

### Resurfacing Project Enhances Safety in Taylor County



TAYLOR COUNTY AUDIBLE EDGE LINE

Taylor County, located on the west side of District Two, is the Forest Capital of the South, has nearly 60 miles of coastline, and is home to four rivers and numerous springs and creeks. The county's incredible offerings of premier hunting and both fresh and saltwater fishing make it a popular ecotourism destination. One of the most-used roads in Taylor County is SR 55 (US 19/US 98/Alt US 27).

In 2021, FDOT District Two completed a mill and resurfacing project of just over 17 miles of SR 55, but this project did more than just improve the friction course and address rutting. To increase safety for all roadway users, District Two constructed new friction course on the paved shoulder for the full project

and included audible edge lines. The combination of the new friction course and the edge lines will help drivers who may depart their lanes be able to recover safely, preventing lane departure crashes, which is one of the FDOT's Vital Few focus areas. Additionally, the paved shoulders can function as a safer space for bicyclists when there is not a designated bike lane.

In addition, the project replaced more than 2,000 linear feet of new guardrail and accessories that meet enhanced crash test standards. This improves the safety of the facility by providing a higher rail height, reducing the risk of vehicle overturn and improving the ribbon strength of the guardrail system to ensure the vehicle is redirected by the rail. To improve visibility and increase safety, the entire project was restriped using thermoplastic for optimal night-time visibility, and 87 new signs such as curve ahead, speed limit, and wildlife crossing signs were included for driver awareness.

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### Alligator Creek Bridge Replaced

As part of providing a high quality and safe transportation system in Florida, there are more than 12,000 bridges that provide connections and crossings to serve the traveling public. In 2021, one of these important structures, the Alligator Creek bridge on US 301 in Bradford County was replaced. Alligator Creek flows southwesterly towards Lake Rowell and provides necessary drainage for the area. This particular bridge project provided safety improvements such as full width bridge shoulders, enhanced pedestrian paths with barrier wall separation, as well as drainage structures and piping.

Portions of the approach to the Alligator Creek Bridge were milled, resurfaced, and overbuilt, using phased traffic detours during demolition of the existing bridge and construction of the replacement bridge. The construction of the detours was a critical component to ensure the safe travel of the public during the removal and construction of the new bridge.

In addition, the adjacent connecting roadways were milled and resurfaced to increase the friction course and address rutting, helping to improve traction and reduce the likelihood of hydroplaning. The new bridge also includes 77 feet of barrier wall and 207 linear feet of guardrail. This, combined with more than 1,500 linear feet of curb and gutter, will help improve safety for motorists who cross the creek by addressing lane departures as well as drainage.

The newly milled surfaces were restriped, and safety and awareness signs including speed limit, no parking, and median directional signage will also enhance safety for those traveling across this bridge.



ALLIGATOR CREEK BRIDGE STRIPING

#### DISTRICT 2 BY THE NUMBERS

- **18** counties
- **6** moveable bridges
- **1.9** million residents
- **2** deep-water ports
- **12,000** square miles
- **3** major rail lines
- **1,206** fixed bridges
- **144** public and private airports



## Communications Team Encourage Safe Holidays

Holiday travel means more cars on Florida's roads, and the average number of motor vehicle crashes is much higher during the holiday season. As part of FDOT's commitment to Target Zero, the Department and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles teamed up to share messages encouraging all roadway users to travel safely in the final few months of 2021.

The combined communications teams implemented a multi-faceted approach by using social media, public service announcements, and paid advertisements to reach the maximum number of drivers. Additionally, District Two's communications office even added holiday safety messages in all of their press releases.

Over the course of the holiday season, District Two published dozens of messages focused on safety on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. 45 of those messages specifically targeted holiday safety, reminding fans and followers to check their vehicles before taking trips, providing tips to prevent drowsy driving, sharing resources for designated drivers, and encouraging safe choices.



