



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

Quote of the Week:

"Passion is the 'fuel' that drives any truly successful endeavor. If you don't seem to care, why should anyone else?" - Doug Callaway

FRIDAY, 2/24/06

[TRAFFIC: Getting on board](#)

(02/24/2006 © Florida Times-Union)

Commuters between Jacksonville and St. Augustine could easily look beyond their windshields and cringe when pondering the future. St. Johns County's population boom will pour tens of thousands of new drivers onto U.S. 1 and other highways linking the two areas. But an idea by U.S. Rep. John Mica could offer some traffic relief and save taxpayers money, too.

[Official wants free rides for seniors on Tri-Rail](#)

(02/24/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

Pompano Beach Riders 65 and older could take Tri-Rail for free anytime in South Florida if one transit official has his way. But the idea would cost \$570,000 a year -- revenue that Tri-Rail says it can't afford to lose from a budget already constrained by last year's hurricanes and construction delays that have driven some passengers away.

[Treasure Coast leaders told their funding needs will face tough competition in Tallahassee](#)

(02/24/2006 © Stuart News)

TALLAHASSEE — Funding for high-profile transportation projects in Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties has significant merit but must compete with similarly critical projects around the state, Florida's top transportation official told area business leaders Thursday.

[Lee MPO analyzing proposed interchange](#)

(02/24/2006 © Naples Daily News)

The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization is taking a look at life in the future with and without a Coconut Road/Interstate 75 interchange. The MPO will use models to examine traffic patterns in a variety of scenarios with and without the interchange, MPO Director John Voges said Thursday afternoon during an area growth summit at Florida Gulf Coast University.

[Editorial: First step, maybe](#)

(02/24/2006 © Florida Today)

As NASA heads toward the post-shuttle era, there is one key around which everything revolves at Kennedy Space Center: Capturing as much work as possible for the shuttle replacement -- called the Crew Exploration Vehicle -- and the rockets that will be used to launch it and cargo into space for the moon-Mars program.

[Disguised cops nab red-light runners](#)

(02/24/2006 © Charlotte Sun Herald)

Florida Highway Patrol troopers stop 27 drivers - Edward Pope normally doesn't wear a long, brown curly wig to work. He also rarely sits at a street corner with a sign that reads, "Will work for food." He did both Thursday. Pope also held a sign warning motorists: "Don't Run Red Lights." They ignored him. Drivers didn't realize the "homeless man" sitting outside the Shell gas station at U.S. 41 and Olean Boulevard was actually a Florida Highway Patrol trooper.

[Hybrids:](#)

(02/24/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

Dear Tom and Ray: I'm hearing a lot of hype about how great hybrids are, and since I love road trips and hate expensive gas, I'm considering the purchase of one. However, no one seems to be talking about the downsides of hybrids. If they are so great, wouldn't we have had them 20 years ago?

THURSDAY, 2/23/06

[If Cattle Flew](#)

(02/23/06 – Wall Street Journal)

Look at the airports. Why would terrorists bother with seaports? - We are debating port security. While we're at it, how about airport security? Does anyone really believe that has gotten much better since 19 terrorists hijacked four planes five years ago?

[Advice to S. Florida: Cooperate](#)

(02/23/2006 © Miami Herald)

Local economic development organizations need to work closely at a regional level to cooperate on tackling some of South Florida's major competitive issues which include rising home prices, traffic woes and declining income, according to a report released Wednesday.

[The high cost of flying at MIA](#)

(02/23/2006 © Miami Herald)

A Miami-Dade County Commission auditor is scrutinizing tens of millions of dollars the county bills Miami International Airport each year for services such as marketing, office supplies and attorney fees. MIA is slated to pay the county \$31.4 million this year, not including fees for police, fire-rescue or utilities. By comparison, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport reimbursed Broward County \$4.3 million for similar services in 2005. Orlando International Airport paid local governments \$1.7 million.

[Bill puts 'DUI' on license plates](#)

(02/23/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

TALLAHASSEE - A bill that would require drivers convicted of DUI offenses to display a clearly marked DUI license plate passed its first House committee Wednesday. HB 627, sponsored by state Rep. Fred Brummer, R-Apopka, passed the House Criminal Justice Committee with a 5-1 vote.

[Boards to rank road wishes](#)

(02/23/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

The Imperial Parkway project in Bonita Springs is one of a handful of regional road projects that transportation planners will scrutinize before they ask for state money. The Metropolitan Planning Organizations in Lee and Collier counties will meet Friday to start ranking their most important road projects.

