



Indianapolis TMC Keeps Track Visitors On Track

Getting to and around Indiana's capital city during the month of May can challenge most motorists. During Memorial Day weekend, an estimated 250,000 Indianapolis 500 race fans navigate their way to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) to see "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing."

Since 2001, the Indianapolis Traffic Management Center (TMC) has annually created an official traffic plan to aid motorists in their interstate treks to IMS. INDOT's TMC Planning Coordinator and self-proclaimed "highway geek" Steve Wuertz notes that the traffic plan is also for those who wish to avoid traffic surrounding IMS.

"Traffic to and around the IMS was very congested before the Interstate Highway System was completed in the 1960s and '70s," said Wuertz. "Although INDOT was not involved in the early years, we have located a traffic plan dating to 1949, when banners and signs were placed on telephone poles as part of the traffic plan."

Seventeen overhead and four portable dynamic message signs (DMS) were used on Race Day this year. The DMS signs are more visible and display up-to-date messages as traffic patterns change.

Another improvement this year was the posting of a simplified version of the inbound traffic plan on the IMS website.

"We've made improvements to the plan each year since 2001," added Wuertz. "Several years ago, the plan was color coded to indicate whether the messages were for pre-race or post-race traffic. We also made the messages more intuitive, for example, using 38th Street instead of Exit 17. These small changes have been extremely helpful to the public as users, and INDOT and law enforcement as implementers."

Through the years, the TMC staff has worked in concert with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, Speedway Police Department and IMS to create traffic plans.

"The traffic information that INDOT provides via their cameras, radios and staff is invaluable to the success of the 500 and other racing events at the IMS" said Speedway Police Department Chief Jim Campbell. We feel very fortunate that they are partners with us and other law enforcement for these events."

Hoosier Helpers also patrol on Race Day, and TMC personnel staff the Unified Command Center at the IMS Pagoda with local law enforcement. During this year's Indianapolis 500, TMC Freeway ITS Manager Ed Cox was at the IMS Pagoda.

"In addition to making adjustments on the DMS signs when we saw backups beginning, we monitored and dispatched the Hoosier Helpers to where they were needed," said Cox. "The Indianapolis



Subdistrict maintenance crews were also helpful with three ramp closures that allowed for law enforcement to focus on the exiting traffic from the race.”

As race fans focus on the largest single-day sporting event in the world each May, we're thankful the plan keeps the focus on the race track and not the highways.