

Coordinated VMS Messaging

This project will address and resolve the institutional issues that prevent or constrain posting messages on Variable Message Signs (VMS) across agency/state lines. These issues occur in situations where one state requests that a neighboring state post a specific message upstream of an event on the neighboring state's sign. The culmination of this project will be an agreement that will support and encourage VMS message coordination across state lines. Such coordination will allow Gary-Chicago-Milwaukee (GCM) Corridor traffic managers to more effectively respond to highway incidents that create impacts outside of their jurisdictions. The benefits will be realized in reduced congestion, delay, secondary accidents and driver frustration.



This project relates to the Gateway Traveler Information System because the Gateway will provide traffic managers in each GCM state the ability to access Corridor-wide traffic surveillance information and to view VMS message content from other agencies. To address the institutional issues associated with cross border communications, this project will produce an agreement between the applicable agencies to support this coordination. Each agency will then adopt a specific set of policies and guidelines to facilitate coordinated message posting.

IDOT prepared an operations manual to assist IDOT, ISTHA and INDOT in the usage of VMS for incidents on Interstates 80, 94 and 294. This manual identifies the actual physical procedures and techniques for coordinating VMS message postings, using primarily low-tech methods. The organizational agreements and commitments developed in this project will build upon the technical capabilities established through the Gateway implementation, and the IDOT-ISTHA-INDOT VMS manual. Because the methods identified in the VMS manual are relatively low-tech, this project may also identify the need for any technology enhancements needed to facilitate this process. For example, it may be useful to introduce some degree of automation that would automatically evaluate a specific request against pre-defined, context-sensitive agency rules, and return a decision to the requesting agency automatically.

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