unseen by the public, covering the backs of law enforcement officers and firefighters, and providing safety for the motoring public and their fellow first responders, who typically get all the recognition. In this edition, we highlight these programs and the benefits they provide to all motorists traveling our highways, and we say thank you.

As I close, your statewide team is here to support you, the boots on the ground, and those working in the “Crosshairs” of “D” drivers. Our number one goal is to provide the training and support so that Everybody Goes Home. Feel free to reach out and let us know how we can help.

David McDonald recently traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina, to participate in a Safety Service Patrol (SSP) Pooled Fund Study. Led by the Federal Highway Administration, this program is a coalition of multiple states to pool funding to research a particular topic, in this case, Safety Service Patrol Programs. The photo to the left was taken at the TIM Training Track in Raleigh, where first responders are given hands-on training in the latest traffic incident management techniques.
HEROES CELEBRATED ON NATIONAL SUPERHERO DAY

By Lauren Macias-Cervantes, El Paso District Public Information Officer, TxDOT (To view the article on the TxDOT website, Click Here)

EL PASO – National Superhero Day on April 28 celebrates superheroes of all types, and in Texas, they include TxDOT’s HERO and roadside assistance field crews.

“The HERO and other courtesy patrol programs around the state are a valuable service to our traveling public on our interstates and highways,” said Dave McDonald, the state’s traffic incident management program manager. “These programs have had a significant impact on safety and incident management.”

While other parts of the state have varied roadside assistance programs, TxDOT districts such as Austin, El Paso, and San Antonio have the Highway Emergency Response Operator program, commonly called HERO.

“We could make somebody’s day be better by them having a real bad day stranded on the side of the road, we could go ahead and help them out to be able to get out of the roadway safely,” El Paso HERO driver Joshua Chavez said.

In Houston, TxDOT helps fund the Harris County Sheriff’s Office Motorist Assistance Program designed to assist stranded motorists on all area freeways. Dallas and Fort Worth have courtesy patrols, and the North Texas Tollway Authority, and the North Tarrant Texpres round out the eight safety services in the state.

The goal of these programs is to improve safety and keep traffic flowing on major TxDOT highways.

“The HERO Program has helped the El Paso Police Department by maintaining the flow of traffic, which also aids the safety of the roadway,” said El Paso Police Officer Adrian Cisneros. “Sometimes a stranded motorist is just out of gas or needs a jump, and that’s the type of call that the El Paso Police Department would get, but because of the HERO program and their quick response, they’re able to get to that stranded motorist and get back on the road before we’ve even been able to get dispatched.”

HERO vehicles are equipped with digital message signs and cameras that send live images back to help with incident management.

While hours of operation vary, services are similar:

- Relocating disabled vehicles to safety
- Removing minor crashes from the roadway
- Providing traffic and lane control at crash scenes
- Removing debris from the travel lanes
- Assisting with low or flat tires
- Providing gasoline and water
- Performing minor vehicle repairs
- Jump-starting batteries
- Assisting first responders at crash scenes
- Providing drinking water and cell phone services to stranded motorists

The Move Over Slow Down Law requires drivers to move over a lane or slow to 20 mph below the posted speed limit when approaching emergency vehicles, law enforcement, tow trucks, utility service vehicles, TxDOT vehicles or other highway construction or maintenance vehicles using visual signals or flashing lights on the roadside. On roadways with posted speed limits of 25 mph or less, drivers must reduce their speed to 5 mph.

“There is no doubt that the highway is a dangerous place to work,” McDonald said. “The HERO’s and other courtesy patrol operators are out there to assist you, keep you safe and get you back on your way. Let’s keep them safe by giving them a safe place to work. Move Over or Slow Down for all of our responders working on our highway.”

Drivers who fail to give emergency and work crews space to safely do their jobs can receive a ticket with a fine of up to $200. If there is a crash that causes injury to a worker, drivers can be fined up to $2,000.

