



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

Quote of the Week:

"The absent are always wrong." - Machiavelli

FRIDAY, 3/17/06

[NASA asks for roads, schools](#)

03/17/2006 © Bradenton Herald

TALLAHASSEE - Traffic-free roads, affordable housing and quality schools in Florida all factor into NASA's ability to attract the best workers necessary to keep the U.S. ahead in the 21st-century space race, the head of the nation's space program told a House joint committee Thursday. NASA Administrator Michael Griffin told lawmakers who handle infrastructure and space issues that it was essential that the highway, rail and waterway connections to Cape Canaveral are improved.

[First, impact fees](#)

03/17/2006 © Florida Today

Four Brevard County cities have now faced reality: The \$360 million needed to improve the area's choked roads isn't going to fall out of the heavens. It's the responsibility of leaders to create a plan to solve traffic gridlock, and that's going to take a combination of approaches. With that in mind, city councils in Cocoa, Melbourne, Rockledge and Titusville have endorsed a proposal to put a referendum on the Nov. 7 ballot for a 1-cent sales tax increase for roads.

[Local ports may take on a new role](#)

03/17/2006 © Florida Times-Union

TALLAHASSEE -- A quartet of Democratic legislators on Thursday proposed a pair of bills to tighten security around Florida's 14 ports, including up to \$2 million in additional funding for Jacksonville. But the money would bring with it the responsibility for local port authorities to inspect cargo containers coming into the country, a new role they don't necessarily want.

[6 Lanes, 3 Years](#)

03/17/2006 © Bonita Daily News

The prospect of earning a \$469 million paycheck attracted 224 representatives from firms worldwide to a presentation Thursday afternoon on the technical aspects of widening Interstate 75 to six lanes. The Florida Department of Transportation plans to give the go-ahead about March 20, 2007.

[Vote on gas-tax increase delayed](#)

03/17/2006 © Bradenton Herald

MANATEE - When it comes to a proposed 5-cent gas tax increase, county commissioners aren't exactly looking to get the lead out. With a possible vote on the tax looming less than one week away, Commissioner Amy Stein on Wednesday suggested postponing the vote until at least the April 11 meeting, in order to have all commissioners present.

[Costs delay wider turnpike](#)

03/17/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

Plans to widen Florida's Turnpike could ease Palm Beach County traffic, but rising construction costs mean relief could be more than a decade away. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise plans to widen the toll road to eight lanes, four north and four south, between Lake Worth and Jupiter. Construction on the initial section from Lake Worth Road to Okeechobee Boulevard would not begin until 2011.

[Car makers shed spare tires](#)

03/17/2006 © Bonita Daily News

New cars are increasingly coming without spare tires. Auto makers are realizing that ditching the spare can improve fuel efficiency and create more space for accessories from DVD players to storage compartments. Instead of spares, some vehicles are coming outfitted with a special type of tire that is designed to run anywhere from 50 miles to 125 miles after a puncture — long enough for most drivers to get to a repair shop.

THURSDAY, 3/16/06

[Metrorail project receives big boost](#)

03/16/2006 © Miami Herald

Miami-Dade Transit announced the county's North Corridor Metrorail expansion project recently got a favorable rating in the Federal Transit Administration's Fiscal Year 2007 New Starts project ratings. The rating is a major achievement because it locks in a 25 percent funding commitment from the state, which translates into \$228 million for the project.

[Collier road-rules bring concerns](#)

03/16/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press

TALLAHASSEE -- A bill to let Collier County impose tougher road-building rules on developers than the rest of the state is drawing the ire of the industry, state agencies and Gov. Jeb Bush's office.

[FGCU told traffic center funding a go if MPO Oks interchange](#)

03/16/2006 © Bonita Daily News

Rep. Mack sends promising letter to university; planning organization to revisit Coconut Road proposal Friday - Florida Gulf Coast University officials recently learned that they may have a shot at federal funding to build a transportation management center. However, local congressmen will have a harder time lobbying for that funding if Lee

County officials turn down \$10 million to study an Interstate 75 interchange at Coconut Road, legislators told the university's president.

[Coconut Road interchange opponents want to take DRGR issue to polls](#)

03/16/2006 © Bonita Daily News

Some opponents of a Coconut Road/Interstate 75 interchange want to take part of the debate to the polls. Residents should get to vote on whether they want the Density Reduction Groundwater Recharge (DRGR) area opened to development, said said Phil Douglas, a representative of the Estero Council of Community Leaders, at a meeting of the Pelican Landing Community Association on Wednesday.

