



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

Quote of the Week:

**"Hard work spotlights the character of people:
some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses,
and some don't turn up at all." -Sam Ewig**

FRIDAY, 1/27/06

[House speaker says he might pull county's Scripps money](#)

(01/27/2006 © Palm Beach Post)

TALLAHASSEE -- Florida House Speaker Allan Bense threatened Thursday to take back the \$310 million allocated to Palm Beach County if the county commission doesn't get its act together regarding The Scripps Research Institute. I'm becoming very disappointed... with the Palm Beach County Commission on their handling of the Scripps issue, Bense, R-Panama City, said at a news conference outlining his legislative priorities for the upcoming session.

[Intracoastal bridge contract let](#)

(01/27/2006 © Florida Times-Union)

Beach Boulevard motorists who find themselves stuck in traffic when the drawbridge goes up at the Intracoastal Waterway can start the countdown to a time when the drawbridge will be retired. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority board on Thursday awarded a \$64.6 million contract to build a new bridge that will rise high enough above the water for sailboats to pass through with room to spare.

[Web site allows motorists view of I-10](#)

(01/27/2006 © Pensacola News Journal)

Motorists who travel on the Interstate 10 bridges over Escambia Bay have new ways to learn of possible traffic delays. The project Web site, www.escambia baybridge.com, has added a link to a camera on I-10 at Davis Highway facing east. The addition of this camera link allows motorists a second view of eastbound traffic and possible traffic congestion before getting on the road.

[SRQ president wins regional FAA award](#)

(01/27/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

Fred Piccolo, president and chief executive officer of the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, was selected as 2005 Commercial Service Airport Manager of the Year by the Federal Aviation Administration's southern region airports division. FAA southern region manager Rusty Chapman called Piccolo's leadership an inspiration to aviation professionals throughout the nation.

[Panel votes to get tough on repeat DUI offenders](#)

(01/27/2006 © St. Augustine Record)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) -- A person who gets a fourth or subsequent conviction for driving or boating under the influence of drugs or alcohol would have to spend at least a year behind bars under a bill that won approval Wednesday from the House Criminal Justice Committee.

[Migrant van seat belt bill advances](#)

(01/27/2006 © Palm Beach Post)

TALLAHASSEE -- As the 2005 legislative session was nearing an end, farmworker advocates cornered Rep. Ralph Poppell on his way to his office to confront him about his opposition to a bill that would force seat belts in vans that transport farmworkers. Poppell, R-Vero Beach and co-chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, argued to the crowd that the bill did not sufficiently protect van owners from lawsuits if passengers failed to use the seat belts. That emotional scene will not be repeated this year, as Poppell has agreed to a rewritten version of the bill and even helped pass it through his committee Wednesday.

[Pedestrians crossing A1A face hazards](#)

(01/27/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

Walking across State Road A1A can be a nerve-racking few steps to the oceanfront in Palm Beach County. "South Florida is notorious for not being pedestrian friendly," Highland Beach Police Chief Glenn Goss told the Town Commission earlier this month. "Motorists are inconsistent. Some motorists don't know their responsibilities." Pedestrians also need to be better informed about their rights and responsibilities, Goss said.

THURSDAY, 1/26/06

[22 Miles Of Guardrail Crowns I-4 Safety Effort](#)

(01/26/2006 © Tampa Tribune)

TAMPA - The final piece of last year's Drive 4 Life campaign to stem a sharp rise in fatal crashes on Interstate 4 began falling into place this week. Construction crews are installing 22 miles of guardrail in the median along Hillsborough County's stretch of I-4.

[Input Needed For Proposed Turnpike](#)

(01/26/2006 © Tampa Tribune)

SEBRING Its the \$2.2 billion question, not only for Highlands County, but much of Central and South Florida. Will there be a tollway of that cost running through Floridas Heartland, connecting both coasts? If so, when? Florida Turnpike Authority officials met Wednesday with the Highlands County Long Range Transportation Committee to add some clarity to the issue.

[Wonderwood project cost increasing](#)

(01/26/2006 © Florida Times-Union)

The Better Jacksonville Plan got a financial jolt Wednesday when bids for building the last piece of the Wonderwood Connector came in 31 percent over the engineer's

estimate. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority had expected the project to cost about \$29.5 million, but the apparent low bid by Superior Construction was \$38.7 million.

