

# All Lanes OPEN

Spring  
2024



## In This Issue...

[Remembering Joey Sagal | Page 4](#)

[Learn About LaneBlade | Page 7](#)

[TSMO Award Winner - Best Project | Page 9](#)

[VESTA at the SOC & TOCs | Page 10](#)

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Normally as we conclude the Winter season here in OTMO, our attention quickly turns to our Eastern Shore Traffic Operations seasonal enhancement. The CHART Program has its beginnings in that same program. It is a part of our legacy that we continue to this day. When I think about the legacy of CHART, I can't help but think about the late Joey Sagal. He was a great friend, a tremendous advocate and expert in all things Traffic Incident Management (TIM), and a mentor to so many. I don't have space here for all my Joey stories, but we've dedicated a profile to him in this issue where you can read more about his storied career and impact on CHART. I do want to share a few thoughts though.

When I first joined CHART in 2004, Joey was an Emergency Respose Technician (ERT), CHART Unit 9408 to be exact, in the Baltimore Region and I was a Highway Operations Technician (HOT) there, too, our classification for a Traffic Management Center (TMC) Operator. By the time I became a supervisor at our Statewide Operations Center (SOC), he was the manager of the entire CHART Patrol Operation. He pulled me into his office on my first day as supervisor and told me some of his values as a leader. I remember him saying, "Jason, it really isn't complicated. Be fair, be consistent, be transparent, and be kind." It was the first of many conversations he would have with me and so many others. Even as the Executive Director of the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), he was scheduling time for one-on-one meetings with team members at every level to be a mentor.

In the late 2000s there remained this underlying sense that CHART was still thought of as a motorist assistance program, despite all the benefit analyses and narratives written by the University of Maryland. Our trucks were even labeled as "courtesy patrol." Joey helped change that narrative. He had the graphics on every truck changed to say, "emergency patrol," emphasizing that we are a TIM program first and foremost. We help stranded motorists to save their lives, so they don't get struck, not just to be a kind service (although that is part of the reason, too).

My point in sharing my thoughts on Joey isn't simply to highlight him and certainly not to bring a somber mood to our readers. What I hope you see is that one person can make a difference. YOU can make a difference. A difference in another team member, a difference in the culture of your shift/unit, and a difference in the safety of those we serve. Whether you are a CHART ERT or HOT, an engineer with SHA or our private consultant partners, a software developer, member of our law enforcement or fire department partners, a planner, a procurement officer, a trainer, and the list would go on, you help save lives along our roadways. Everyone contributes to this mission of improving safety and mobility.

You make a difference.

As Joey would say, "be well and stay safe."

Jason Dicembre  
Director – Office of Transportation  
Mobility & Operations (OTMO)



# RETIRES & HIRES

## Congratulations on Your Retirement:

- **Douglas Bell** - IT System Tech Specialist (CHART Systems), 41 years
- **Michael Meek** - Emergency Response Technician Sr. (Regional Operations), 35 years

## Welcome to the Team:

- **Kevin Fox** - Regional Operations Training Manager (Regional Operations)
- **Anthony Lowman** - Regional Manager (Regional Operations)
- **Alexander Archer** - ITS Supervisor (ITSD)
- **Jared Resh** - ITS III (ITSD)
- **Neiville Tezi** - ITS III (ITSD)
- Emergency Response Technicians (Regional Operations)  
**Ryan Kim, Anthony Johnson, Mario Funez, Charles Dorsey, Jesse Edmonds**
- Highway Operations Technicians (TMC Operations)  
**Travis Wirth, Amy Schrum, Fabien Duval, Andrea Richburg, Scott Jewell, Princeton Graham, Patricia Eteh, Sarah Atkinson, Devin Henson, Kimberly McGrath**

## CHART MONTHLY STATISTICS

OCTOBER 2023



**3,296**

INCIDENTS MANAGED



**3,395**

MOTORISTS ASSISTED

**29.56**

MINUTES  
AVG INCIDENT  
DURATION



**11.19**

MINUTES  
AVG RESPONSE  
TIME

NOVEMBER 2023



**3,214**

INCIDENTS MANAGED



**3,080**

MOTORISTS ASSISTED

**29.36**

MINUTES  
AVG INCIDENT  
DURATION



**11.59**

MINUTES  
AVG RESPONSE  
TIME

DECEMBER 2023



**3,263**

INCIDENTS MANAGED



**3,892**

MOTORISTS ASSISTED

**30.59**

MINUTES  
AVG INCIDENT  
DURATION



**11.40**

MINUTES  
AVG RESPONSE  
TIME

# SPECIAL EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## REMEMBERING JOEY SAGAL

Joey began his professional transportation career with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) in 1998 as a Facilities Maintenance Technician. He soon joined SHA's CHART program as an Emergency Response Technician (ERT), where he responded to incidents and disabled motorists along the highway. Joey also took the initiative to learn the Traffic Management Center (TMC) positions, taking extra shifts in the operation centers when staffing was short.



