



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

Quote of the Week:

**|"Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated.
Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.**

FRIDAY, 1/20/06

[Leaders seek gridlock answers](#)

(01/20/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

MANATEE COUNTY -- Today's usual 30-minute trip from Parrish to Bradenton could become a nearly three-hour, stop-and-go crawl by mid-century. Yet that worst-case scenario -- which is based on current growth patterns and a presumption the county won't make major investments in roads and mass transit -- need not come true.

[New attitude, new cash](#)

(01/20/2006 © Palm Beach Post)

Millions in federal mass-transit money is financing commuter rail and other projects in other states. This year, Florida lawmakers get yet another chance to stop turning their backs on that money, which this region needs. The fact that areas such as Orlando have joined the hunt should help Tallahassee identify the required matching money for the cash that state lawmakers keep leaving in Washington.

[Study: Easterly route \\$140M cheaper than westerly way](#)

(01/20/2006 © Naples Daily News)

An eastern extension of County Road 951 would cost about \$140 million less and attract 40 to 70 percent more traffic trips than Lee County staff has estimated, according to a study presented to about 400 people Thursday night at the Three Oaks Conference Center in Estero.

[Firm to tell story of U.S. 98](#)

(01/20/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

PENSACOLA — A consulting firm working for the state has promised the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority as much information on U.S. Highway 98 as it can handle. "We'll be telling the story of U.S. 98," Gene Martin, a project director with PBS&J, told corridor authority members Thursday.

[TPO urges cooperation on proposed toll bridge](#)

(01/20/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

NICEVILLE — The Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization is asking

that two authorities looking at traffic issues along U.S. Highway 98 work together to determine if a toll bridge should be built in Fort Walton Beach. TPO members on Thursday agreed to ask the Emerald Coast Bridge Authority and the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority to interact as the bridge panel determines if a second bridge is needed to Okaloosa Island.

[Need a lift? Pedicabs popping up on I-Drive](#)

(01/20/2006 © Orlando Sentinel)

Shops, hotels and restaurants have long competed for the cash that floods the tourist corridor during the convention season. Now another contest is brewing in the streets.

[Ethanol gets a push, but road ahead fraught with challenge](#)

(01/20/2006 © Miami Herald)

PAROLE, Md. - The handle on the ethanol pump at Wan Kang's Quik-Mart Citgo hasn't been lifted in more than a day. He's selling more water than he is the corn-based alternative to gasoline. High oil prices and subsidies that Congress passed last year, however, are generating new interest in ethanol, which is made from corn and has been around so long that it powered Henry Ford's Model T.

THURSDAY, 1/19/06

[Transportation referendum to be proposed](#)

(01/19/2006 © Englewood Sun Herald)

SARASOTA -- Sarasota County Commissioner Paul Mercier's presence will be felt today at the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council meeting in Fort Myers even though he will not be there. Mercier has proposed the council approve a motion supporting a statewide referendum demanding the state Legislature come up with a plan to solve the current transportation crisis.

[MIA may cut staff](#)

(01/19/2006 © Miami Herald)

Faced with massive construction debt and soaring operating costs for airlines, Miami International Airport will likely reduce its large staff through attrition over the next several years, aviation director Jose Abreu wrote in a memo last week. Abreu stressed Wednesday there are no plans for layoffs.

[Boca mayor touts new Tri-Rail station as a plus for Scripps](#)

(01/19/2006 © Palm Beach Post)

BOCA RATON — A couple of weeks ago, the newly opened Tri-Rail station just south of Yamato Road was one of 18 near-identical cogs in the South Florida commuter rail spine. Today, with the city in the race to land The Scripps Research Institute, the station has the potential to stand apart as the busiest on the 71-mile corridor, a hub for thousands of daily commuters.

[Orlando's new No. 1](#)

(01/19/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

Low-cost carrier Southwest Airlines reported soaring profits on Wednesday and confirmed plans to expand to three newly constructed gates at Orlando International Airport by March. At the same time, bankrupt Delta Air Lines prepared to vacate two-thirds of its 24 Orlando gates today, leaving Southwest as the leader in passenger market share and airline operating space in Orlando.

[Camera tracks red-light runners](#)

(01/19/2006 © Orlando Sentinel)

Starting today, police will send warnings to violators spotted at an Orlando intersection.

- If you open your mail and see a picture of your car speeding through a red light, consider yourself warned -- courtesy of the Orlando Police Department.