### BEFORE ENTERING RAMP

See This	Do This
	Do Not Turn Right
	Do Not Turn Left
	Do Not Enter Ramp
	



### IF YOU ENTERED RAMP

See This	Do This
	STOP
	Pull Over
	Turn Around
	Call *FHP for assistance, if needed



### IF YOU SEE A WRONG-WAY DRIVER

## End Your Year the Right Way

As part of the year-end focus on safety messaging, FDOT shared messaging to educate Florida drivers about the dangers of wrong-way driving, how to recover if they found themselves driving the wrong direction, how to avoid a crash with a wrong-way driver, and how to report wrong-way driving. Although wrong-way driving crashes occur less frequently than other types of crashes, they often result in multiple fatalities and/or serious injuries.

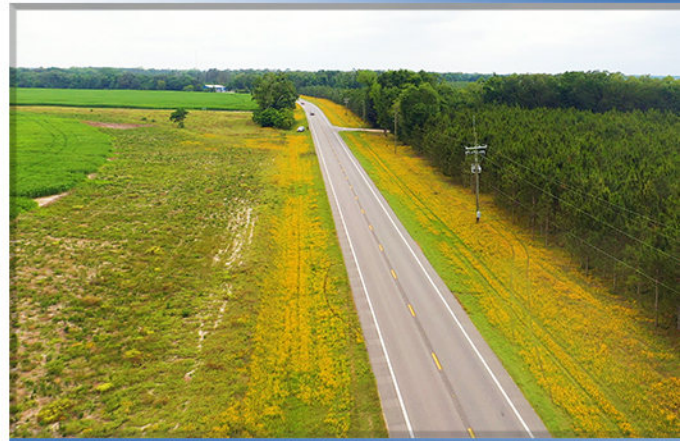
The holiday season is the perfect time to share wrong-way driving messaging because of the most frequent contributing factors: impaired drivers, drowsy drivers, and tourists. While Florida sees tourists year-round and people drive while impaired and/or drowsy in all seasons, the holiday season can see an increase in this type of driver as folks travel to and from holiday parties and to celebrate with friends and family in areas they are less familiar with.

Because the majority of wrong-way driving incidents occur when a driver enters a freeway or expressway from an exit ramp, District Two placed tip cards and posters at rest areas near areas with higher rates of serious injuries and crashes. In Alachua County, the focus was on the northbound rest area with facilities on I-75 in Payne's Prairie. In hopes of reaching travelers on I-95, District staff also put up posters and left tip cards at the northbound St. Johns County rest area with facilities. An example of one of these tip cards is shown to the left.

[fdot.tips/wrongway](https://www.floridadot.com/tips/wrongway)

## Funding Rural Off-System Road Projects

FDOT is responsible for state roads, but the Department often works with other municipalities to help them with their roadways. 14 of District Two's 18 counties are rural, which means there are plenty of rural roadways to maintain in Northeast Florida. There are a variety of funding methods used for improving rural roads, and there are three programs often used specifically for off-system roads owned by counties and cities. Many county road improvements are funded through the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), and the Local Agency Program (LAP). SCOP and SCRAP are both state programs specifically for rural or small counties. LAP is a federally funded program open to all counties, and rural counties are eligible to (and often do) participate.



RURAL ROADWAY IN COLUMBIA COUNTY

Florida's SCOP initiative is intended to help small county governments with a variety of issues on county roads. Projects eligible for SCOP funding include the repair or rehabilitation of county bridges, the paving of unpaved roads, addressing road-related draining issues, constructing capacity improvements, resurfacing or reconstruction, and safety improvements. A state funding source, SCOP is allocated to FDOT districts based on the number of small counties within the district. FDOT districts then use these funds to pay for 75 percent of the local county road project.