In 2007, Joey helped launch an expansion of CHART into Frederick County, being promoted to become the first TMC Supervisor in what would come to be called CHART's Western Region. Since staffing was still building in the new coverage area, he would often do double duty, splitting time in the TMC and on the road in a CHART response vehicle, where he also taught and mentored new ERTs hired to patrol the region.

He would later go on to fill the positions of Division Chief of the Communications Division, now called the ITS Division, and Deputy Director for (CHART) Operations before leaving to join the Federal Highway Administration Resource Center as a Traffic Incident and Event Management Specialist. In this role Joey traveled across the nation, sharing his knowledge and passion for effective traffic incident management. He would return to SHA in 2016 as the Director of CHART.

His national presence didn't end with his transition back to SHA. Joey served as Vice Chair of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Committee for Transportation System Operations (AASHTO CTSO) Community of Practice on Road Weather Management and Co-Chair of the AASHTO CTSO National Highway Automation Task Force. He also served as Co-Chair of the Maryland Quality Initiative and served on the Transportation Research Board (TRB) ACP20 Freeway Operations Committee, the TRB ACP10(5) Operations Resilience Subcommittee, and was a voting member of the United States Department of Transportation Safety Advancement Group. He supported the National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCOe) as a Technical Advisory Committee Chair.

Joey wanted to put an emphasis on the other focus areas of the Office of CHART, so he championed an office reorganization and renaming to the Office of Transportation Mobility & Operations (OTMO). He was then promoted to Deputy Administrator for Operations in the Hanover Offices, which include CHART (now OTMO), the Asset Management Office, Construction, Materials Technology, Traffic & Safety, and Maintenance before taking on the role of Chief Operating Officer at the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA). In 2023, he became the Executive Director of MDTA.

All throughout his transportation career, Joey also remained engaged in volunteer fire service, holding the rank of Chief in two of the four fire companies he served with (Butler, Hereford, Pikesville, and Hampstead). He received five citations for exemplary rescues in Baltimore County throughout his fire career.

When he wasn't at work, you'd probably find him with his family at Walt Disney World, of which he was an avid fan, or off-roading in his Jeep with his daughters.