Learn more about the HERO program or request HERO assistance.
Intelligent Transportation Society (ITS) of America held its annual conference this year at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas, from April 24th - 27th. The conference allows technology companies, state, local, and federal DOTs, and engineers to discuss how technology can be used to make safer, greener, and smarter roadways for first responders and the motoring public.

On the second day of the conference, Tuesday, April 25th, ITS America held the Emergency Response Program sponsored by TxDOT, AECOM, State Farm, and Travelers Marketing and supported by the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA). The program was designed to show first responders the technology available to them for safer and more efficient traffic incident management.

The day began with a Dallas and Fort Worth joint TIM meeting in the convention center. The meeting was moderated by Natalie Bettger, Sr. Project Manager for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, representing the Dallas TIM Team, and Anthony White, the Fort Worth TIM Coordinator for TxDOT.

The joint TIM meeting began with the City of Venus Police Chief James Groom discussed the importance of the rural TIM team. Captain John Stevenson followed with a presentation on their retired fire apparatus blocking vehicle equipped with a TMA crash attenuator, the first of its kind in the United States. TxDOT engineer Michael Bazie discussed construction updates at the old Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Irving, Texas, and was followed by the Tarrant County Sheriff’s Office Courtesy Patrol after-action review process that included a tabletop display giving a 3D view of reviewed incidents. Jamie Pierce, the Lead Operator (Supervisor) for the Fort Worth Traffic Management Center (TMC), discussed the role and resources available to first responders in the FTW area for safer and faster roadway clearance. The highlight of the morning session was a presentation by Fox 4 News Traffic Anchor Chip Waggoner. He told the group how he collects, collates, and disseminates traffic information to the motoring public for morning and afternoon “rush hours.” He emphasized that the more accurate and timelier the information received from first responders on scene, the more informed the motoring public would be to avoid incident areas, thus relieving congestion and possible secondary crashes. A complimentary lunch was then provided by Reed Exhibitions, the event coordinator, for all of the attending first responders.
The afternoon TIM workshop began at 1:00 and was moderated by Brian Purvis, AECOM’s project manager for the Coordinated Highway Assistance & Maintenance Program (CHAMP) under the Georgia Department of Transportation. Ms. Millie Hayes, from the Federal Highway Administration, began the session by congratulating Texas TIM trainers for achieving an 85% first responder TIM certification rate. She invited the participants to attend the monthly FHWA National "Talking TIM" webinar. The webinar discusses TIM best practices from around the United States to broaden interstate and inter-agency cooperation for first responder safety. James Bennett, the owner of Beard’s Towing, discussed the mass casualty crash on February 11th, 2021. He spoke to the necessity of multi-disciplinary training for first responders and the equipment and technology available to achieve safe, quick clearance times. This laid the groundwork for the rest of the session, allowing the following speakers to explain available and emerging technology designed to meet TIM objectives on roadway incidents.

David McDonald, the Statewide TIM Coordinator, and Jamie Pierce, the Fort Worth TMC Lead, both with TxDOT, described the use of the Highway Emergency Link Platform (HELP) for local first responders and the motoring public. Mr. Pierce emphasized that the traffic management center (TMC) is available to first responders 24/7 as a resource for quick clearance and first responder safety. This led to a discussion by Brock Aun of HAAS Alerts on the emerging technology of automatic in-vehicle roadway emergency alerts. The system sends a message to the motorist via the onboard LED screen of an approaching emergency vehicle or an incident scene ahead, giving the motorist time to slow down and move over. The final speaker was Officer Clayton Salas from the Grand Prairie Police Department Criminal Intelligence Unit. Officer Salas discussed the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS), or drones, for traffic crash investigation, warrant service, SWAT breaches, and other police-related activities.

