

Incident Management Task Force

July 17, 2008

To: Kevin J. Kelleher
Chairman
Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board

From: Karen Olson, Chair
Statewide Incident Management Task Force
Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board

It has been more than a year since we last reported on the work of the Statewide Incident Management Task Force (SIMTF) and on the status of projects first recommended to you in 2003. Significant progress has been made in this last year, and I am happy to provide you with this, my first report as new Chair of the SIMTF.

In 2006, we identified our three highest priorities for the management of incidents on our highways: 1) developing a Unified Response Manual (URM), 2) reissuing the Statewide Incident Management Policy, and 3) undertaking an incident management awareness campaign. We reported previously that the Incident Management Policy was signed by all parties in April 2007. ConnDOT has identified funding for the first part of an awareness campaign that is expected to be available next year.

Our highest priority, the Unified Response Manual, is now complete and has been approved by the SIMTF. The forward progress on this project is due in large part to the support that we received from the South Central Regional Council of Governments and their Executive Director Judy Gott, who made planning funds available to hire a consultant to develop a first draft; and to the diligence of the URM subcommittee led by Norwalk Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, who expanded the first draft into the final document before you today. We are also indebted to the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security for their assistance in developing a tabletop exercise to test the first draft of the document, and to the Naugatuck Fire Department and its Deputy Chief Kenneth Hanks for hosting the tabletop. At today's meeting, we will give you a more in-depth report on the development and contents of the URM, and ask for your endorsement.

Other projects which have made significant progress in the last year include:

- DEMHS has agreed to oversee the maintenance and distribution of the URM. A training program based on the URM is being initiated with the assistance of DEMHS and with the continuing support of the SIMTF.
- The 511 Plan (traveler information phone number) has been completed and is awaiting funding approval from FHWA and the State's 15 regional planning agencies.

- A comprehensive interoperability communications plan has been completed for the southwest area of the State and is in final draft form for the Hartford area. It is expected that other regions will have adopted plans within the next two years.
- ConnDOT has developed a proposal which when implemented will allow authorized local responders access to ConnDOT's camera images over the internet. This project is also awaiting funding approval from FHWA and the RPAs.
- ConnDOT has undertaken an 8-year program to provide as-built plans for highway drainage systems. The plans are delivered to the municipalities as they become available.

Two projects have been essentially completed since our last report. Funded by the State legislature, with TSB support, they are:

- Additional diversion plans for major accidents that close limited access highways were completed and made available to local and State police. Most are available on the internet, and the few that are not will be available soon.
- The CHAMP service has been expanded in southeastern CT and on the Merritt Parkway. Expansion in the Waterbury area is expected in August 2008.

Other recommendations that have moved forward, but still require funding, include:

- Additional motorist outreach efforts.
- Photogrammetry equipment for use by State Police at the scene of an accident.
- A pilot program for reference markers in the Buckland area.

Another difference since the last report to you is, of course, the change in chairmanship of the Task Force. Steve Cassano, who served as Chair, and Jim Mona, who served as Vice Chair, have both moved on to other endeavors. Mr. Cassano, while serving as Mayor of Manchester and as a member of the Transportation Strategy Board, gave his unwavering support to the recommendations and work of the SIMTF. Mr. Mona, now Manager of Highway Operations at ConnDOT, was our knowledgeable resource for incident management best practices and he assured that many of the projects recommended by the SIMTF moved forward as quickly as possible. Mr. Mona, while no longer serving on the Task Force, continues to give our efforts high level support. We wish to gratefully acknowledge the work that both of these gentlemen undertook to promote improvements in the management of incidents on our highways.

I also wish to personally acknowledge the entire membership of the SIMTF. A list of present and former members is attached. Most have been with us since the inception of the SIMTF in 2003. All have given time and effort in service to the work of the Task Force. I doubt that many have the SIMTF as a part of their official work program, but their dedication to the goal of making continuous improvements to incident management is evident by their participation.

This fall, the members of the SIMTF will meet to review our progress and determine our Next Steps. We hope to have an updated report for you before the end of the year. We appreciate the strong support that the TSB has given us in the past and look forward to continuing that relationship in the future.

enc.