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MDOTSHA



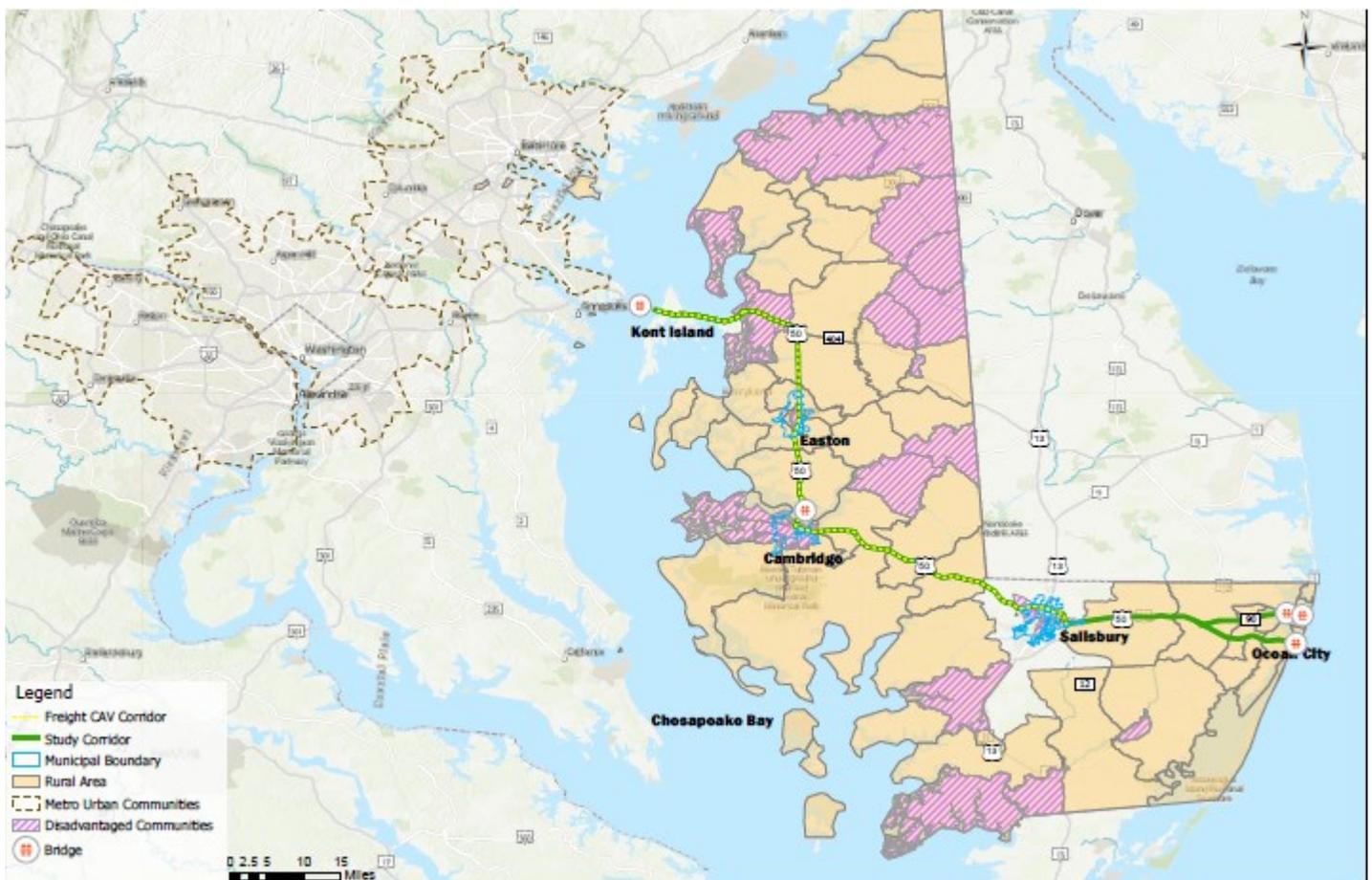
MDSHA



marylandstatehighwayadmin

# NEWS FROM CHART

The United States Department of Transportation issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) through the Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Grant Program, to which the State Highway Administration (SHA) applied and was awarded \$11,935,600 to fund the Rural Opportunities to Use Traffic Technology Enhancements (ROUTE) on US 50 project, aka "ROUTE 50." This project adopts a unique and innovative approach to dynamically managing traffic and focuses on improving safety, mobility, travel time reliability, and quality of life in the rural communities along the 113-mile US 50 corridor between the oceanside resort areas and the Baltimore - Washington metropolitan area. Seasonal congestion on US 50 effectively creates a barrier that divides communities, hinders emergency response time and mobility, limits the movement of freight and farm-to-market deliveries, and stifles economic development. This project will help restore economic vitality to a historically disadvantaged region. The ROUTE 50 project is also a component of the TSMO program, which has a goal to maximize the efficiency and safety of the surface transportation system through the application of ITS technologies. The estimated annual mobility, safety and environmental benefits are approximately \$60M. The grant covers 80% of the \$14,918,750 project cost. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and SHA have executed a Cooperative Agreement to initiate this project, and SHA is in the process of programming the necessary funding.