[Corzine: New Jersey Turnpike won't go private](#)

(02/23/2006 © Miami Herald)

TRENTON, N.J. — The New Jersey Turnpike won't be placed on the auction block to bail out the state's nearly bankrupt Transportation Trust Fund, Gov. Corzine said. The former Wall Street executive said his top choice was to borrow more money and refinance existing debt before the fund, which pays for the state's roads and rail lines, ran out of money July 1.

[Federal Appeals Court Rejects N.J. Rig Ban](#)

(02/23/2006 © Lakeland Ledger)

TRENTON, N.J. Big rigs passing through New Jersey must be allowed to use local roads, according to a federal appeals court ruling that invalidated a 7-year-old ban. The state had restricted the double-trailer trucks and many tractor-trailers to major highways.

WEDNESDAY, 2/22/06

[75-year lease deal of Indiana Toll Road put on the fast track](#)

(02/22/2006 © Miami Herald)

MISHAWAKA, Ind. - The transaction occurs thousands of times every day. For \$4.65 you can drive all the way across Indiana. That's the deal on Interstate Highway 90, the Indiana Toll Road. But the deal could change in big ways - some known, some unknown - if Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels succeeds in the most aggressive highway privatization venture in the country: turning day-to-day management of the 157-mile tollway over to Australian and Spanish operators for the next 75 years, in exchange for an upfront payment of \$3.85 billion.

[On the Editorial Page](#)

(02/22/2006 – Wall Street Journal)

Port politics: How to sound like a hawk without being one. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist is the latest Republican to broadcast his "independence" from President Bush on homeland security, yesterday joining Senator Lindsey Graham, Representative Peter King and numerous state politicians in calling on the Administration to stop a deal that would allow a United Arab Emirates company to manage six major U.S. ports.

[Gov. Bush has faith in brother's administration in ports deal](#)

(02/22/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

CORAL GABLES, Fla. - Gov. Jeb Bush said Tuesday that his brother, President Bush, would adequately protect national security as part of the federal government's approval of the sale of a ports operator to a state-owned company in the United Arab Emirates. But at least eight Florida Congress members, including six Republicans, questioned the deal.

[Spacecraft could be assembled in Brevard](#)

(02/22/2006 © Florida Today)

CAPE CANAVERAL - Lockheed Martin Corp. today will map out how it would build and operate a new fleet of NASA spaceships if the company wins the multimillion-dollar Crew Exploration Vehicle contract later this year. Florida and Brevard County have been lobbying for months to lure final assembly work to the Space Coast.

[State may lift sales taxes to gain edge on space](#)

(02/22/2006 © Florida Today)

TALLAHASSEE - A new proposal to support Florida's space industry and hang on to Space Coast jobs would eliminate sales taxes for researchers and developers of any space-related product. "It is part of a competitiveness issue for Florida, because many other states don't have that," said Sena Black, marketing director for Enterprise Florida.

[Developer pledges \\$1 million for U.S. 41 widening](#)

(02/22/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

Another developer has pledged \$1 million toward the \$3.5 million in interest on a county loan to speed up U.S. 41's widening from Estero to San Carlos Park. J.E.D. of Southwest Florida is in the rezoning process for Estero On the River, a mix of residential, retail, office and cultural at the northeast corner of U.S. 41 and Corkscrew Road in Estero.

[County tells state to leave housing funds alone](#)

(02/22/2006 © Naples Daily News)

Lee County commissioners called on the state Tuesday to stop raiding affordable housing funds. Commissioners passed a resolution asking the state to return to cities and counties all of the nearly \$1 billion that will be available this year in an affordable housing trust fund.

TUESDAY, 2/21/06

[Editorial: Roads](#)

(02/21/2006 © Naples Daily News)

Once in a while we hear of a road project that sounds almost too good to be true. Then it fades from public view. Thank goodness an Interstate 75 bypass of the Naples-Fort Myers urban area is not going that route. The project surged to life last week as it secured the support of Collier County commissioners.

[Lawmakers to sort out plans for spending \\$3.2 billion windfall](#)

(02/21/2006 © Tallahassee Democrat)

Florida lawmakers have the kind of problem that a Lottery winner can identify with. The only difference is the number of zeros in the jackpot. Instead of figuring out what to do with mere millions, the Legislature has a \$3.2 billion windfall to play with.

[Project tries to envision future that works](#)

(02/21/2006 © Orlando Sentinel)

Central Florida leaders will spend nearly \$1 million during the next 15 months to come up with a dream. They'll imagine where new high-rise condos will be built, where roads will be paved, where rail lines could whisk people around the region and where environmentally sensitive lands should be preserved.

