



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, August 22nd, 2014

Volume 11, Number 7

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Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) met this week (*See MPO Updates*). There is Senate speculation of a gas tax increase (*See Legislative Updates*), fuel is going green (literally, see *In The News*) and this week's *Just For Fun* is about the can opener, something the Bankhead Tunnel can relate too...

Have great weekend

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison, PTP



www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

706-1CAR

Mobile MPO Updates

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE NON-MOTORIZED MOBILITY STUDY FOR DOWNTOWN MOBILE, ALABAMA

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is requesting submittal of interest in the form of a proposal from all qualified firms interested in performing work outlined in the following scope of work. (All firms submitting proposals must be on ALDOT's List of Qualified Consultants). Proposals are due September 3, 2014. For scope of work and information, please see [HERE](#)



In case you missed it, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge has been approved by the FHWA and public meetings have been announced. ALDOT will host two public hearings for the Mobile River Bridge project. Officials will be on site to answer questions about the proposed bridge and Bayway widening and solicit comments and concerns from the public. Please see <http://www.mobileriverbridge.com/> where you can view the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Under the Documents Tab) and keep up with the latest

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developments.

Public Meetings:

Tuesday, September 23, 2014 - 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.
Alabama Cruise Terminal
201 S. Water Street
Mobile, AL 36602
<http://www.shipmobile.com/>

Monday, September 29, 2014 - 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.
Five Rivers Delta Resource Center
30945 Five Rivers Blvd, Spanish Fort, AL 36527
<http://www.outdooralabama.com/outdoor-adventures/5rivers/>

The Mobile MPO Met This Week

The Mobile MPO met on Wednesday, August 20, 2014. The board adopted the FY2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and included various projects into the FY 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Mobile MPO voted on the following recommendations made by the TCC/CAC. Projects to be included into the TIP are:

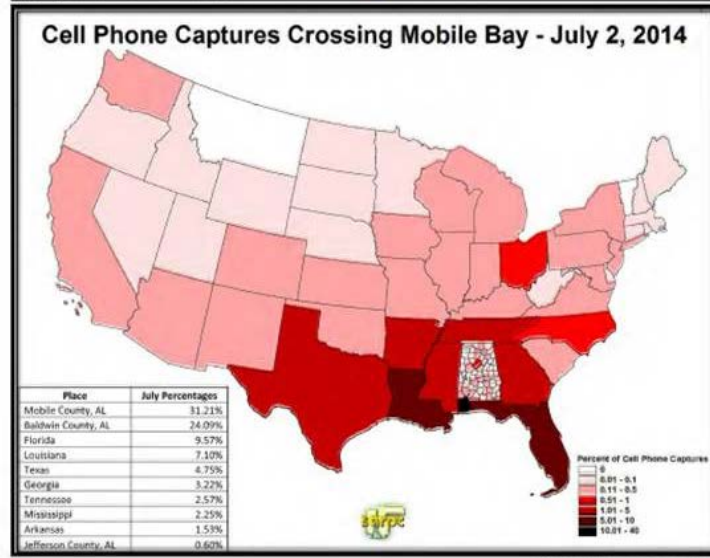
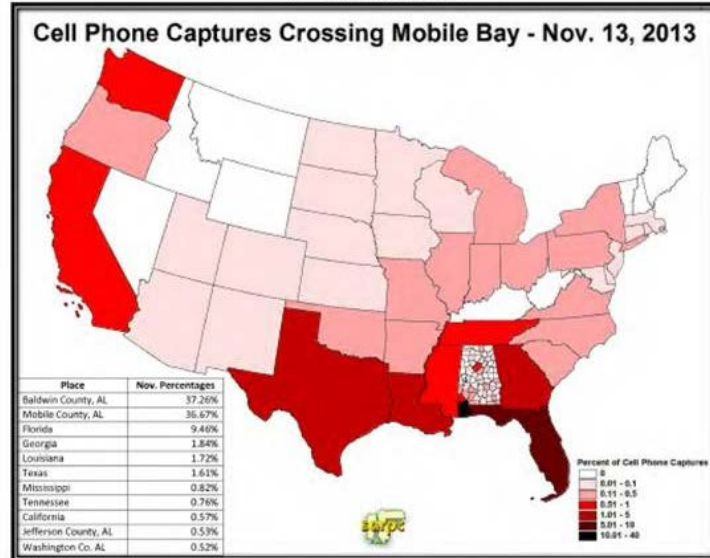
Mobile Urban Area FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Funds projects recommend for approval. The projects selected include:

- The City of Bayou La Batre - \$44,600 federal funds for a 15 passenger van
- Mobile ARC \$173,000 federal funds for operating assistance for public transit for disabled clients
- AHEPA - \$40,000 federal funds for a 15 passenger van
- Mercy Life - \$64,000 federal funds for a 28-30 passenger bus
- Mobile Bay Transportation Company - \$64,964 for two vans and \$21,563 for operating assistance for public transit for elderly and disabled clients

HSIP Funds

- ROW, Interchange modifications on US 45 at SR 158 to install roundabout design; \$208,000
 - UT, Interchange modifications on US 45 at SR 158 to install roundabout design; \$48,048
 - CN, Interchange modifications on US 45 at SR 158 to install roundabout design; \$1,248,000
-

WHO IS CROSSING THE BAY, AND WHERE ARE THEY FROM?
(Bayway and Causeway only)

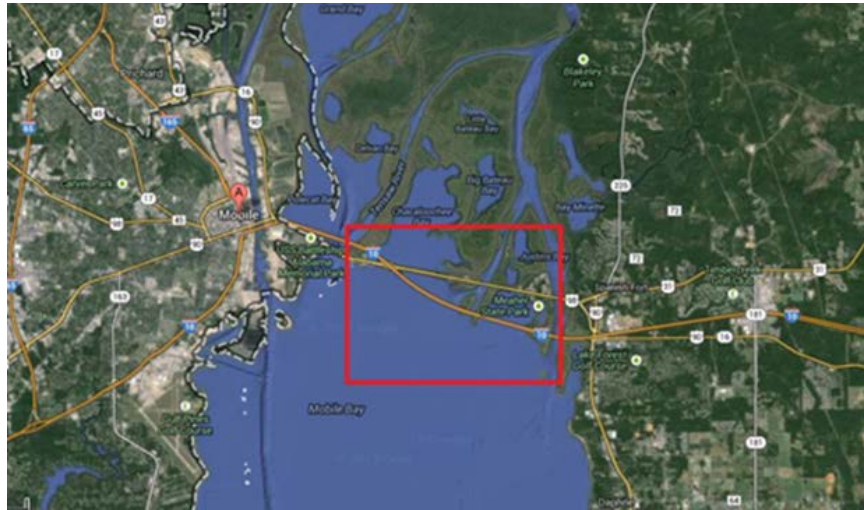


POWERED BY AIRSAGE

[\[HERE\]](#) for map

It appears that on November 13th the majority of traffic was local, about 74% from Mobile and Baldwin County. But on July 2nd, just over half (55.3%) of the traffic is local. Keep in mind this is for the Bayway AND Causeway, so there is an assumption that causeway traffic is predominantly local. That means that well over half the traffic on the Bayway for July 2 is not from the Region.

The “capture fence” for this data is between the middle bay interchange and Meaher State Park for the Bayway and Causeway. The company Airsage has the ability to capture cell phone frequencies and average that frequency’s location. So they have the average work and home location of cell phone frequencies from a couple major carriers. When they pop up “in a fence” and their average location is from another state, we know they are visiting. They process over 15 Billion pings a day throughout the country, and archive (and average) the location and time of that ping.