[Freedom to ride without helmets comes with price: South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#)

(01/19/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

Tony Salter loves motorcycles as much as anyone. "I got on a Harley-Davidson when I was 14," he said, "and I never looked back." Now 50, he's co-owner and operator of Tombstone Cycles in West Palm Beach, where custom choppers go for \$30,000 and up. Like many a self-respecting motorcycle freak, Salter wouldn't be caught dead in a helmet. That is, until he was almost caught dead.

[Editorial: A deadly mistake](#)

(01/19/2006 © Gainesville Sun)

Five years ago, the Florida Legislature repealed a state law that required motorcyclists to wear helmets. Three years later, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motorcycle-related highway fatalities had increased by more than 81 percent in Florida. Cause and effect? Lawmakers aren't sure yet.

WEDNESDAY, 1/18/06

[FDOT money crunch worries county](#)

(01/18/2006 © Charlotte Sun Herald)

SARASOTA -- When one government entity pulls back money, there is going to be a reaction. Sarasota County Administrator Jim Ley pitched potential legislation to State Sen. Michael Bennett, R-Bradenton, Tuesday that would balance the loss of nearly \$120 million in money for road projects. The money was pulled by the Florida Department of Transportation from major projects in the county's Capital Improvement Program, including the widening of the U.S. 41 Bypass in Venice and U.S. 301 to the county line with Manatee.

[Costs push plans for new Bayway bridge back again](#)

(01/18/2006 © St. Petersburg Times)

ST. PETERSBURG - The oft-delayed replacement bridge on the Pinellas Bayway is hung up again, but this time not by controversy so much as economics. The Florida Department of Transportation sought bids two years ago to replace the 40-year-old drawbridge with a tall fixed span. The DOT staff expected the new bridge to cost about

\$39-million, but the single bid the department received was for \$49-million. Though the DOT rejected that bid, it now appears it might have been a bargain.

[Money to spare? Give it to S.R. 64](#)

(01/18/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

The Riverdale Action Group is dissatisfied with pending decisions and legislative action in Tallahassee that are critical to our well-being and safety. The Department of Transportation proposal to delay funding for critical highway expansion under the tentative five-year work program is not at all favorable to the homeowners and geographical areas that we represent. Why not transfer to the highway budget the windfall tax revenue that the lawmakers are considering refunding to taxpayers?

[Broward business group seeks sales tax hike](#)

(01/18/2006 © Miami Herald)

The Broward Workshop, an organization of county business executives, on Tuesday kicked off its campaign to raise support for a November referendum on a one-cent sales tax increase to pay for various transportation upgrades.

[County weighs runway option](#)

(01/18/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

For the second time in less than two years, the Broward County Commission wavered on plans to build a second major runway at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport -- this time moving toward a cheaper, shorter option that could save the Melaleuca Gardens neighborhood.

[Today's Tip: Safety](#)

(01/18/2006 © Lakeland Ledger)

Today's Tip: Safety Wear your seat belt, and put away the cell phone. Statistics show seat belts add to longevity and help alleviate potential injuries in car crashes, says Joyce Tompkins of the University of Florida extension service in Bartow. And a recent study from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says driving while using a cell phone "poses a serious cognitive distraction and degrades driver performance."

[Smaller jets may transform flying](#)

(01/18/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

WASHINGTON - America's already crowded skies are about to become more congested. Taking off for the first time this year will be small, speedy, cheap jets that big airlines worry will cause traffic jams around major metropolitan areas. Called "microjets" or "very light jets," they've been likened to SUVs with wings.

TUESDAY, 1/17/06

[Region's funding for roads to shrink](#)

(01/17/2006 © Florida Times-Union)

Florida motorists pay 39 cents a gallon in state and federal gas taxes, so every time they pull in for a fill-up, they have a stake in whether those taxes pay for roadwork in their home region or go to some other part of the state.

[Detour from reality](#)

(01/17/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

Commissioner asks wrong question about gas-tax proposal - County Commissioner Donna Hayes has chosen an interesting way to frame the debate over a proposal to raise Manatee County's gas tax by a nickel a gallon. "Are you looking forward to paying more at the pump?" she asked in e-mails sent out last week in an unsuccessful attempt to drum up a large crowd for her news conference/anti-tax rally last week. Hayes might play a more constructive role if she framed the debate this way: "Are you looking forward to more gridlock and more unsafe roads?"

[Airport expansion needed?](#)

(01/17/2006 © Miami Herald)

After the airspace over South Florida was reconfigured in October, both Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International and Palm Beach International airports saw dramatic decreases in delays over the holiday travel season. That good news has some activists questioning whether a long-planned controversial new runway is needed.