The SCRAP program is specifically designed to assist small county governments with the resurfacing and reconstruction of county roads. Up to \$25 million in state funding is allocated to the SCRAP program each fiscal year, and the money is allocated across the districts based on the number of eligible counties. Eligible counties as defined in Section 339.2816 of the Florida Statutes are any county with a population of 75,000 people or fewer. SCRAP funds can only be used on roads that were part of the county road system as of June 10, 1995, and these funds cannot be used for capacity improvements.

A third way rural counties can have road improvements funded is through LAP dollars. Local agency partners such as cities or counties apply for LAP funding, and FDOT prioritizes projects and then authorizes the local partners' projects. For a project to be selected for the LAP program, the local partner must be an approved partner and submit their plans to FDOT. The District then analyzes the project and does a feasibility analysis. Although LAP projects are federally funded and constructed by the local agency, FDOT views these projects as part of their commitment to the community. The District provides support, cooperating and providing assistance to help keep the projects on track and on budget.

District Two is proud to be a partner with local municipalities to help improve safety on all roadways.



## Maintenance Crew Helps with Bridge Safety

An icon of historic St. Augustine, the Bridge of Lions is a drawbridge over the Intercoastal Waterway connecting the city and Anastasia Island. Completed in 1927, the Bridge of Lions is on the National Register of Historic Places, has been recognized as one of the nation's top bridges by Roads and Bridges magazine, and was included on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "11 Most Endangered Historic Sites."

To improve safety for those crossing the bridge by bicycle, a St. Augustine Maintenance crew installed sharrows on the Bridge of Lions overnight in October of 2021. Their overnight work minimized the impact to traffic on the busy bridge and will help keep cyclists safe by reminding all users that lanes on the Bridge of Lions can be used by vehicles and bicyclists alike.





SCHOOL ZONE CROSSWALK IN DIXIE COUNTY

## Dixie School Zone Gets Safety Overhaul

Accidents in school zones are often preventable if motorists are focused on looking out for children and are traveling at the posted speed required for the zones. District Two recently worked with a local agency on a LAP (Local Agency Program) project in Dixie County designed to help make drivers in the rural area more aware of a school zone. To enhance safety for students on County Road 55-A, improvements were made to increase driver awareness in a variety of ways.

For this school zone, the existing crossings did not have many of the modern features and requirements that are currently being deployed. The improvements at the school zone included constructing a high intensity crosswalk at the crossings for Old Town Elementary School. In addition to pavement marking improvements, the signage in the school zone was upgraded significantly. Five ground mount solar powered beacons were added, and school zone speed limit flashing beacons were replaced. The new

signage includes one-way, end of travel lane warnings opposite intersecting roadways, school bus stop ahead, speed limit, school pedestrian crossing, pedestrians ahead, and begin and end school zone signs.

Simple changes like improved and increased signage and striping can make major differences for motorists and help keep school children safe.



SCHOOL ZONE BEACON STOP

## District Rail Administrator Keeps Safety on Track

Regardless of where you drive within District Two, you can't help but notice that railroads are a major component of our transportation network. As a matter of fact, when compared to other FDOT Districts, District Two ranks first in the state in number of rail miles, number of active railroads, and number of at-grade crossings. With the large number of intersections of railways and roadways, Kelli Phillips (District Rail Administrator) stays focused on safety for the traveling public. A key element of her success is working closely with transportation partners to maintain safe conditions throughout the District.

In late 2021, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reached out to FDOT and requested assistance in completing field assessments at railroad crossings in Taylor and Madison counties. The field assessments were associated with an \$8 million-dollar federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant awarded to Taylor County and the Georgia & Florida Railway to rehabilitate approximately 50 miles of rail line between Perry and the Georgia state line. FRA requested FDOT's assistance in reviewing each of the rail crossings included in the TIGER grant for conformance with current signage and pavement marking guidance found in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways.