[Lee airports get \\$7.7 million for 4 projects](#)

(02/21/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

Lee County airports have received more than \$7.7 million for four projects. The new state transportation money for Southwest Florida International are: \$6.9 million toward construction of the new terminal that opened Sept. 9; \$420,000 for rehabilitating the runway, a project now under way; and \$237,000 for the purchase of an aircraft rescue and fire-fighting vehicle. Additionally, the Page Field general aviation airport received \$187,000 for taxiway construction.

[Plan to ease east Lee traffic explored](#)

(02/21/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

For motorists, a proposal to turn a once-forgotten road in east Lee County into four lanes or six lanes could be a dream come true. Under the proposal, Lockett Road, which ends about one-half mile east of I-75, would be extended east to Joel Boulevard in Lehigh Acres.

[Contractor paves path to hall of fame](#)

(02/21/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

The next time you're caught in rush-hour traffic, take a look around you and think about what it must have looked like in the early days of the Sunshine State. Now zoom forward 50 years and meet **Wendell Kent**, a hard-working road builder from Illinois who moves south with his wife Evelyn to make his fortune. Kent, one of the pioneers of road building in southwest Florida, is one of only 20 people across the state being named to the newly created Transportation Builders' Association Hall of Fame.

[Ceremony Thursday to mark 10-year anniversary of deadly crash](#)

(02/21/2006 © Boca Raton News)

State Rep. Irv Slosberg will never forget the night of Feb. 23, 1996. It was the night his daughter's life ended - and his life changed. Dori Slosberg, 14, was one of seven teens who packed into a Honda Civic driven by Nicholas Copertino. The driver lost control. The tragic results: five teens killed, one is now a quadriplegic, one teen and three women suffered severe injuries, and Copertino is serving time in jail on five counts of manslaughter.

MONDAY, 2/20/06

[Transportation](#)

(02/20/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

ISSUE: Plan would fund regional transit. It's time to talk again about a dedicated funding source for mass transit, because South Florida's traffic crisis isn't getting any better. It's getting worse. Past efforts have failed because of either rote anti-tax sentiments or failure to agree on a plan. Now there's a new proposal from the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, and good news: it's supported by the Palm Beach County Commission.

[Can a vision for growth be achieved?](#)

(02/20/2006 © Orlando Business Journal)

A new regional approach to growth management soon may serve as a model for the rest of the state. A local group, led by a range of business, civic and government leaders, has done a series of studies that take a comprehensive look at the area's future growth needs. The next step: outreach.

[Highways' new stripes may ease traffic](#)

(02/20/2006 © Florida Times-Union)

In an attempt to deal with the rush-hour traffic that ties up a new \$107 million interchange in southeast Jacksonville, the Florida Department of Transportation will reduce the number of lanes at the points where traffic merges.

[Great wall of Viera](#)

(02/20/2006 © Florida Today)

Developers should have paid to build barriers - So, let me get this Viera history straight. Interstate 95, a highly traveled, high-speed highway, exists. Then developers put in several new residential areas. Now, residents expect the state to pay millions for sound barriers to protect them. Where were the county and state officials when these developments were being built?

[Bill protecting billboard views is moving along](#)

(02/20/2006 © South Florida Business Journal)

Proposed legislation to turn state rules regarding billboard visibility into law is being modified to reduce opposition. Two bills - H. 273, sponsored by State Rep. Stan Mayfield, R-Vero Beach, and S. 566 by State Sen. Mike Haridopolos, R-Melbourne - nearly made it through last year's session, but ran out of time.

[Route 66 still the 'classic American trek'](#)

(02/20/2006 © Bradenton Herald)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. - From Chicago to Los Angeles, Americans know Route 66 as a bygone road evoking a simpler era of road trips and song. But Karen Macaulay and Andy Garrett say Europeans like them still get their kicks retracing a decommissioned highway that now exists officially only in tour guides and on the occasional brown historical marker.

[Housing advocates pushing for full use of trust fund](#)

(02/20/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune)

DESTIN -- Amber Leto is a single mother of two making around \$40,000 a year in a resort community where real estate prices have spiraled upward. Leto is among many middle-income workers who have trouble finding affordable housing across Florida. Many advocates are pushing legislators to spend the more than \$900 million in Florida's affordable housing trust fund, which was created in 1992 and comes from a surcharge on a type of property tax. It has ballooned because of the state's booming real estate market, but lawmakers voted last year to cap annual appropriations beginning in 2007 at \$243 million.

***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