[It makes sense to help complete escape route](#)

(01/17/2006 © Pensacola News Journal)

The proposal to widen a stretch of Alabama roadway connecting the Pensacola Bay Area to Interstate 65 in Alabama is probably the most cost-effective hurricane evacuation project out there. Escambia County commissioners should give close attention to a coming request to commit cash in a joint pledge with Flomaton, Ala., and Escambia County, Ala.

[Ride Program Helps Seniors Get Around](#)

(01/17/2006 © Lakeland Ledger)

PORTLAND, Maine -- Margaret Emmons had not driven in more than 20 years. So when her husband died last fall, she had no use for their 1997 Ford Taurus. Rather than sell it or give it away, she decided to trade it for rides through the Independent Transportation Network.

[Builder offers traffic remedy](#)

(01/17/2006 © Miami Herald)

For all its grandeur -- luxury condos, rows of stores, gambling -- the Village at Gulfstream Park still has one hurdle it hasn't cleared: traffic. The latest attempt at offsetting the Village's traffic was more than \$6 million in road and mass transit improvements to handle the vehicles it would bring. Developers suggested them in a letter to county officials last month.

[Billboard battle taking shape](#)

(01/17/2006 © Florida Times-Union)

TALLAHASSEE -- A battle over billboards may be coming to the Capitol as state legislators begin considering a law enforcing "view zones" for the jumbo-sized ads along Florida roadways.

MONDAY, 1/16/06

[Officials Optimistic as Plagued Road Finally Nears Finish](#)

(01/16/2006 © Lakeland Ledger)

TAMPA -- Day by day, segment by segment, the elevated lanes of the Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway edge ever closer to downtown Tampa. Highway officials say they are on schedule for a grand opening for the problem-plagued, high-tech, structurally spectacular, reversible-lane project in August, if not sooner.

[ROAD FIX WILL TAKE YEARS](#)

(01/16/2006 © Miami Herald)

Tired of the seemingly endless parade of concrete mixers, back hoes and asphalt rollers on South Florida roadways? Better get used to it, or move somewhere else. The Florida Department of Transportation is putting the final touches on one of the granddaddies of gridlock, the long overdue project to "fix" the interchange at the Dolphin and Palmetto expressways (State Roads 836 and 826).

[New people should pay for growth](#)

(01/16/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

With the baby boom generation turning 60 this month, Okaloosa County can only expect more people to move here. Using one of Ross Perot's phrases, we are going to "hear a giant sucking sound" as the baby boom generation retires over the next 20 years and moves from the North to the South. Add to this the planned increase in population under BRAC and we are going to need new and wider roads.

[Collier leaders to address growth management law](#)

(01/16/2006 © Naples Daily News)

A new year is bringing in a new plan for Collier County's elected leaders in how to address a statewide growth management law they believe will devastate their system for balancing growth with services. County government officials contend a growth-management law passed last year will damage their system, known as concurrency management.

[HARTline To Expand Express Service](#)

(01/16/2006 © Tampa Tribune)

TAMPA - Bob Jett remembers the first day he rode a bus into downtown Tampa from Brandon. It was Sept. 10, 1979. "A Monday," he said. He's ridden an express bus to work ever since and is sold on the cost savings and convenience of taking an express bus to work. HARTline will expand its popular express bus service next week.

[Official seeks aid to build new route](#)

(01/16/2006 © Pensacola News Journal)

A long-awaited four-lane evacuation route from the Pensacola Bay Area to Interstate 65 in Alabama appears to be getting closer. That route would follow four-lane U.S. 29 north from Pensacola to Flomaton, Ala. Motorists then would use Alabama State Road 113 to reach I-65.

[Kaine Pursues Sprawl, Traffic](#)

(Washington Post) RICHMOND, Jan. 15 -- Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine will call for new controls on growth and development Monday night, saying the only way to solve congestion on the state's roads is to slow the march of suburban sprawl. Kaine also will acknowledge the need for more money to build wider highways, buy more buses and trains and erect bridges. Kaine also hopes to make good on a promise he made during the campaign to lock up the state's transportation fund so road and transit money can't be used for other purposes.

***Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT)** is a statewide business and transportation association dedicated to making transportation safer and more efficient in Florida. FBT has a diverse membership of 150 businesses, organizations, and individuals, including the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Transportation Builders Association, Publix Super Markets, AAA Auto Club South, SunTrust Bank, the Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers, the Florida Public Transportation Association, the Florida Ports Council, the Florida MPO Advisory Council, the Florida Airports Council, and numerous local businesses, Chambers of Commerce, MPOs, and transit providers all across the Sunshine State.*

www.bettertransportation.org