

STRIKING GOLD!

Transportation & the 2005 Florida Legislature

*Remarks by FBT President Doug Callaway
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When the handkerchiefs dropped at 11:49 pm on Friday, May 6, signaling the end of the 2005 Florida Legislative Session, it was clear that this had been a **very good Session** for transportation in the Sunshine State.

Thanks to Florida's many transportation supporters –

- In the industry,
- In the Executive and Legislative branches of state government, and
- Among the public

– The recently concluded 2005 Legislative Session was an extraordinarily successful one.

The bottom line is that state transportation funding will increase dramatically next year!

As you know, we're facing a \$23 BILLION "pothole" in the road ahead. That's how much more we need over the next ten years – *not* to improve our state's transportation conditions but just to keep things the way they are TODAY!

Consider the following facts:

- Florida's lane miles are increasing at 0.9% annually,
- Our population is increasing at 2.1% annually,
- Vehicle Miles Traveled is increasing at 3.9% annually,
- Each day, about 1,000 new residents move to Florida.
- Over the course of one year, that's like adding a brand new city the size of Tampa to our state, and
- According to the Texas Transportation Institute, traffic in Orlando is now worse than in New York City!

These all remind me of the Ronald Reagan quote that:

"Status Quo is Latin for 'the mess we're in.'"

Clearly, the Status Quo is NOT an option for a growing state like Florida!

But thanks to YOU – and our successful efforts to “TRANSLATE” the importance of transportation to the Public, the Press, and the Politicians – we made REAL progress this Session!

(Tell Uncle Bob & Electric Chair story...)

As part of the Growth Management legislation (SB 360), transportation will receive an additional \$1.1 BILLION in the next state fiscal year (FY 2005-06) and an additional \$542 million each year thereafter!!!!

While these amounts are clearly insufficient to entirely "fill" the \$23 BILLION "pothole" on the road to Florida's future, they DO represent very real and significant progress.

And don't forget, just two short years ago \$200 million was diverted OUT of the State Transportation Trust Fund, and last year we all worked hard to defeat a proposed \$100 million diversion.

Going from a \$200 million “raid” to an additional \$1.1 billion in just two years is truly extraordinary! Obviously, much work remains to be done, but this is a very substantial increase in state transportation funding and a legitimate cause for great celebration.

We all should applaud the Florida Legislature and the Governor for investing in our state's future.

That additional investment of \$1.1 billion is a lot of money! And yet, much more will ultimately be required. If we don't make the necessary investments in our state's infrastructure ... our now-robust economic vitality will suffer. Simply put:

- A.) The additional transportation funding provided in the Growth Management bill is an **OUTSTANDING first step**.
- B.) However, **more CAN and MUST be done** to continue “filling” the \$23 billion “pothole” in the road to Florida's future.
- C.) But for now ... **let's be content to celebrate the transportation successes of the 2005 Florida Legislative Session! THANK YOU!**