On July 2, there were over 107,000 vehicles crossing the Mobile River (Wallace, Bankhead and Cochrane), however some of those trips are Mobilians going to Austal and BAE. On November 13th the river crossing traffic volume was 96,500 and the 2013 Average (AADT) River crossing is 98,870 <http://algis.dot.state.al.us/atd/default.aspx> . The 2013 AADT for the capture fence is 79,840.

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As you may recall we contracted with SARCOR with Nelson Nygaard to develop a Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the Mobile MPO study area . We received a draft of the document and are currently reviewing it. Once we get comments from the WAVE Transit, the document will be available for public review, starting next week hopefully. The TDP is going to be the focus of the Transit Element of the *Destination 2040* Long Range Transportation Plan, and will be adopted as part of LRTP.

Destination 2040

The MPO Staff is continuing to develop the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan titled Destination 2040. The objective of the plan is to identify, to the maximum extent feasible, the multi-modal transportation improvements which will be needed in the Mobile urban area between now and the year 2040 in order to maintain an acceptable level of mobility. The plan is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to other modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. You can learn more about the plan [HERE](#).

Projects Within Region Let August 29th, 2014

MOBILE COUNTY

- for constructing the Bridge Replacement and Approaches on CR-28 (Old Pascagoula Road) over Jackson Creek. Length 0.289 mi.
- for constructing the Widening, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on Juniper Avenue from the junction of SR-13 (US-43) to the junction of Aaron Drive in Satsuma. Length 0.865 mi.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on CR-30 (Huxford Road) from the intersection of SR-21 to the intersection of CR-45 (Butler Street) in Huxford. Length 2.491 mi.

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on Sowell Road from the Brewton City Limits to the intersection of CR-7 (Kirkland Road) (Site #1) and on CR-7 (Kirkland Road), Sybil Lane, and CR-9 (Old Castleberry Road) from the Brewton City Limits on CR-7 to the Brewton City Limits on CR-9 (Site #2). Length 3.143 mi.

[What's Under Construction?](#)

Legislative Updates

U.S. Senators Predict Changes to Highway Funding:

U.S. Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and James Inhofe (R-OK) recently testified at a hearing in Fort Smith, Arkansas where they predicted that Congress will soon change how revenue is generated to fund the nation's highways. Inhofe stated that "coming up between now and May, you'll see a new funding mechanism that is going to change how we are funding our roads and highways." Because the gas tax has not been raised since 1993 and cars are getting better gas millage, funding the Highway Trust Fund has become more challenging. Boozman stated that "we're going to have to figure out how we can get a revenue stream to support that, and there'll be a lot of controversy about that." [\[HERE\]](#)

Funding Opportunities

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)








Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) has \$682,757 available for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a grant program that develops community parks, trails and outdoor recreation projects. This program, through The U. S. Department of Interior, provides funding to Alabama cities and counties for the development or establishment of outdoor recreational areas. Projects include parks, playgrounds, forest and wildlife refuges, recreational lakes and ponds, outdoor playing fields, and picnic and camping areas. The deadline for the 2014 Land and Water Conservation Fund Pre-applications is 12:00 noon on Tuesday, September 2, 2014. If you have any questions, you may contact:

Maureen Neighbors
Community Services Unit Chief
Community and Economic Development Division
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
401 Adams Avenue | Montgomery, Alabama 36104
Post Office Box 5690 | Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5690
334.242.5467

More information and the grant application is available [HERE](#).

Also, there are more funding opportunities from the ADECA Energy Division are listed below. All proposals are due by Friday, September 5, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. Eligibility should be verified before submitting a proposal.

