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**Florida Department of Transportation Receives Two Awards at  
31<sup>st</sup> Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference**

*Florida 511 Traveler Information System honored for Public Education/Public Information and Innovation*

**TALLAHASSEE** — Today, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) received awards for public education/public information and innovation during the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference Awards Luncheon at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach.

The awards recognized FDOT for developing the [Florida 511 Traveler Information System](#) into an innovative and effective public-education tool that has "improved hurricane preparedness, response, recovery or mitigation in Florida," according to the award criteria. During the 2016 hurricane season, Florida 511 provided real-time information in English and Spanish for evacuation routes, traffic speeds, travel times, road and bridge closures, detour maps, and weather updates.

"It is an honor to receive this award on behalf of many hardworking people who operate the Florida 511 system," said Rachel D. Cone, interim Florida secretary of transportation. "We're proud to provide this service that delivers free real-time roadway information and urgent alerts vital to public safety before, during and after a hurricane."

Russell Allen, FDOT ITS program development engineer, received individual recognition for the "concept and development of new, unique and innovative programs or systems in the field of hurricane preparedness, response, recovery or mitigation in Florida," according to the award criteria

Allen leads the team that developed a new, enhanced version of Florida 511 in 2016. The new system features five platforms through which residents and visitors can access traffic and roadway information: the free [mobile app](#) available for Apple and Android devices, [FL511.com](#), personalized services with text and email alerts, toll-free 511 phone system, and [Twitter](#) feeds.

Allen's team launched the new Florida 511 system September 1, 2016, just one day before Hurricane Hermine struck the Florida Panhandle. As the storm hit the following day, the new website recorded nearly 30,000 sessions in one day. The following month when Hurricane Matthew skirted Florida's east coast, website sessions exceeded 100,000 sessions in one day.

FDOT encourages all drivers to visit the Florida 511 website before leaving or have a passenger check the mobile app to avoid using a phone while driving.

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