[A viable alternative to cars](#)

03/16/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

In Pinellas County, the term "mass transit" has historically meant the masses are in transit in cars, and none too rapidly. The bus system, operated by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, has never been viewed by commuters with other choices as a viable option. That attitude could change with the development of a new service called Bus Rapid Transit, or BRT.

[Orlando Airport extends Disney's airport deal for five years](#)

03/16/2006 © Lakeland Ledger

Walt Disney World's express shuttle that takes visitors directly to the resort from the Orlando International Airport without having to wait for luggage will be around for another five years. Limousine operators, taxi drivers and rental car companies complained that the airport's agreement Wednesday with Disney has caused them to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in business.

[FDOT: Truck Involved In Fatal Toll Booth Wreck Had Multiple Violations](#)

03/16/2006 © Miami-WPLG (ABC)

A report by the Florida Department of Transportation indicates that the dump truck that crushed a car at a toll plaza, killing two men inside, should not have been on the road at the time. The FDOT report released Wednesday states that the four-axle Kenworth truck had 19 violations, seven of which would have placed the vehicle out of service under the North American Standard Out-Of-Service criteria.

WEDNESDAY, 3/15/06

[Kerry to put hold on Bush pick for post](#)

03/15/2006 © Miami Herald

WASHINGTON - Former presidential candidate John Kerry said Tuesday he will prevent the former head of Boston's \$14.6 billion Big Dig, Richard Capka, from becoming head of the Federal Highway Administration.

[GROWTH: Shaping the future](#)

03/15/2006 © Florida Times-Union

At Jacksonville's current pace of growth, new homes in subdivisions could be extinct in 25 years or less. In fact, the city could be built out. So why care now? Because what the

city does -- or doesn't do -- about the trend will have a major impact on the quality of life in Jacksonville. That view is one of the major findings of Mayor John Peyton's Growth Management Task Force, which has been studying city growth issues for months. The task force is expected to present its findings and recommendations to the mayor next month.

[Pinellas OKs Rise In Gas Tax](#)

03/15/2006 © Tampa Tribune

CLEARWATER - Pinellas County motorists will pay an extra penny per gallon at the pump to help ease congestion in the state's most densely developed county, commissioners decided Tuesday. The increase in the county's local-option gas tax from 6 cents to 7 cents per gallon was approved 6-1, with Commissioner Bob Stewart dissenting.

[Clay County Commission Supports Southern Route For New River Crossing](#)

03/15/2006 © Jacksonville-WJXT (CBS)

GREEN COVE SPRINGS, Fla. -- The Clay County Commission voted unanimously Tuesday to support a southern route for a new bridge crossing the St. Johns River. The St. Johns County Commission will vote next week on where they would like the bridge to cross. The proposed routes for a new river crossing between fast-growing Clay and St. Johns counties have stirred up debate among local leaders.

[Clearwater approves traffic agreement with county](#)

03/15/2006 © Clearwater Citizen

It was all smiles at the March 2 City Council meeting as city and county officials agreed to enter into an interlocal agreement to work together on Clearwater's portion of a countywide system of smart traffic signals. The system, called Advanced Traffic Management System/Intelligent Transportation System, or ITS for short, will be applied to 400 of the 750 traffic signals in Pinellas County, including 145 in Clearwater.

[City holds off on bridge referendum](#)

03/15/2006 © Northwest Florida Daily News

FORT WALTON BEACH — The City Council Tuesday night put off taking action to seek a non-binding vote on a proposed toll bridge from Fort Walton Beach to Okaloosa Island. On Councilman Mike Minich's suggestion, the council voted unanimously to indefinitely postpone a request for the Okaloosa County Commission to put a bridge referendum on the ballot this fall.

[Group opposes Colonial Blvd. Expressway](#)

03/15/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press

A local watchdog group that monitors growth is protesting a road project intended to relieve one of Lee County's busiest roads. David Urich, president of the Responsible Growth Management Coalition, wrote a letter to the county, Fort Myers and Cape Coral, pleading with them to oppose an elevated, four-lane expressway over most of Colonial Boulevard.

TUESDAY, 3/14/06

[Lee adds 10 road projects](#)

03/14/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press

A dramatic increase in estimated road money will advance two projects and add 10 others to Lee County's 10-year road plan, which was released Monday. Early county projections on road impact fees for the 2006-07 fiscal year estimated that growth would produce \$28 million. The report that Dave Loveland, a Lee DOT transportation manager, finished Monday pushes that to \$40.9 million, a 46 percent jump.