1.  [Energy Codes Training RFP](#)
Soliciting proposals from qualified applicants to provide training on the statewide commercial and residential energy codes
2.  [Energy-Efficient Retrofits of K-12 Schools RFP](#)  [Addendum A \(K-12 Schools\)](#)
Soliciting proposals from public school systems in Alabama for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient improvements in K-12 schools located within their jurisdiction
3.  [Energy-Efficient Retrofits of Non-Profit Organizations RFP](#)  [Addendum A \(Non-Profit Organizations\)](#)
Soliciting proposals from non-profit organizations in Alabama for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient improvements to their buildings
4.  [Energy-Efficient Retrofits of Wastewater Treatment Facilities](#)  [Addendum A \(Wastewater Treatment Facilities\)](#)
Soliciting proposals from wastewater treatment facilities in Alabama for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient improvements to wastewater systems.

Just For Fun

How tall is 11 foot 8 inches? Not as tall as most trucks apparently. The federal standard vertical clearance for bridges is 14 feet. So, there is a web page out there that has compilations of "THE CAN OPENER" bridge. Trucks continuously try to go through a 11 foot 8 inch bridge. There is even a truck hitting the bridge with a train crossing the trestle (video 13)!! Pretty scary, but since no one is getting injured in these collisions, watching them is *Just For Fun*.



<http://11foot8.com/11foot8-bridge-fall-compilation/>

In the News

Entrepreneurs have been trying for years to get something valuable out of algae.

By **MATTHEW L. WALD** AUG. 18, 2014



It has not been easy, and not just because algae are an unsightly nuisance (and sometimes dangerous, as is the Lake Erie bloom that has endangered drinking water this month).

Although algae grow prodigiously and contain potentially useful molecules — especially lipids, which can be turned into high-energy fuel and other products — extracting those molecules has proved complicated and expensive. So far, virtually the only marketable products based on algae have been high-end skin creams.

But a Nevada company, Algae Systems, has a pilot plant in Alabama that, it says, can turn a profit making diesel fuel from algae by simultaneously performing three other tasks: making clean water from municipal sewage (which it uses to fertilize the algae), using the carbon-heavy residue as fertilizer and generating valuable credits for advanced biofuels.

If it works, the company says, the process will remove more carbon from the atmosphere than is added when the fuel is burned.

At the pilot plant, Algae Systems converts the waste and algae into clean water and biocrude oil. Credit Tad Denson "We think it is a really elegant solution," said Matt Atwood, the chief executive.

At its heart is a “hydrothermal liquefaction” system that heats the algae and other solids in the sewage to more than 550 degrees Fahrenheit, at 3,000 pounds per square inch, turning out a liquid that resembles crude oil from a well.

The company sent the liquid to Auburn University, where scientists added hydrogen (a common step in oil refining) to produce diesel fuel. An independent laboratory, Intertek, confirmed that the diesel fuel met industry specifications. The thermal processing has caught the attention of independent scientists. The Department of Energy recently awarded a \$4 million grant to a partnership led by SRI International for further work on Algae Systems’ hydrothermal processing system.

Engineers hope the system could dispose of a variety of unwanted or hazardous materials. It also destroys pathogens in sewage.

At the University of Texas at Austin, Halil Berberoglu, an assistant professor of mechanical engineering who is conducting research in the area and is not affiliated with Algae Systems, said the process had the potential to eliminate a key bottleneck in working with algae. Continue reading [\[HERE\]](#)

Report: Alabama roads cost drivers \$3.1 billion each year; Congress urged to act on road funding



By [Mike D. Smith | msmith@al.com](mailto:msmith@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on August 20, 2014 at 11:47 AM, updated August 21, 2014 at 12:22 PM



BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- Deficient roads and bridges, traffic delays and the lack of "desirable" safety features cost the average Alabama driver \$1,600 per year, according to a report by nonprofit transportation research group TRIP.

Unless Congress enacts a long-term highway money solution, funding levels will continue to be inadequate for satisfying growing travel and economic development needs, the group and assembled area officials said Wednesday.

TRIP's report states that a growing population, more drivers, more wear and tear and lack of adequate funding is taking its toll on roadways.

Now, 15 percent of Alabama's major urban roadways are in poor condition, with 35 percent in fair condition and 50 percent rated "good," according to the report.