In December 2021, Kelli and Jordan Eady (FDOT Central Office Rail Safety Inspection Program Manager) conducted the requested safety reviews at 78 at-grade railroad crossings throughout Taylor and Madison counties and provided the results to the FRA for recommended improvements. Recommended improvements included updated advanced warning signage and replacement of pavement markings at certain crossings. By partnering with the FRA and completing these field reviews, FDOT is playing a key role in better protecting motorists and pedestrians near at-grade rail crossings and reducing the probability of future train/vehicle collisions.



## Safety Spotlight: Structures Maintenance Team

Bridges within D2 are as varied as the district itself, ranging from simple spans and culverts across creeks to eight-lane overpasses and cable-stayed bridges across the St. Johns River. Regardless of the bridge size or structure, it must be inspected at least every two years. That means District Two's Structures Maintenance team has a big job: inspecting and maintaining nearly 1,300 state-owned bridges across the district and inspecting an

additional 700 that belong to local cities and counties.

Each year, District Two conducts, oversees, and reviews more than 1,000 bridge inspections. Dive teams put on scuba gear and submerge themselves and their equipment to examine pilings and soil to ensure these are stable. Toppers inspectors put on chest-high waders and crawl through culverts on their hands and knees – avoiding snakes and alligators – to check for cracks. Certified Bridge Inspectors (CBIs) walk bridges, searching for spalling (chunks of missing concrete) along decks, beams, railing, and piles. They



STRUCTURES MAINTENANCE CREW INSPECTS CULVERT

note the location and orientation of cracks and prioritize repairs. The District also works with consultants for inspections, and these teams use climbers to put their hands and eyes on every piece of a bridge including every single cable and wind tie on a cable stayed bridge like the Dames Point Bridge. Leaning into innovation to keep traffic moving, the teams also employ the use of drones for inspections. All of this scrutiny ensures the bridge is safe and can also help extend the life of a bridge by addressing potential issues in a timely manner to prevent further degradation.

In addition to regularly scheduled inspections, the Structures Maintenance team also conducts inspections after accidents. If a bridge is hit by a tall vehicle passing under it, an inspector is sent out. If a vehicle hits a barrier wall or catches on fire, an inspector is sent to examine the bridge and make sure it's safe for traffic to resume. And although it is usually the Florida Highway Patrol who shuts down traffic on bridges due to hazard, the Structures Maintenance office has the authority to immediately close any bridge it believes is unsafe.

The inspections conducted and overseen by the Structures Maintenance office are required to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations, but they're also a critical component of keeping bridges safe for the traveling public.



MAIN STREET BRIDGE INSPECTION

# Community Traffic Safety Team Creates and Shares Collateral with Partners

District Two's Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) works with local communities to solve local problems with state assistance. The CTST partners with local law enforcement, advocates, citizens, and emergency services to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes across the district. The local groups take a multi-disciplinary approach, incorporating engineering, education/public information, enforcement, and emergency medical services. By implementing the four E's of traffic safety, CTSTs are able to make an impact on problems related to drivers, vehicles, and roadways.

To help focus CTSTs across District Two on FDOT's top three emphasis areas for Target Zero and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the Community Traffic Safety Program developed a series of three videos highlighting proven, cost-effective safety engineering countermeasures. Each video covers one of the three emphasis areas - lane departures, intersections, and pedestrian/bicyclists - and shows examples of engineering countermeasures and explains how and why they work.

In addition to the video series, the Community Traffic Safety Program created 15 digital cards to share, print, and download with local CTSTs. The cards are all focused on the three emphasis areas. To see the videos and/or download the cards, visit [TrafficSafetyTeam.org](http://TrafficSafetyTeam.org).

**Intersection Countermeasures that Work**

## Backplates

Signal Backplate

Retroreflective Border

**Backplates with Retroreflective Borders**

Backplates are a low cost countermeasure being introduced in Northeast Florida on traffic signal heads to improve visibility of the illuminated face. The dark backplate provides a controlled-contrast background. The framing with a retroreflective border makes the signal easily seen in both daytime and nighttime conditions. This treatment enhances visibility for aging motorists and color vision deficient drivers, and is also beneficial during power outages or inclement weather, providing a visible cue for all motorists.

