



# **NEWS**

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## **CLEARING FREEWAY ACCIDENTS FASTER IN SOUTH FLORIDA AN AWARD WINNING IDEA** *Saves Motorists Time and Taxpayers Money*

**DANIA** — Florida TaxWatch is proud to recognize forty-two individual state employees and teams from South Florida receiving recognition for a job well done by the Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards. Their achievements will be published in the “**2007 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards**” *magazine*, to be released at a luncheon today in Dania honoring the winners.

“Our state employees are Florida’s most valuable resource. I’m proud to be a part of a program that helps distinguish and encourage the initiative and creativity of our state employees and promotes wise innovations that serve the people of Florida better,” Lt. Governor Kottkamp said.

The Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards program is a major government improvement initiative chaired by Lt. Governor Kottkamp and sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, The Florida Council of 100 and the State of Florida. Cash awards of \$200 to \$2,500 plus commemorative plaques and certificates of commendation are presented annually to state employees who clearly exceed their job descriptions and performance expectations in ways that improve service delivery and save money for Florida taxpayers and businesses.

“The Davis Productivity Awards are proof that the State of Florida has some of the most creative and innovative minds working to save our taxpayers’ dollars,” said Mike Jennings, Vice President of Government Relations for Prudential Financial and Chairman of Florida TaxWatch. “They continually go above and beyond the call of duty, and I think it’s extremely important to recognize that,” said Jennings.

This year’s awards magazine will include two new and noteworthy sections. One highlights achievements of significant technology advancements and the other showcases wellness innovations throughout state government.

“Our state government is continually challenged to deliver services more efficiently and effectively,” said Dominic M. Calabro, President of Florida TaxWatch. “But Florida’s state employees constantly rise to the occasion.”

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The 2007 competition awarded 490 winners statewide for their innovations and productivity improvements worth \$332 million in cost savings, cost avoidances and increased revenue for state government. Some winners from South Florida who are being honored at today's luncheon include:

**I-75/I-595 Value Engineering Team**

**Department of Transportation, Ft. Lauderdale**

This three-member team integrated a \$1.3 million video wall upgrade into an intelligent transportation system project's scope without additional funding. A 205% viewable area increase resulted in 100% freeway camera visibility (without rotating images); directly contributing to 25% faster freeway incident detection times for estimated time savings to motorists valued at \$10.5 million. For more information, please contact Dong Chen at (954) 847-2796 or dong.chen@dot.state.fl.us. (Award 2007 DOT-045)

**S&T Rapid Incident Scene Clearance Team**

**Department of Transportation and Florida Highway Patrol, Ft. Lauderdale**

This 13-member team developed an incident management program to use heavy duty wreckers under an incentive-based performance contract to achieve faster clearance of major incidents on Florida's Turnpike. User costs savings of more than \$5 million were achieved in 2005 by an average 30-minute reduction in clearance time of 88 incidents. The program also helped prevent secondary crashes valued at more than \$500,000 and toll revenue loss of more than \$250,000. For more information, please contact Mike Werner at (954) 934-1208 or michael.werner@dot.state.fl.us. (Award 2007 DOT-010)

**A.G. Holley State Hospital Educational Team**

**Department of Health, Lantana**

Through the creation and implementation of this dynamic TB educational program, the "Comprehensive Clinical Tuberculosis Course," rates of patients with TB admitted to A.G. Holley Hospital (the state's only public health hospital), have declined by 12% over a nine year period. Not only is the savings to the citizens of the state of Florida tremendous, but the health and welfare of citizens and visitors in this state and our nation have been protected and improved. For more information, please contact Dr. Dwayne Turner at (561) 540-3750 or Dwayne\_Turner@doh.state.fl.us. (Award 2007 DOH-015)

**Squad P, Miami Region**

**Department of Law Enforcement, Miami**

This ten-member squad conducted a two-year investigation into food stamp trafficking at a single store that exposed a money laundering scheme and retail fraud involving more than \$10 million of unreported taxable sales and nearly \$1.5 million in improperly issued benefits to 600 food stamp recipients. The squad's investigation identified other retail stores that piqued the interest of federal domestic security authorities. For more information, please contact Jack Heacock at (786) 336-1013 or jackheacock@fdle.state.fl.us. (Award 2007 FDLE-011)

**Rayo Mestio, Government Analyst**

**Department of Law Enforcement, Fort Pierce**

In 2005-06, Rayo Mesito was assigned a caseload that normally would be spread among up to four analysts. Her achievements had a major impact on drug trafficking activities in the Treasure Coast area and statewide. She provided analytical and technical support to a wire intercept investigation involving a major narcotic trafficking organization based in Saint Lucie County. During the investigation, she conducted background checks on more than 500 individuals, prepared more than 100 subpoenas for telephone information, and built a database of telephone subscriber information on more than 700 telephone numbers. This information was utilized in the above investigation and will serve as an intelligence database in the future. The investigation resulted in federal and state arrests of 42 suspects involved with monthly distribution of more than 45 kilograms of cocaine, seizure of nearly \$200,000 and nine firearms. For more information, please contact Richard Piccininni at (772) 468-5692 or richpiccininni@fdle.state.fl.us. (Award 2007 FDLE-013)

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Prudential Financial is in its fourth year as Anchor Sponsor of the Davis Productivity Awards program. Their support is crucial for sustaining and growing this nationally unique initiative. Governor Charlie Crist and Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp have made leveraging the added value of award winning achievements by adapting them to other areas of state government a priority for building a more effective and efficient government. The Florida TaxWatch Adaptable Achievements on-line publication identifies more than 700 achievements from the past five years of winners that can create more than \$100 million worth of this added value within three years after full implementation.

Florida TaxWatch, The Council of 100, and the State of Florida will be honoring other award winners from across the state at other regional luncheon ceremonies scheduled as follows:

- Monday, June 18th – Jacksonville
- Wednesday, June 20th – Gainesville

Since 1989, more than 12,000 individuals, teams, work units and partnerships have been honored for producing more than \$5.6 billion worth of added value.

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**MEDIA NOTE: The actual awards presentation will begin at noon. SHOW & TELL opportunities exist for the highlighted award winners above, including the giant traffic video wall, by calling the winners at the phone numbers provided above. They are ready for your visit to their location!**

**[Click here](#) to view the 2007 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards magazine.**

**[Click here](#) to view the 2007 Adaptables magazine**

Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 28 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government. On the web at [www.FloridaTaxWatch.org](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org).