

## **ITS on the West Side**

by Lou Davenport (URS Corporation)

Most people are aware of the MITS Center in downtown Detroit and the extensive network of ITS devices deployed throughout the Detroit metropolitan area, but what is MDOT doing with ITS on the west side of the state?

Over the last decade, MDOT has steadily expanded the ITS infrastructure in the Grand Rapids area to create a network of approximately ITS 80 field devices. Amidst these infrastructure deployments, MDOT also commissioned the West Michigan Traffic Management Center (TMC) to operate and manage the expanding system.

The primary objectives of the West Michigan TMC are to produce real-time traveler information and to facilitate traffic incident management along the Grand Rapids area freeways. The TMC utilizes Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) and email notifications to disseminate traveler information, and assists emergency responders by verifying traffic incidents and providing them with real-time video feeds as requested. The control room, which serves as the nerve center of the TMC, is located just north of downtown at MDOT's Grand Region office. The facility is currently only about the size of a large cubicle, but houses the equipment to support two operators simultaneously managing the system. URS Corporation has been under contract with MDOT to manage and operate the TMC April 2006 and staffs the control room approximately 70 hours a week. Staffing is ramped up during construction season and for special events, but the weekend coverage is typically limited. The TMC staff also coordinates with local media outlets and shares video images that are used during television news broadcasts. The Grand Rapids Police Department assumes control of the system during off hours.

By 2011 the number of ITS field devices managed by the West Michigan TMC will have more than doubled, and the control room itself will have been remodeled and expanded to accommodate a larger operation. In addition to the growth of the physical system, MDOT is also continually making efforts to develop interagency coordination that facilitates more effective and efficient traffic incident management in the Grand Rapids area. The Grand Rapids Incident Management Planning Committee is scheduled to have its first meeting in Spring 2010.

For more information on the West Michigan TMC, please visit [www.michigan.gov/its](http://www.michigan.gov/its), or contact Suzette Peplinski (Grand Region ITS Operations Engineer) at [peplinskis@michigan.gov](mailto:peplinskis@michigan.gov) or 616.451.8448.