



Moving Florida ***Forward!*** Facts & Talking Points

**“Even if you’re on the right track,
you’ll get run over if you just sit there.” -Will Rogers**

- Florida’s future is jeopardized by growing traffic gridlock.
- Transportation is the fuel that “drives” Florida’s economy, and makes our quality of life possible.
- And yet, like a thief siphoning fuel from your car’s tank, growing traffic congestion threatens to bring us all to a screeching halt.
- NOW is the time to **Move Florida ***Forward!*****

THE MESS WE’RE IN

**“Status Quo is Latin for ‘the mess we’re in’.”
-Ronald Reagan**

As the fourth largest state, and still one of the fastest growing, Florida’s transportation challenges are incredibly daunting. Consider the following:

- Florida Lane Miles – *how large its road network is* – increasing at only 1.1% annually,
- Our Population is increasing at 2.3% annually,
- Our Highway Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) – *how heavily our road network is used* – increasing at 3.5% annually, and
- A 25-year Transportation Funding Shortfall on the State Highway System of at least \$58 Billion – just to *maintain* today’s conditions! Local Shortfall is at least another \$40 Billion.

The Florida Chamber's New Cornerstone *Revisited* report (December 2007) indicated that Florida does:

- A.) a great job of maintaining our *existing* highway system ... but
- B.) has little money left for **ADDING badly-needed new capacity!**

A Reason Foundation report from last June confirms this. Here's the Good and the Bad News for Florida transportation-wise:

Good News:

- Rural Interstate miles in poor condition 1st
- Rural primary road miles in poor condition 1st
- Urban Interstate miles in poor condition 11th

Bad News:

- **Fatality Rate** per 100 million miles 34th
- Urban Interstate miles **congested** 40th
- **Total Disbursements** per mile 48th

- Overall Rank for 2004 & 2005 41st

FDOT'S LIMITATIONS

- The FDOT budget, by law, is self adjusting. It cannot spend more revenue than it takes in.

- Over the past three years FDOT has had to defer projects each year to make adjustments to its budget - the first two years due to construction cost increases and this year due to a reduction in gas tax receipts.

- In the first two years alone, FDOT had to defer 175 projects statewide at a total cost of \$2.5 Billion.

- Knowing that these types of "ready-to-go" projects return \$7 in economic benefit for every \$1 invested in transportation ...

- just imagine how much better Florida's economy would be today if these transportation "investments" had been made as originally planned!

FOCUS AND FUNDING

- A new Florida transportation “recipe” for meeting the demands of the 21st Century is needed.
- This new comprehensive approach will require a smarter way of dealing with transportation and additional financial resources for transportation.
- We need a new focus and more funding.

Focus

- Florida’s efforts to build upon the success of the Interstate Highway System with the development of the Florida Intrastate Highway System – and more recently the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) – are significant steps in the right direction.
- However, they alone are not enough.
- Over the next 25 years, **\$45 billion** more will be needed just to fund the highway component of the SIS.
- Additional financial resources and a clear commitment to reducing congestion – after meeting essential safety requirements – are needed.

Funding

- Transportation is significantly under funded throughout the nation, but in a high growth state such as Florida, the long-term impacts can be staggering.
- The major source of revenue – the fuel tax – is stagnant and may actually be declining.
- Short-term, Florida needs a minimum of **\$2 billion** in new, critically-needed recurring money for the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF).
- And in the longer-term, new potential funding sources should be explored.

“The talk you hear about adapting to change is not only stupid, it’s dangerous. The only way you can manage change is to create it.” -Peter Drucker

IDEAS PROPOSED TO THE TBRC

- **Adjust and Index Motor Vehicle Registration Fees** (better known as tag fees): Florida tag fees are low compared to other states. Depending on the rate of increase, this could raise ***\$700 million per year*** by the fifth year.
- **Adjust and Index Title Fees**: This could raise up to ***\$130 million per year*** by the fifth year.
- **Indexing Remainder of State, Local and Federal tax**. Allows Florida to keep up with inflation. Would raise ***\$520 million annually*** after five years.
- **Equalizing Local Option Gas Tax**: Currently all counties may levy up to 12 cents in local option gas taxes. Establish the tax at 12 cents in all counties. This would raise an additional ***\$400 million per year*** by the fifth year.
- Many of these fee increases are aimed at adjusting transportation-related user fees that
 - Aren’t indexed to keep pace with inflation, and
 - Haven’t been revised in 25 years!

“TAX INCREASE” RESPONSE

Some may attack these reasonable proposals for additional transportation revenue as big “Tax Increases.” Consider the following:

- Every option proposed involves transportation “user fees” – if you don’t “use” the transportation system ... you don’t pay.
- Idaho’s Republican Governor Butch Otter recently proposed a trio of bills – very similar to some of the ideas presented to the TBRC – designed to boost funding for the Idaho DOT.
 - Under Otter’s plan, state automobile registration fees would rise to \$150 per year! ... and county & local surcharges would continue, so

some county residents would pay \$187 per year! (These are dramatically higher than what Floridians would pay under our plan.)

- “It’s a fair and simple way of taxing people,” said Otter transportation official Clete Edmunson.

And now, the best reply to the “tax increase” argument:

“More efficient roads mean lower transportation costs for the many products and goods that make our abundant way of life possible.”

“So what we’re proposing is to add the equivalent of 5 cents per gallon to the existing **highway user fee**, the gas tax. The cost to the average motorist will be small (roughly 20-25cents per day) but the benefit to our transportation system will be immense.”

President Ronald Reagan - November 27, 1982

- The last time the federal gas tax was increased for transportation purposes, was under Reagan in 1982! (*It was increased 4.3 cents per gallon in 1993 under Clinton, but the proceeds were initially used for “deficient reduction.”*)
- Ronald Reagan loved cutting taxes, but he **Raised** the **Highway User Fee** to Strengthen the American Economy!
- Reagan proved tax cuts can spur our economy, but he also knew investment in our highway and public transportation systems is essential.

BOTTOM LINE

- Making our transportation system safer and reducing traffic congestion will improve Florida’s productivity, strengthen our state’s economy, and give you and your family more time together.
- Florida’s transportation program is **running out of “gas”** and attention needs to be focused on this issue!
- We can’t move FORWARD if our transportation system is stuck in **REVERSE!**

Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT)

www.bettertransportation.org