[Is time right for regional transportation authority?](#)

(01/26/2006 © Jacksonville Daily Record)

Attorney Jim Rinaman was appointed to the Jacksonville Transportation Authority board in 1971 by then-Mayor Hans Tanzler and he spent a decade as the chair of the Mass Transit Committee. During his tenure, Rinaman was adamant about assuring the JTA looked into the future regarding mass transit.

[Crackdown on repeat DUI offenders](#)

(01/26/2006 © Daytona Beach News-Journal)

TALLAHASSEE -- A person who gets a fourth or subsequent conviction for driving or boating under the influence of drugs or alcohol would have to spend at least a year behind bars under a bill that won approval Wednesday from the House Criminal Justice Committee.

[Join the transportation talks](#)

(01/26/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

In debate over needs and funding, Manatee residents should weigh in. A proposal to boost Manatee County's gas tax by a nickel a gallon has dominated the debate over how to bridge the gap between transportation needs and funding. But that's only one part of a larger discussion.

[DOT plan violates own rules](#)

(01/26/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

Walton County has told the state Department of Transportation that it cannot build an operations center south of the city as planned because it will add too much traffic on U.S. Highway 331. Ironically, the county used the DOT's own traffic count formula to make the determination.

WEDNESDAY, 1/25/06

[Collier rejects road builder's bid for widening, restarts process](#)

(01/25/2006 © Naples Daily News)

Collier County has decided once again to bid a major road-widening project after only one firm offered a price significantly higher than the county was anticipating. On Tuesday, without discussion and on its consent agenda, the Collier County Commission rejected a \$41.6 million bid for a Collier Boulevard widening project that came in about 70 percent more than the engineer's estimate.

[Commissioner in hot seat over tax news conference](#)

(01/25/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

MANATEE COUNTY -- Six county commissioners lashed out at one of their own Tuesday over a news conference she called to oppose an increase in local gas taxes. Commissioner Donna Hayes found herself on the hot seat, as other commissioners

scolded her for spreading inaccurate information and for criticizing a county budget she voted to approve.

[Lee to offer \\$1.17 million for parkway project land](#)

(01/25/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

Lee County will make a \$1.17 million offer for the final 17 pieces of land needed for the Three Oaks Parkway corridor under action taken by county commissioners on Tuesday. The land is along Imperial Street, the two-lane road that will be widened to four between Bonita Beach Road and East Terry Street. That section will become Imperial Parkway.

[Bridge routes on the table](#)

(01/25/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

A new bridge to link Fort Walton Beach to Okaloosa Island has occupied many minds for years and has sparked passionate debate. So it seems fitting that a full day has been set aside to explore the latest three proposed corridors for a toll bridge. A charette, or workshop, to discuss bridge options will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at the Emerald Coast Conference Center.

[SCAT overhaul approved](#)

(01/25/2006 © Charlotte Sun Herald)

Plans shift buses, routes throughout county - Getting around Sarasota County by bus is about to get easier, as the county commissioners approved plans for an upgrade to the Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) system.

[City wants road study](#)

(01/25/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

CRESTVIEW — Trying to speed up the building of a bypass road around Crestview, the City Council has requested the Florida Turnpike Enterprise to study its feasibility. The council on Monday approved a resolution asking the Turnpike Enterprise, which is part of the Florida Department of Transportation, to study the issue. The Turnpike Enterprise is run like a private business.

[Slosberg wants driving age raised to 17](#)

(01/25/2006 © Boca Raton News)

By a full year, Rep. Irving Slosberg (D-Boca Raton) wants to delay perhaps the major rite of passage for young people. He has introduced legislation to increase the driving age from 16 to 17. "Shockingly, some of these kids agree," Slosberg told The Boca Raton News.

TUESDAY, 1/24/06

[Florida to study I-75 speed limit](#)

(01/24/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

SARASOTA - Increasing congestion and accidents on Interstate 75 in Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte counties have prompted the state to consider reducing the speed limit. Local transportation leaders were told Monday the state plans to conduct a study to see if the 70-mph speed limit needs to be lowered.

[Tax refund a bad idea, officials say](#)

(01/24/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

Floridians need better roads more than they need a week's break from paying sales taxes, many local officials say. They are arguing against what legislators describe as a statewide tax refund. They want the state to keep a projected \$3.2 billion surplus and spend a portion of it on delayed and underfunded transportation projects.