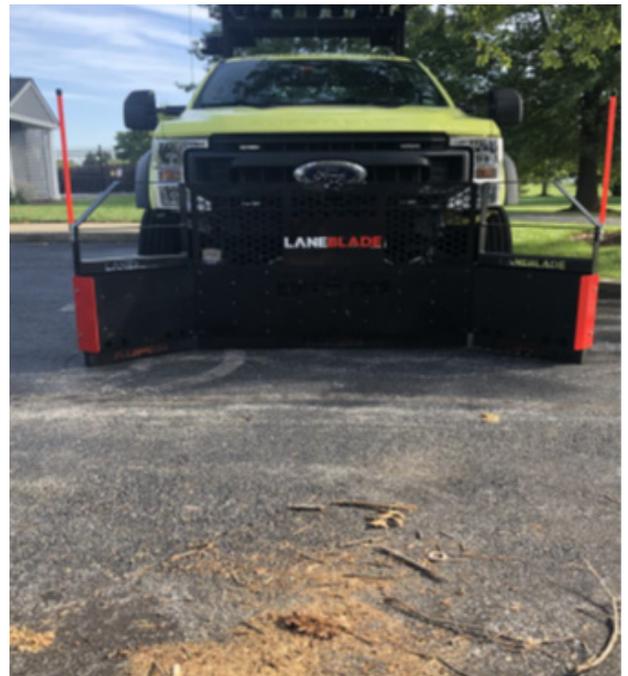


# LANEBLADE

## Enhancing Roadway Responder Safety Through Innovative Debris Clearance and Collection



One of the many responsibilities that CHART has is to clear debris on nearly 2,000 roadway miles throughout the state of Maryland. This responsibility poses significant safety risks to CHART responders who exit their vehicles to collect and dispose of debris, exposing them to high-speed traffic on highways and freeways. These risks increase during low visibility conditions such as at nighttime and in inclement weather. CHART recently engaged the University of Maryland to perform a literature review, survey current operations, develop an evaluation plan, and conduct a field evaluation, using two CHART vehicles equipped with a lane-clearing technology, known as the LaneBlade.



The goal of this technology is to protect roadway workers by facilitating safe and efficient debris removal without endangering lives since the drivers will not have to exit their vehicles during debris-removal operations. The evaluation demonstrated that the trucks equipped with this technology can effectively clear debris such as dirt, stones, wood, tires, and heavy metal objects in both dry and wet conditions. SHA anticipates adopting this technology as a standard practice throughout the agency and has recently applied for an Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration (AID) Grant to conduct a pilot project deploying multiple CHART patrol vehicles equipped with enhanced debris removal technology in three locations that represent both urban and rural areas: the National Capital, Baltimore, and Eastern regions. The deployment of this technology has the potential to revolutionize debris clearance by greatly reducing manual labor, enhancing safety for CHART responders, and improving traffic flow and road safety.

# NATIONAL TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (TIM) RESPONDER LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, AND TRAINING SYMPOSIUM

FHWA hosted the National Traffic Incident Management Responder Leadership, Technology, and Training Symposium at the National Emergency Training Center located at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The event included presentations from various agencies from across the nation, highlighting areas in which they are advanced in the state of practice. OTMO delivered a presentation on video sharing and the use of data in real-time operations. Other sessions included TIM strategies for electric vehicle incidents, TIM education and outreach, and building TIM Coalitions. Maryland Transportation Authority ERT Supervisor, and former CHART ERT, Steve Stinchcomb, also shared his stories detailing his struck-by incidents during his career to highlight the need for Move Over Laws and their enforcement.



# TSMO AWARD WINNER - BEST PROJECT

In collaboration with SHA's Office of Highway Development (OHD), OTMO submitted a list of projects for the National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCoE) annual TSMO Award, which consists of several categories, including Emerging Trends, Agency Improvement, and Best TSMO Project. On August 18th of last year, NOCoE announced that one of SHA's project submissions, the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management (ICM) Ramp Metering project, was the winner of the 2023 NOCoE TSMO Award - Best Project Category. SHA was also recognized for this award during a webinar that was held in conjunction with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Committee on Transportation System Operations (CTSO) Leadership Meeting on December 13, 2023. As part of this award, NOCoE will publish a case study that will include this project.



# VESTA AT THE SOC & TOCS

In October of 2023, TMC Operations completed installation of Motorola's VESTA system at all four of CHART's operations centers. Traffic Operations Center 7 (TOC 7), which is located in Frederick, Maryland, had already been using this system for nearly the previous five years. VESTA is an all-encompassing communications software program that allows our operators to use radio communications and phone communications consolidated into a single system, optimizing our operators' ability to multi-task. Using a single-ear headset connected to a wireless transmitter, a screen, and a keyboard, our operators can more efficiently communicate with partnering agencies, CHART Field Patrol units, and stranded citizens. Saving time between gathering information, processing information, and disseminating information is vital to improving mobility and safety for the users of Maryland's highways, which is CHART's primary mission. VESTA also allows for real-time listening of radio transmissions and phone calls by operators' supervisors, allowing for more interactive training as well as in-depth quality assurance and quality control. This ensures that our customers are receiving accurate information and timely assistance. It was custom-designed in-house from the graphical user interface to the phone numbers contained within, allowing for a tailor-made experience at each operations center.

Ultimately, VESTA's ability to combine call management software and dispatching software has proven to be beneficial on all sides of operations and will continue to be an integral part of OTMO's TMC division.

