The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an overview of the region’s TIM activities – past and future. Programming is designed to improve responder safety, enable the quick clearance of roadway obstructions, and promote prompt communication that responders can rely on to improve their approach to incident management. More information can be found on the TIM SharePoint site for collaboration. Please direct comments to Domenic D’Andrea from SPC, at ddandrea@spcregion.org.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE DAY IN PITTSBURGH

The Intelligent Transportation Society of America is bringing its annual meeting and about 2,000 visitors to Pittsburgh’s Lawrence Convention Center May 31–June 3.

On June 2, Emergency Response Day will feature an innovative presentation or two on emergency response and its ties to ITS devices and applications.

ALL uniformed responders (and towing/recovery personnel, and public safety communicators) can attend free (including lunch) and pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. The day begins at 9 a.m. with a two-hour “TIM in Action” play of sorts, where a mock TIM team meeting, brief training, simulated actual response, and after action review meeting will be conducted.

Along with responders, a number of innovative young people will be in attendance. They will learn more about ITS devices (signs, signals, sensors, radios, etc.) and emergency response, and will meet with those of you who wish to talk about what you do to improve traffic incident management. They will develop concepts about how new computer applications might help us do our job safer and better.

The day includes a fantastic exhibit floor which should interest many of you, and some guided tours of vendor booths specifically aimed at the emergency responder community will be held.

Registration information can be found here: http://itsannualmeeting.org/register/
Be sure to proceed to the end of the registration to claim the emergency response day complimentary registration. Those who wish a simpler way to register can submit names of persons and basic contact information to Josh Spano of SPC at jspano@spcregion.org by email.

TACKLING THE COMMUNICATIONS ISSUE

A small group of folks from the I-79/I-76 local TIM Team have decided it is time to quit talking about communication difficulties with drivers, and do something about it. A committee formed April 8 after discussion about continued challenges with providing enough information to enough drivers to make scenes safe and increase mobility.

The panel, chaired by Mark Nanna of Cranberry Fire, will be talking more about how to reach drivers in a variety of ways BEFORE the incident occurs. Generally speaking, drivers are too often unaware of incidents, too often ill prepared to change their routes, and too often unaware of laws and general driver safety concepts about how to travel through or near an incident scene.

We all look forward to their ideas and they will be shared during the next round of meetings, if not before.
REGIONAL TIM STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The April 8, 2015 meeting of the Regional Steering Committee was a spirited discussion of a variety of topics. PennDOT Districts 10, 11, and 12 were represented, and one highlight of the meeting was a presentation on impactful PennDOT projects in District 11, presented by TMC Manager Ben Devore.

State Police and the Allegheny County Office of Emergency Management, along with the Department of Homeland Security’s infrastructure protection office were also active participants.

Trooper Doug Bartoe of PSP Washington and Jay Ofsanik, a veteran responder and safety press officer at PennDOT District 12, spoke about the renewed importance of an organized approach to TIM in light of impending construction projects on I-79 and I-70. A meeting was held later in the month to begin organizing thoughts and approaches.

LOCAL TIM TEAM UPDATES

Airport Corridor: The meeting at Moon Township’s Public Safety Center focused on the continued benefits of organized thinking. Thankfully, no major incident issues had been reported in the past six months by Moon firefighters or PSP Pittsburgh station. The majority of the meeting focused on preparation of one section of the draft incident management guidelines. Moon Township VFD has indicated it is willing to meet more frequently to develop guidelines that could be used by all responders.

Pittsburgh: The use of Knowledge Center, an incident reporting software, has been successful in western Pennsylvania for some time, and SPC was represented at a special exercise April 7 at the Allegheny County EOC. The session brought together emergency management partners and the operations and emergency personnel from a variety of public utilities and energy providers. Utilities entered and reacted to information in the KC system as part of the exercise. The value of current situational awareness about the traffic operations conditions can’t be overstated, and the continued attempts to involve utilities in training and exercises, as well as TIM team meeting attendance, will bear fruit. KC is also the statewide information sharing platform used by most areas of the Commonwealth, and monitored by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency at its Statewide Emergency Operations Center.

I-79/I-76: More than 30 responders, and towing/recovery professionals gathered April 8 at the Cranberry Township Public Safety Training Center, and spent most of the meeting talking out issues that had been uncovered in a variety of responses. This group continues to be inclusive of all disciplines, and at this meeting, had multiple municipal law enforcement, fire companies, and fire police organizations represented, along with two towing firms. This team is also working to help develop, edit, and modify the draft incident management guidelines introduced this spring at those meetings.

I-70 Washington: The meeting at PA State Police Barracks in Washington, PA focused about the renewed importance of an organized approach to TIM in light of impending construction projects on I-79 and I-70. This group continues to be inclusive of all disciplines and at this meeting had representation from PennDOT, PennDOT consultants, law enforcement, and local fire companies. A brief discussion of recent incidents followed including a motorcycle incident on I-70.

Any responder or interested party can learn more about those guidelines by contacting Chuck Yorks of Gannett Fleming at cyorks@gfnet.com or by calling him at 717-461-1346. Additional information can be obtained from Josh Spano of SPC at jspano@spcregion.org or by calling him at 412-391-5590 ex.362.

SHRP II TRAINING OFFERED BY TURNPIKE

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) has become more involved in TIM in a variety of ways, including a renewed commitment to be part of TIM teams and the steering committee whenever possible.
On its own, PTC has adopted the National Unified Goal on Traffic Incident Management, and sponsored 10 different classes founded on the Federal Highway Administration’s Responder Safety curriculum.

Two more classes will be held in southwestern PA in the coming month. Classes June 11 and 12 will be held at Jefferson Hills and Searights Turnpike maintenance facilities. For more information, contact Ken North at knorth@paturnpike.com.

SPC's REGIONAL OPERATIONS PLAN

The Regional Operations Plan, or the ROP, which is a key initiative of the SPC's Transportation Operations and Safety Committee, is being updated this year. Many of the priority areas identified in previous years are continued with this update, including the importance of facilitating interagency coordination and cooperation for traffic incident management (TIM Program). The updated ROP has an increased emphasis on:

- Performance measures that SPC and its planning partners can use to track our progress in meeting our operational objectives

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) solutions that address needs in each of the priority areas. Advancing technology is anticipated to significantly transform the future improvements to our transportation infrastructure.