[Plan shows future gap between transportation needs, revenue](#)

(01/24/2006 © Charlotte Sun Herald)

If Charlotte County hopes to adequately meet its transportation needs in 2030, it will require 42 separate road projects costing more than \$1.1 billion, according to a report by the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization. However, the county will only be able to afford to pay for 20 of those projects because anticipated revenues for that purpose will only add up to \$603 million by then, the report says.

[Connector for I-275 may get investor](#)

(01/24/2006 © St. Petersburg Times)

TAMPA - In figuring out how to pay for a 3-mile road connecting Interstate 275 and New Tampa, the Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority has turned to the possibility of a private investor funding the road and collecting its tolls. The concept - called a public private partnership, or P3 - has been used in Europe and Asia for several years.

[FDOT restores \\$6.1 million for Aqui Esta project](#)

(01/24/2006 © Charlotte Sun Herald)

Here it is -- again. Just when Charlotte County officials thought the Florida Department of Transportation had indefinitely detoured their highest-priority road project, the state announced Monday it will restore its \$6.1 million share of funding for the initial phase of an ambitious plan to improve Aqui Esta Drive.

[In-Town Bypass Back, but With Catches](#)

(01/24/2006 © Lakeland Ledger)

Lakeland project delayed until 2007 and won't get bridge over Kathleen Road. -

Lakeland's delayed In-Town Bypass is back -a year later and a bridge short to save money -- but it will be built beginning in July 2007, state legislators and transportation officials said Monday.

[Boca offering gas cards to local carpoolers](#)

(01/24/2006 © Boca Raton News)

Boca Raton officials hope to promote carpooling among local employees through a special gas card offer. During February, both Boca's Transportation Management Initiative (TMI) division and South Florida Commuter Services (SFCS) have teamed up to give gas cards to those carpools that operate an average of three days a week.

MONDAY, 1/23/06

[Dramatic need](#)

(01/23/2006 © Orlando Sentinel)

Our position: It's time for legislators such as Randy Johnson to back surcharge vote.

The bandwagon's rolling, but there's always more room for leaders who are serious about getting a handle on Florida's transportation woes. Gov. Jeb Bush has said that he supports the idea of letting local voters decide on a modest increase in the surcharge on rental cars, a no-brainer move that could raise \$40 million a year for Central Florida needs, including commuter rail.

[Transportation](#)

(01/23/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

ISSUE: Coalition pushes sales tax for transit. As traffic congestion steadily worsens throughout South Florida, and as projections call for a 50 percent increase in population over the next two decades, it behooves all of us to imagine a future in which there are three cars on the roads for every two today.

[Report shows gloomy funding forecast for transportation improvements](#)

(01/23/2006 © Miami Herald)

A preliminary report shows that the People's Transportation Plan -- an ambitious set of transportation improvements planned throughout Miami-Dade County -- may come up more than \$200 million short in state and federal matching funds over the next 30 years.

[Plans take Tri-Rail south, west](#)

(01/23/2006 © Miami Herald)

Local transportation officials are pushing to build a new Tri-Rail extension 20 miles into the heart of southwestern Miami-Dade County -- a line that would provide a new commuting option for hundreds of thousands of suburbanites. Dozens of critical details are still in flux.

[Go to Lowe's when E-PASS battery runs low](#)

(01/23/2006 © Florida Today)

Brevard County commuters who frequent Orlando since 1992 have had the option of the E-PASS to make their ride a little easier. The Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority, which maintains toll roads including the Beachline and the Greenway, allows commuters to purchase transponders which let them pay for tolls automatically. So what's a customer to do when the transponder battery dies? The customer can have their battery replaced for free at any of the three E-PASS Service Centers in Orlando or at any Lowe's home improvement store in the hardware section.

[The 180-year-old solution to traffic](#)

(01/23/2006 © Orlando Business Journal)

Driving through most parts of Florida is becoming more difficult each passing month. In many cases, our current road structures are incapable of handling the volume of traffic that is required, particularly during peak traffic times. The 2005 edition of Urban Mobility Report concludes traffic congestion costs Americans \$63.1 billion a year.

C. Fla. to receive Florida's first regional visioning grant

(01/23/2006 © Orlando Business Journal)

Central Florida has received a state grant to become the first region in Florida to conduct a comprehensive regional growth visioning project. The grant is being funded through a partnership between the Florida Department of Community Affairs, the Florida Department of Transportation, myregion.org, the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Central Florida MPO Alliance and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

***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 180 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