



Celebrating Ten Years of Keeping Georgia On The Move

By Monica Luck, Georgia Department of Transportation and Christine Macaulay, PB Farradyne.

On April 27, 2006, the Georgia **NaviGator** Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) celebrated ten years of excellent service. The ITS Georgia Chapter honored several champions of the original **NaviGator** system at an anniversary luncheon held at the Georgia DOT Transportation Management Center (TMC). Panelists included Marion Waters (formerly of GDOT), Joe Stapleton (formally of GDOT), Mike Hendon (formerly of GDOT), Hallie Smith (formerly of MARTA), Randy Bundy (formerly of the City of Atlanta), Robert “Tip” Franklin (formerly of TRW), Martin Knopp (FHWA), and Susie Dunn (ARC and Atlanta Committee for Olympic Games). The entire **NaviGator** system was the result of an entire “team that grew together and built the flagship for traffic management”, Tip Franklin recalls, “I am proud to have been a part of that great legacy.”



The champions of **NaviGator, Joe Stapleton (left) and Marion Waters (right), celebrate with their successors, Carla Holmes (State Traffic Operations Engineer) and Mark Demidovich (Assistant State Traffic Operations Engineer).**

Fond memories and lively discussions filled the TMC remembering the struggles and successes that were encountered when creating **NaviGator**. Susie Dunn remembers “Planning was a challenge—there were many cooks in the kitchen—local transportation planning partners, events personnel, international sports federations, law enforcement and so on.” Most audience members had some part in the creation of **NaviGator** and all were ready and willing to share their personal experiences. “Looking back on those times there is no question that they were hard, but they were fun too, Marion Waters recalls, “I am proud to have been part of that effort and to understand the lives that have been saved, the thousands of hours of time saved, and the hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel that were not burned because of the past decade of operation of **NaviGator**. ”

After the panel discussions, attendees adjourned to the patio to hear heartfelt remarks and birthday toasts by GDOT Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl. Commissioner Linnenkohl praised **NaviGator**



ITS Georgia Board participates in the cake cutting ceremony.

champions for the success of the system and expressed his commitment to continue enhancing **NaviGator** for the next ten years.

Final remarks were followed by a catered lunch and an anniversary cake cutting ceremony. Participants continued to reflect and share stories of the creation of **NaviGator** throughout the afternoon.

Why the System was Created

Thousands cheered when Atlanta was chosen to host the Centennial Summer Olympic Games in 1996. However, in “welcoming the world,” it also invited a traffic onslaught that would add more gridlock to the already strained interstates. Widening the roads was not the answer. The Georgia Department of Transportation joined forces with federal and local authorities to create an Intelligent Transportation System to address traffic congestion. **NaviGator** was introduced in April of 1996 at the opening of GDOT’s TMC.



How the System Works

NaviGator is a leader in ITS because it is comprehensive. TMC Operators monitor the roads using CCTV cameras installed approximately every mile. They can also determine incident locations via color-coded maps that display traffic speeds. These are fed into the system from Video Detection System (VDS) cameras spaced every 1/3 mile. Customer Service Representatives take calls from motorists reporting road hazards and accidents. All of this information is fed into **NaviGator**, which generates response plans. Travel times and incidents appear on Changeable Message Signs (CMS) placed above the roads to alert motorists of congestion ahead. In addition, this information is fed to the **NaviGator** website, which is accessible 24 hours a day at www.georgia-NaviGator.com. Ramp meters placed at key access points assist in mitigating congestion due to merging traffic. Weather monitoring stations throughout the state keep the TMC and the public aware of road conditions and potential hazards. On the front lines of incident management, the Highway Emergency Response Operators (HEROs) patrol the interstates to keep the roads safe and open, via traffic control and motorist aid.



Current **NaviGator TMC located in Atlanta, Georgia.**

via traffic control and motorist aid.

GDOT introduced My **NaviGator** in 2004 to provide “customized” traffic information. Subscribers can set up travel profiles and have traffic alerts sent to their cell phones, computers or PDAs. **NaviGator To Go** enables access to a Personal Traffic Page or the **NaviGator** website from a handheld wireless device. **NaviGator Web**, designed primarily for first responders, is a web-based version of the system software with over 125 subscriber organizations.

System Statistics

NaviGator coverage has increased 400% since launch:

	1996	2006
Coverage (miles)	37	143
CMS	24	97
CCTV	67	341
VDS	310	1361
Ramp meters	4	9
NaviGator Staff	5	134

Since 1996:

- 525 million cars have passed under each CMS along I-75 and I-85
- 292 million CCTV images have been viewed on the website
- 1.75 million alerts have gone out to My **NaviGator** subscribers’ e-mail, pagers and cell phones
- The TMC has been open continuously 87,600 hours

In 2004 the Governor of Georgia launched the “Fast Forward” program to accelerate expansion for congestion relief and increased mobility. By 2007 **NaviGator** coverage will include 81 more miles of Interstate. The HERO program will add 30 units and 17 more routes.

System Benefits

In one year, **NaviGator** saved Georgians time, money, and in some cases, lives:

- Over 7 million vehicle-hours of incident-delay savings
- Smog Reduction:
 - 186+ tons of HC
 - 2,457+ tons of CO
 - 261+ tons of NOx
- Fuel Savings
 - 5.2 million gallons of gasoline
 - 1.6 million gallons of diesel fuel



Highway Emergency Response Operators (HERO) educate children on the importance of incident management and motorist assistance.

- Help on the Road:
 - 49,000+ motorist assists
 - 340+ crashed prevented
- Total Value in US Dollars:
 - \$186,799,012

Special Recognition

In recognition of their past and future partnerships, ITS Florida presented GDOT with an Outstanding Achievement Award during the ceremony. The citation read, "In partnership with the U.S.DOT, regional and local agencies, and many other partners, the Georgia DOT created what, at the time was, and continues to be, one of the leading Intelligent Transportation Systems and Transportation Management Centers in the world. The NaviGator System formally opened on April 11, 1996, and was instrumental in helping manage traffic and incidents for the 1996 Olympic Games and Special Olympic that summer, and the Super Bowl the following January. It has continued to relieve congestion and save lives, time, and money for 10 years hence. ITS Georgia and GDOT have long been close partners with ITS Florida and FDOT, reaching a highlight in our joint sponsorship (with FHWA and the Florida and Georgia Sections of ITE) of Transpo2004 in Jacksonville. Also, during the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, GDOT dispatched HERO units to assist evacuees from Florida and NaviGator posted informative messages in CMSs for those headed to Florida. ITS Florida and its members congratulate GDOT, its partners, and all who are associated with the system for their outstanding service to the state, region, and nation on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the NaviGator System." Past President Charles Wallace presented the award to Ms. Carla Holmes, State Traffic Operations Engineer, and she was joined by Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl and Director of Operations, Steve Henry.

Closing

Special thanks are extended to those who designed and launched **NaviGator** in 1996, to those who maintain **NaviGator** today and are expanding it for the future, and to all of **NaviGator** partners for their continued support.

