**9th Annual Partnering Workshop: Traffic Incident Management**

March 20, 2014 Macomb County Community College

The Intelligent Transportation Society of Michigan (ITS-MI) sponsored the 9th Annual Workshop on Traffic Incident Management for Metro Detroit to promote partnerships among the various responders to traffic incidents. The workshop was held at Macomb County Community College on March 20, 2014. Co-sponsors included the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Macomb Traffic Safety Association, Beaubien Engineering, Emergency Road Response (ERR) and Carrier & Gable. This workshop was the ninth in a series of annual workshops to develop partnering relationships among those with an interest in safe, quick clearance of traffic incidents.

The program was intended to clarify the roles of the different responders to a traffic incident and to foster a better understanding amongst first responders and the roles each play in response to and safe clearance of traffic incidents The workshop identified the roles of the different responders so the participants could get a better understanding of “who is in charge” of what. The presenters included three Macomb County Departments (Sheriff, Roads and Emergency Management), the Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan State Police, Westshore Fire, and Beaumont Medical Transportation. Over 30 of the 90 attendees at this workshop took the tour of Macomb’s Communications and Technology Center (COMTEC) and were treated to a firsthand look at this new joint transportation operations and dispatch center

Macomb Community College President Jim Jabobs and Christopher Lineberger from the Traffic Safety Association of Macomb welcomed Workshop participants. Richard Beaubien, chair of the Southeast Michigan Regional Transportation Operations Coordinating Committee, facilitated the discussion throughout the Workshop tying it to the goals and actions of the Coordinating Committee. These priority actions, developed in 2013, included educating the public on the “move over” law, developing alternate routes around freeway closures, training of first responders, and improving interoperable communications

The presenters included Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham, Macomb County Emergency Manager Vickie Wolberg, Macomb County Highway Engineer Bob Hoepfner, Oladayo Akinyemi Manager of the Michigan Department of Transportation Operations Center, Lt. Phil Menna from the Michigan State Police, Beaumont Medical Transportation Director Ellen Fleming, and Annjanette Kremer Traffic Incident Management Engineer from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

One third of the 90 attendees at this workshop toured the new joint COMTEC operations center that is home to the Roads Department (Traffic Signal Operations), Macomb County Emergency Management, and Macomb County Sheriff Dispatch. Participants included: the Michigan Department of Transportation (Lansing, Bay, and Metro Regions), representatives from Roseville, Romeo, Bloomfield Township, Eastpointe, Ford, Troy, Auburn Hills, Madison Heights, Harrison Township, Marine Pollution Control, Macomb County, Washtenaw County, SERESA 911, Oakland County, Washtenaw County, Michigan State Police, Novi, Oakland County, Clinton Township, Sterling Heights, Motorola Solutions, Romulus, Roseville, SEMCOG, Traffic Improvement Association, Carrier & Gable, Kimley Horn, URS, and Westshore Fire.

Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel opened the Workshop by emphasizing the importance of sharing the images of the the Road’s traffic cameras with both the Sheriff’s dispatch and Emergency Management. Putting all of these county operations into the same control room eliminates duplication of efforts and allows the sharing of resources to better serve the citizens of the county. Sterling Heights and Clinton Township dispatch are also scheduled to move their operations to the new center.

Macomb Sheriff Anthony Wickersham, Emergency Manager Vickie Wolber, and County Highway Engineer participated in a panel discussion of joint operations at the new COMTEC Center in Mt. Clemens

Michigan Department of Transportation Transportation Operations Center Official Dayo Akinyemi and Michigan State Police Post Commander Phil Menna described how the two agencies work together to route traffic away from transportation incidents in the I-696 Corridor in Macomb County. Integrated Corridor Management more closely aligns freeway operations and arterial operations in Metro Detroit. The Integrated Corridor Management Plan for I-696 uses DMS on the freeway, trailblazer signs, and special traffic signal timing plans on parallel arterial streets when a freeway closure is required

Dayo Akinyemi, Manager of MDOT’s Southeast Michigan Transportation Operations Center (SEMTOC), described the technologies and resources available to assist with traffic incident management including the closed circuit television cameras and the dynamic message signs. The Freeway Courtesy Patrol also operates out of SEMTOC, and the Michigan State Police regional dispatch shares the center which has access to the more than 200 cameras on Metro Detroit Freeways to assist with their dispatch operations. The cameras are also available for local public safety answering points (PSAPs) to dispatch local police, fire, ambulance, and tow services. Finally Mr. Akinyemi described the first responder safety workshops they provide (upon request) for properly closing a lane due to a traffic incident, to promote awareness of the camera technology availability, and best practices to keep first responders safe on the road.