**Adding Backplates with Retroreflective Borders at Signalized Intersections**

Total Crash Reduction: **15%**

[trafficsafetyteam.org](http://trafficsafetyteam.org)

**YOUR TRAFFIC SAFETY TEAM**

Cost Effective Safety Engineering Countermeasures Help Reduce Intersection Crashes

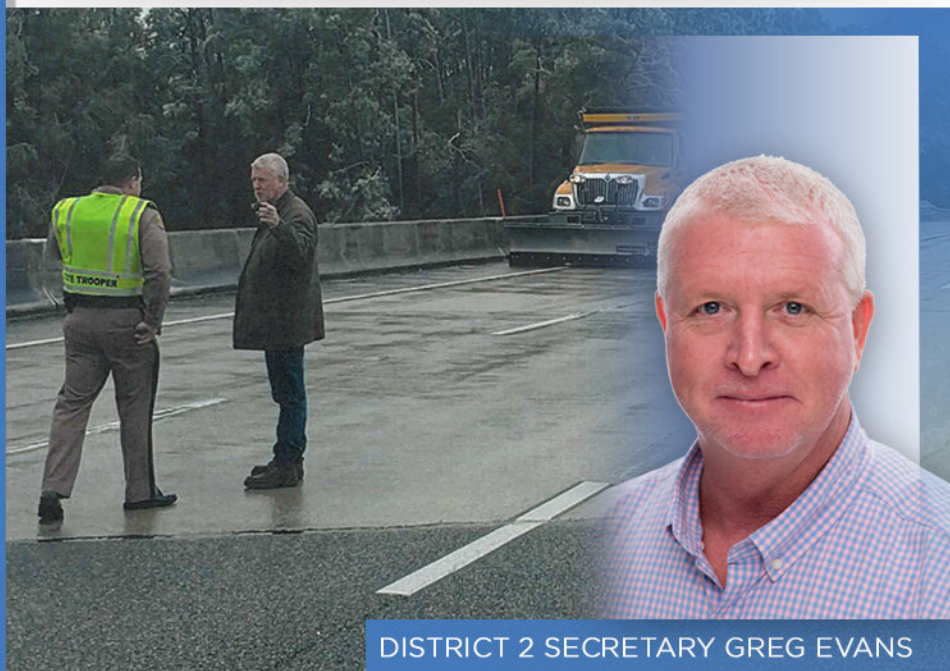
## Everyday Actions Count: Bridge Inspections

I am sure that you would agree with this statement: life is busy. And in the middle of our "busyness," between our family and work responsibilities, it can be very easy to take things for granted. Things that are often unseen, but if not handled promptly and correctly, would have a huge impact on our daily lives.

Throughout the 18 counties that comprise District Two in Northeast Florida, there are nearly 1,300 state-owned bridges. We travel on these bridges every day as we go to work, take our children to school or sporting events, or attend activities with friends and family. And I would imagine that most of the traveling public (including us FDOT employees) are not aware of all the efforts that go into inspecting and maintaining those bridges to ensure their structural stability. These activities are vital to sustaining an efficient transportation network, but since many of the inspection activities are completed outside the view of the public, these tasks can be taken for granted.

This quarter, I would like to acknowledge and express my personal thanks to Ross Hammock, District Structures Maintenance Engineer, and his staff for their outstanding efforts in inspecting and maintaining the many bridges located in District Two. Their job is not easy and has its own unique challenges (as noted in this month's "Safety Spotlight" article), yet every week, their teams are deployed throughout the district to complete their assignments. Thank you, inspections staff, for doing your part to keep District Two moving!

- Greg Evans



DISTRICT 2 SECRETARY GREG EVANS



There are 8 deaths  
on Florida roadways daily

There are 49 serious injuries  
every day on Florida's roads



Driver behavior is a contributing factor  
of 94% of crashes nationally.

94%

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