In metro Birmingham, 21 percent are rated in poor condition and 51 percent are in mediocre condition said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

Drivers feel the effects through vehicle maintenance costs, fuel-wasting congestion delays and traffic crashes where road features likely played a role, according to TRIP.

TRIP estimates that overall cost for Alabama is \$3.1 billion per year. For Birmingham drivers, that calculates as \$1,562 per year for each driver.

The average annual cost for Huntsville drivers is \$1,226; for Mobile: \$1,195 and for Montgomery: \$1,218.

Economic opportunities are tied to the state's road conditions. Wilkins said \$183 billion in goods are shipped from Alabama and \$189 billion are shipped to the state, mostly on trucks.

Those figures, and economic competition with other states in the region, mean Alabama needs a "top-flight" infrastructure system said Mike Thompson, chair of the Coalition for Regional Transportation.

Federal funding provides the largest share of road dollars in the state. For needed projects to proceed without interruption, Congress must pass an adequate, long-term funding solution by June 1, 2015, Wilkins said.

"Alabama's ability to move forward with needed improvements in the transportation system is seriously threatened by a lack of adequate revenue in the national Highway Trust Fund," Wilkins said.

On July 31, Congress plugged the trust fund -- which was projected to go bankrupt this month -- with an \$11 billion funding extension which will last through May 2015.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has said the extension was the 28th short-term fix passed during the past six years, and the uncertainty of federal highway funding is putting long-range infrastructure planning in jeopardy. Continue reading [\[HERE\]](#)

ALDOT speeds up process to get work started on closed I-10/Causeway ramp



By [Angela Levins | alevins@al.com](mailto:alevins@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on August 21, 2014 at 12:58 PM, updated August 21, 2014 at 1:28 PM

SPANISH FORT, Ala. -- Next week, the Alabama Department of Transportation will let out the project to repair the Causeway/I-10 bridge exit damaged during a fiery accident on July 31.

The truck driven by Carlos Lyles, 38, hit a guardrail on the ramp, overturned and burst into flames at about 1 a.m., officials said. Lyles escaped by kicking out a window.

ALDOT has spent the last several weeks inspecting the bridge to determine what work was needed.

Don Powell, the southwest region preconstruction engineer for ALDOT, said the bidding and awarding of the repair contract will be a condensed process, because it's considered an emergency project.

Powell said they will open the project for bids August 28, and plan to award the contract about four days later.

Once the bid is awarded and the contract is finalized, Powell said it should take two to three months for the work to be completed.

Powell said construction work isn't confined to the deck of the exit ramp. Repairs will also need to be done underneath the ramp and that will be dependent on the tides.

Work also has to be done to repair the barrier wall and the seawall.

Powell said there are seven contractors interested in bidding on the work.

Traffic troubles in Mobile and Baldwin County for Friday and propane powered buses



By [Angela Levins | alevins@al.com](mailto:alevins@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on August 22, 2014 at 5:30 AM, updated August 22, 2014 at 7:45 AM

MOBILE, Ala. -- Of note in the traffic world. Mobile County Public Schools rolled out a new fleet of fuel efficient buses Thursday. The school system is the first in Alabama to use the propane-gas powered school buses.

Law Enforcement Labor Day Campaign

Law enforcement from Alabama and Florida meet at the Welcome Center on I10. They pledge to work together to ensure drivers have a safe Labor Day weekend. (Courtesy South Regional Highway Safety Office)

Monday morning, law enforcement from Florida and Alabama will meet and pledge to work together during the Labor Day weekend to ensure drivers are safe on the roads.

ALDOT Mobile County:

I10: The interstate 10 ramp leading to Battleship Parkway that was damaged in a fiery accident July 31 remains closed. ALDOT's Don Powell said Thursday that the bidding process for repairs to be made will open next week.

I10: From Halls Mill Creek to the west end of the George C. Wallace Tunnel. Road and bridge work is just getting started with completion expected next summer. Drivers can expect lane closures with minimal or no delays Sunday to Thursday from 7 p.m. until 6 a.m.