Phil Wagner from Westshore Fire noted the importance of the Incident Command System at the scene of a traffic incident. A recent incident in California resulted in the arrest of a volunteer firefighter when there was a disagreement with law enforcement about whether a fire truck should be moved and who was “in charge.” The fire service has been improving relationships with other agencies by conducting more joint training activities. He also discussed the new Firetrucks requirements for retro-reflective markings which make them more visible to traffic. At least 50% of the vertical surface of the side facing traffic must have chevron striping.

Ellen Fleming, Director, from Beaumont Medical Transportation noted that the different disciplines responding to a traffic incident should perform like the soloists in a symphony. Each one should know his/her part, and each one should know when to enter and when to exit. The primary responsibilities of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are triage, treatment, and transport of crash victims. EMS determines severity of injuries, patient priorities, and transportation requirements and destination. EMS notifies the trauma center and removes medical waste from the scene. Very often medical services must be the first ones to exit because of serious injuries

Annjanette Kremer, MDOT Traffic Incident Management Engineer, described the coordinated training program that is intended to build a stronger responder corps for safer incident recovery in Michigan. A new coordinated, multi-disciplinary, training program developed through the second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) is now available for all emergency responders and those supporting Traffic Incident Management Operations. The training puts police, firefighters, state and local departments of transportation, towing, medical personnel, and other incident responders on the same page, leading to faster, safer, integrated responder teams. Traffic Incident Management has now been added to the Governor’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Ms. Kremer also noted that presently only 59% of responders wear the required high visibility vests. Three programs to train the trainers on traffic incident management are scheduled for Michigan in 2014. The training objectives are to improve responder safety, improve reliability, and improve motorist safety. Michigan approvals of the training include the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) and the Firefighter Training Council. The aim is to train 1,500 first responders by the end of 2016.

The Macomb County Communications and Technology Center (COMTEC) opened in late 2013 and is a 25,000 square foot state-of-the art facility that provides 24/7 situational awareness for the county’s residents, businesses, and first responders.

The facility includes the Macomb Department of Roads Traffic Operations Center that provides and maintains a reliable real-time traffic operations system in coordination with Emergency Management and Sheriff dispatch to deliver a safe, efficient and traveling experience to the public. It serves as the centralized hub of activity for operation, maintenance, and monitoring of advanced traffic signal systems, cameras, and the county-wide Intelligent Transportation Systems communications network including real-time monitoring of traffic operations, traffic flow, signal operations, and special event coordination. The mission of the traffic operations center is accomplished by working together and sharing resources, such as the video wall, with Emergency Management and Sheriff Dispatch.

COMTEC provides a 20’ x 50’ video wall, eight traffic monitoring stations, 25 Sheriff and police dispatch stations, centralized County IT data center, integrated communications and technologies (radio/voice/data/video),

Participants who evaluated the workshop rated it good to excellent. They rated public awareness as the most important factor in improving the outcome of a traffic incident in their community. Other important improvements to improve outcomes were training, better multidisciplinary communications, and responder safety. More than 85% of the respondents did not believe the public knows about the move-over, steer-it-clear it laws. Respondents felt there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities during an incident that requires response from various first responders most of the time.



 Macomb Sheriff Anthony Wickersham, Emergency Manager Vickie Wolber, and County Highway Engineer Robert Hoepfner participated in a panel discussion of joint operations at the new COMTEC Center in Mt. Clemens.



Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel described the joint funding and operations of the new COMTEC Center.