[Titusville council looks at 1-cent tax](#)

03/14/2006 © Florida Today

TITUSVILLE - The city council is expected to vote tonight on whether to lend its support to Brevard County's proposed penny sales tax. Over five years, it would bring Titusville almost \$14 million. It would also give the county \$350 million to spend on roadwork throughout the county.

[Price tag for proposed I-75 to airport connector expected to rise sharply](#)

03/14/2006 © Bonita Daily News

The estimated price of a road that will take drivers directly from Interstate 75 to Southwest Florida International Airport is about to increase. It's been less than a year since officials calculated that the road would cost \$87 million to build, but in Southwest Florida, a lot can change in a few months.

[Don't raise driving age](#)

03/14/2006 © Orlando Sentinel

Our position: Experience, not age, is key to having kids drive safely. It's a tragedy any time a young driver gets hurt or killed in a car crash. Yet there is no cause for Florida lawmakers to overreact by supporting a proposal to raise the minimum age for a driver's license in this state to 17.

[Gondolas could be the ticket to the Beach](#)

03/14/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press

A Cape Coral real estate agent wants to build gondolas that would carry as many as 1,600 people an hour between Fort Myers Beach and the mainland. Dave Simms is calling the air transportation system a "world-class ecotour attraction" that would take people nearly 200 feet high and give them breathtaking views.

[Traffic team to address trucker problem](#)

03/14/2006 © Clewiston News

MOORE HAVEN "We don't have any problems with cars. They are always very careful, but if we don't do something about these trucks, someone is going to get killed," were the sentiments of the Glades County school bus drivers who attended the Glades County Community Traffic Safety Team meeting March 2.

[Contested road projects come to a head](#)

03/14/2006 © Naples Daily News

All road controversies lead to the Collier County Commission chambers today, with an Immokalee Road contractor hiring and a Golden Gate Estates road extension both slated for debate.

MONDAY, 3/13/06

[For a quicker commute](#)

03/13/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

Pinellas County residents' main quality-of-life complaint is traffic congestion. Tuesday, the County Commission can begin to do something about it. With five affirmative votes, the commission can raise the local gas tax by an additional penny per gallon and use the revenue to modernize traffic signals on the busiest streets throughout the county.

[Jeb's Legacy](#)

03/13/2006 © Florida Trend

Turnpike Enterprise - Early in his administration, Bush considered whether to sell Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, the authority that operates toll roads in the state. He made it a quasi-autonomous arm of the state Department of Transportation instead, and the authority, free of many bureaucratic restrictions, has become one of the most entrepreneurial and effective parts of state government.

[GOP hopefuls discuss the issues](#)

03/13/2006 © Leesburg Daily Commercial

A Who's Who of Lake County Republicans gathered at the Savannah Center in The Villages Saturday night to meet the two GOP candidates vying to be the next governor of Florida. Questions focusing largely on current issues the state is having with the school system, specifically about vouchers. Gallagher and Crist also discussed traffic Saturday night.

[A plan for growth](#)

03/13/2006 © Gainesville Sun

I am writing in response to recent articles and statements regarding the increasing road congestion. What amazes me is the notion that narrowing roads would control congestion by increasing bike ridership and bus usage. As most of the morning and afternoon traffic is from the working population, this assumption is absolutely absurd and will only cause additional frustration with increased travel time.

[Port Manatee grows as it finds niche in lumber](#)

03/13/2006 © Gainesville Sun

Lumber is king at Port Manatee. Stacks of wood are everywhere, including parking lots used for overflow draped in tarps. Massive warehouses hold 1.2 million pieces of plywood, enough to build thousands of homes. Without much fanfare, the port has become the largest importer of plywood and wood fencing in the Southeast.

Mooo-ving new roads, unfair fees for trees and other O'pinions

03/13/2006 © Pensacola News Journal

Better roads? In Escambia County? Maybe. Commissioners are considering a plan to widen Perdido Key Drive, the Theo Baars Bridge, Sorrento Road and part of Blue Angel Parkway, which would help everyday motorists as well as those evacuating when hurricanes threaten. The commission could borrow about \$150 million for the project. It could be completed by 2011.

Facing traffic

03/13/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Sarasota needs to invest in transportation alternatives - In the realm of transportation solutions, wishful thinking doesn't cut it, traffic planners warned Sarasota's city commissioners last week. The commission, in a wide-ranging discussion of roadway needs in the northern sector of the city, raised some interesting concepts -- including the hope of someday turning a rail corridor into a busway or bike path.

***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