Throughout the morning and afternoon sessions, Statewide TIM Program Manager David McDonald presented attendees and speakers with the Texas TIM Challenge Coin, designed by the statewide TIM team, and given exclusively to those members of the first responder community that have shown exceptional service through innovation and dedication to TIM practices. Mr. McDonald awarded nine Challenge coins to deserving members, adding their names to the Texas TIM Wall of Fame.

The final Challenge Coin presentation was an unexpected surprise for Mr. McDonald. Bob Murphy, AECOM Sr. Project Manager and Emergency Response Program Committee Co-Chair, awarded the coin to Mr. McDonald, who has led the statewide TIM program since 2018.
After the session, the attendees moved outside to the front of the convention center for the equipment display and demonstration area. Eight agencies graciously donated their time to display the latest vehicle technology used for traffic incident management, including the NTTA, Beard’s Towing, CG Environmental, the cities of Denton and Grand Prairie fire departments, HAAS Alerts, IncidentClear, and LaneBlade.

The Emergency Response Program had over one hundred registered attendees, well above the anticipated number. The event was an ideal opportunity to bring first responders together to discuss and demonstrate the latest tips and techniques for safer traffic incident management. The goal is always first responder safety and safe, quick clearance. The success of this conference is one step closer to the Texas TIM mission that “Everybody Goes Home.”

The statewide TIM team would like to thank TxDOT, AECOM, State Farm, and Travelers Marketing for their generous sponsorship and the NTTA for their support.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

- Eric Hemphill, North Texas Tollway Authority
- Kareem Williams, North Texas Tollway Authority
- James Austrich, Federal Highway Administration
- Dia Gainor, National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
- Sam McClain, Travelers Marketing
- Brock Aun, Cory Hohs, HAAS Alert
- Brian Purvis, AECOM
- Jim Comfort, TxDOT TIM Coordinator/AECOM
- Cecil Arient, TxDOT TIM Coordinator/AECOM
- Ralph Etienne, AECOM
- Scott Parr, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
DFW TIM TRAINING

AVAILABLE CLASSES

NCTCOG First Responder & Manager’s course
2023 class schedule
616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, TX, 76005

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>First Responder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 3 – 4, 2023</td>
<td>(In-Person) 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Each Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NCTCOG 616 Six Flags Dr. Arlington, TX, 76005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 14 – 15, 2023</td>
<td>(In-Person) 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Each Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>TxDOT Fort Worth Office 5501 McCart Ave, Fort Worth TX 76005</td>
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Executive Level Course - A two-hour course designed to give department executives a general overview of the TIM program.

Nov. 2, 2023
(In-Person) 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.
NCTCOG 616 Six Flags Dr. Arlington, TX 76005

This course is available for all TxDOT Area Engineers, DTO, and DOOs.

For SHRP2 TIM Training classes contact Camille Fountain: cfountain@nctcog.org
Off-Site classes available

TIM MEETINGS

Texas Statewide TIM Webinar
Texas Statewide TIM Webinar
Jun. 21st, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Aug. 16th, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Oct. 18th, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Every third Wednesday, every other month.
The cities of Austin, Childress, 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) 965-2515.

To visit the TxDOT TIM Website, Click Here.

SAN ANTONIO TIM MEETINGS

TAKE FLIGHT WITH THE SAPD

On April 3rd, 2023, the San Antonio Police Department’s RAVEN Team presented at the monthly San Antonio TIM meeting with a live drone demonstration. RAVEN is the name of SAPD’s Remote Aerial Vehicles in Law Enforcement program. RAVEN’s mission is to support public safety and preserve human life using multiple UAVs and pilots. SAPD’s UAVs are on constant standby for missing or fleeing persons, tactical teams-safety sweeps, critical incidents, crime scene and crash scene diagrams, and situational awareness for significant events or gatherings. Currently, their fleet consists of seven different UAV’s starting with the granddaddy DJI M300 RTK ($35K) down to the DJI Mavic Mini ($500).