I65: From just North of AL158 in Saraland to a mile north of U.S. 43. Road and bridge work about 95% complete. Traffic impacts possible in the evening, but very few.

U.S. 90: From Halls Mill to Pine Hill Drive. Work getting started to resurface the road. Lane closures will be at night. Drainage repairs could temporarily detour traffic at times. Work is expected to be complete by December.

ALDOT Baldwin County:

I10: CR 68 connector to Baldwin Beach Express. Work is about 90 percent complete. Drivers may see an occasional lane closure on CR 83.

AL 181: From U.S. 31 to south of U.S. 90. Road resurfacing creating lane closures at night. Delays and minor backups are possible. Work should be complete by October.

Little Lagoon Pass bridge remains under construction. ALDOT reports that the work is about 50 percent complete. There is a detour bridge next to the Little Lagoon Pass bridge. It's expected to be in place until the end of 2014. Expect minimal traffic delays.

Gulf Shores:

Reminder for all drivers: Be cautious heading over the bridge on Hwy 59 into Gulf Shores with school back in session. Fender bender reported Wednesday because of traffic backing up. Cleared up quickly.

Mobile:

Royal Street is closed to traffic from Dauphin St. to Conti St. for emergency sewer repairs. Barbara Shaw with MAWSS said it's expected to take another week to make the repair.

Alabama Association of Regional Councils Annual Training Conference

The Alabama Association of Regional Councils (of which SARPC is one) is having the Annual Training Conference at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach October 26-29, 2014. This conference is open to anyone associated with SARPC. There are training sessions for Planning and Transportation, Economic Development, Medicaid Waver and Aging, and Local Leaders. For more information and to register click [HERE](#).



September – Multi State Passenger Rail Meeting in New Orleans

Last Week, representatives from the Southern Rail Commission held a conference call with staff members of the Federal Railroad Administration to discuss and initiate formal coordination for a multi-state passenger rail meeting. The meeting will be primarily sponsored by the SRC.

Where: New Orleans Regional Planning Commission offices. 10 Veterans Blvd, New Orleans, LA 70124

When: September 18th, 2014

Time: 10am to 2pm (tentative)

Agenda topics will tentatively include:

- SRC will lead discussion regarding gulf coast passenger rail service restoration from New Orleans to Orlando

- FRA will lead workshop/discussions on their recently announced funding for multi-state planning and ways to jointly apply for this funding.

- Opportunities for individual states to share their rail planning, and discuss their opportunities and plans to connect with neighboring states

Invitees: To include key mayors from our gulf coast route, DOT representatives from each state, and Regional Planning Commissions from key cities that are actively working on rail projects.

States involved: - Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee

Sponsor opportunities: The Southern Rail Commission is the major sponsor, along with the FRA, and the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission.

Transportation Research

1ST ANNUAL ALABAMA RURAL ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE

The Alabama Rural Road Safety Workshop and Conference is for engineers, planners and others who are responsible for the design, maintenance, and safety of rural roads. It will strengthen your knowledge of available tools, countermeasures and processes to improve safety on your roads,

and includes a one-day eight hour Workshop followed by a one and one half day Conference. The Workshop explains how road safety may be integrated into rural/ local transportation projects at all stages including planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance. The Conference emphasizes methods to identify rural road safety issues and appropriate countermeasures. Participants may attend either the Workshop or Conference, or both. For more information click [HERE](#).

Combined Intelligence - Working Together for Smarter Transportation

In September of 2014 the Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society (GRITS), the Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITSFL) and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Georgia (ITSGA), will come together for a joint annual meeting. Join us in 2014 for the ITS 3C Summit.

ITS 3C Summit

The conference will be held **September 14-17, 2014** at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center along the waterfront in Mobile, Alabama.

Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center

One South Water Street

Mobile, AL 36602