In 2018, Sgt. Daniel Anders, still the current program manager, was tasked with starting the drone program. Much like Sgt. Anders, all drone pilots started as helicopter pilots and added UAV operators to their current qualifications.

SAPD currently has four turbo-shaft helicopters, eighteen pilots, and two supervisors. They support Bexar county, and the thirteen surrounding counties of San Antonio. The helicopter (EAGLE) and RAVEN programs fall under the supervision of Captain Michael Starnes, Traffic & Emergency Operations Section Commander. Capt. Starnes has been an integral member of the San Antonio TIM Team and has helped to strengthen the relationship with all participants. Spearheaded by Cecil Arient (AECOM), the San Antonio TIM Coordinator, the San Antonio TIM Team was the only TIM Team in Texas that never missed a monthly TIM meeting, meeting virtually during the heightened COVID years of 2020/2021.
TEXAS HERO/SAFETY SERVICE PATROL/COURTESY PATROL
These Superheroes Don’t Wear Capes!

HERO/Safety Service Patrol/Courtesy Patrol operators have shown how essential their service is to the motoring public and first responder agencies throughout the great state of Texas. Thank you to all of our “Highway Heroes”!

### Austin Hero
- CL miles covered: 142
- Incidents: 9,172
- Service to public: 13,529

### Dallas Courtesy Patrol
- CL miles covered: 304
- Incidents: 3,064
- Service to public: 6,010

### El Paso Hero
- CL miles covered: 212
- Incidents: 6,080
- Service to public: 16,911

### Fort Worth Courtesy Patrol
- CL miles covered: 462
- Incidents: 248
- Service to public: 4,928

### Houston Motorist Assistance Program
- CL miles covered: 278
- Incidents: 6,482
- Service to public: 20,181

### January-March 2023
- Total Lane Miles – 2,026
- Incidents – 36,047
- Services to Public – 100,957

Incidents - blocking/assisting in crashes
Services - Tire changes, gas, etc.

The FHWA offers a manual for Safety Service Patrol Priorities and Best Practices available for download. For more information [click here](#).

### North Tarrant Texpress
- CL miles covered: NA
- Incidents: NA
- Service to public: NA

### North Texas Tollway Authority
- CL miles covered: 156
- Incidents: NA
- Service to public: 11,482

### San Antonio Hero
- CL miles covered: 261
- Incidents: 11,001
- Service to public: 27,916
HOUSTON AREA TOW AND GO CELEBRATES ITS FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
By David Fink, Incident Manager, Houston-Galveston Area Council

The Gulf Coast Regional Tow and GoTM Program celebrated its five-year anniversary on May 1, 2023. The program provides motorists with no-cost towing when their vehicle breaks down from mechanical failure (e.g., out of gas, overheating, flat tire) in the main lanes, shoulders, ramps, or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)/High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes of freeways. The program covers 271 center line miles of freeway in Unincorporated Harris County, City of Houston, Bellaire, Deer Park, Humble, Jersey Village, La Porte, Pasadena, and Webster.

The program operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Since its beginning, Tow and Go has provided drivers with over 163,000 no-cost tows. The program has also helped drivers experiencing medical problems on the freeway, such as heart attacks, diabetic attacks, and women going into labor. The program has also prevented a person’s abduction.

Funding for this program provided by the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

TEXAS TIM CHALLENGE COIN WALL OF FAME

Congratulations to the latest Texas TIM Wall of Fame honorees for their outstanding contributions to TIM programs throughout the great state of Texas!

FACES OF THE FALLEN − REMEMBERING OUR COMRADES

West, TX. Volunteer Firefighter Eddie Hykel
End of Watch: March 28, 2023
FF Hykel was struck by a vehicle while working traffic control at a crash scene on I-35.

Abbott TX. Volunteer Firefighter Horace D. Wright
End of Watch: April 14, 2023
FF Wright was struck by fire apparatus while working traffic control for a disabled motorist.