



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

Quote of the Week:

"Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance." - Samuel Johnson

FRIDAY, 3/31/06

[The Future](#)

03/31/06 - Sun-Sentinel

ISSUE: Report sees region at a crossroads - "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot," Joni Mitchell once sang. She didn't know it then, but she could have been talking about South Florida. In a new report, the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University says the region is at a crossroads. Decisions made now are likely to determine whether South Florida becomes a "promised land," a "devastated wasteland," or something in between.

[We need less dithering and more work on transportation](#)

03/31/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

Any local candidate who can't engage in a meaningful discussion about improving transportation and mass transit doesn't deserve your vote this year. Let's be clear. No longer should we accept the standard cliches that have passed for policy: Traffic isn't that bad here compared with other cities. We're widening Interstate 4. Some day we'll get light rail. Please, stop. When it comes to improving transportation, we need someone who presents ideas with vision and conviction.

[Others guzzle our gas taxes](#)

03/31/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Area drivers pay for road work in other parts of the state, a study finds - Every time they buy gas or renew their car tags, drivers in Sarasota, Manatee and Charlotte counties are heavily subsidizing road and bridge projects elsewhere in Florida.

[Drivers resigned to expensive gas](#)

03/31/06 – Palm Beach Post

Despite jump of 29 cents, many local motorists are still driving just as much - Gasoline prices in Florida have risen 29 cents a gallon over the past month. Yeah? So what else is new? While paying more than \$2.60 a gallon for regular is not much fun, at least it's not the \$3 a gallon that followed Hurricane Katrina last year. And that's what's happened to consumers, a AAA spokesman said. They've learned to live with it.

[News-Press: Range of development may get relaxed limits](#)

03/31/06 – Ft. Myers News-Press

A year after putting sharper teeth in Florida's growth-management law, lawmakers are advancing far-less-heralded plans to smooth the path for developers to erect new high-rises, factories and marinas. Among the proposals advancing are efforts to weaken or kill some state review of expansions at hotels, condos, mining operations, hospitals and marinas.

[Expert: Roads for center would cost plenty](#)

03/31/06 – Orlando Sentinel

Constructing the road network needed for the proposed Southwest Activity Center could cost as much as \$245 million, a transportation consultant said Thursday night at a public meeting Volusia County officials called to discuss the project. At the meeting, Bill Oliver said the activity center would create about 181,000 trips a day on area roads, which is roughly equal to the number of trips in downtown Tampa.

[Tri-Rail now in double-track delight](#)

03/31/2006 © Boca Raton News

Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce President Troy McLellan has said Tri-Rail will be an integral part of the city's action plan to insure recruitment and retention of current and future employees. And if you get within 100 yards of County Commissioner Jeff Koons you'll hear the same thing - but including the entire length of the commuter rail line's 71-mile corridor.

THURSDAY, 3/30/06

[Raise Skyway toll](#)

03/30/2006 © Bradenton Herald

Extra funds could ease local congestion - How can Manatee County pay for the road needs that become greater with each passing day as more people move here permanently and more come as tourists to visit? Manatee County commissioners hopefully will provide some direction in that quest next week by approving a 5-cents-per-gallon increase in the local gas tax. There is another way to generate revenue for S.R. 64 and other local projects: Raise the toll on the Sunshine Skyway. FDOT plans a study to determine whether an increase is justified.

[MPO continues to push for road money](#)

03/30/2006 © North Port Sun Herald

A billion here and a billion there -- and we're talking real money. Members of the Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Organization want to know why their representatives in the state Legislature are reluctant to share a piece of the extra revenue to fully fund road projects, especially when there are billions left over. The latest estimate puts the excess revenue at \$4.2 billion. MPO members want \$1 billion to making the Florida Department of Transportation's Five-Year Work Program budget whole again.

[OIA to pour billions into expansion](#)

03/30/2006 © Florida Today

To accommodate a continually growing flying public, the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority plans to spend \$3 billion to \$5 billion in capital improvements to Orlando

International Airport by 2020. The latest addition to those plans was announced Wednesday: a \$150 million Intermodal Transportation Center that can handle buses and trains dropping off airport passengers.

[Florida to receive \\$480 in transportation funds for hurricane clean-up](#)

03/30/2006 © Gainesville Sun

Florida will receive \$480 million in federal transportation funds to reimburse the state for repairs made after last year's Hurricanes Rita and Wilma, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta announced Wednesday. Earlier this year the Transportation Department provided \$42.8 million to Florida for repairs made after Hurricane Katrina.

[Expressway Authority's loan request sparks review](#)

03/30/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

Senate President Tom Lee has initiated a financial review of the agency building the elevated commuter lanes on the Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway to figure out if it has the money to finish the job. Word in the Capitol has been that the project could require a major bailout, though officials with the Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority say that's not true.

[Growth group meets to plan future rush](#)

03/30/2006 © Florida Today

Central Florida leaders gathered in Orlando on Wednesday to begin a process to extinguish turf wars between counties and find ways to work together on how best to absorb an estimated 4 million more residents in the years ahead. "We are at a critical crossroads," said Teresa Jacobs, chairwoman of an organization called Central Florida Smart Growth Alliance.

[Missouri traffic planners think left side is all right](#)

03/30/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

Traffic engineers trying to ease congestion and reduce accidents in Kansas City have come up with an audacious idea for this side of the Atlantic: making people drive on the left side of the road. Missouri Transportation Department officials considered a number of plans for the downtown Front Street approach to Interstate 435. But the one they settled on appears to be a national first. It involves briefly crisscrossing lanes and putting drivers on the left.

WEDNESDAY, 3/29/06

[Let voters decide](#)

03/29/2006 © Orlando Sentinel

Our position: Lawmakers should allow locals to raise the rental-car surcharge. March 29, 2006 A fair, common-sense approach to attack Florida's transportation problems with a modest increase in rental-car fees has survived its first tests in the Legislature.

[Two panels wince and okay tax proposal](#)

03/29/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

Over several firms' protests, Senate and House committees advance a bill to allow

counties to put a \$2-a-day tax on car rentals. - It's not every day that one of the Senate's most conservative Republicans gets accused of raising taxes. Sen. Daniel Webster of Winter Garden heard the charge over his bill, which sailed through its first committee Tuesday, that would allow counties to tax rental cars \$2 a day. The money would go toward local transportation projects.

[Rising prices kill one paving project, delay another](#)

03/29/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

Prices for cement, steel and oil continue to increase, driving up the costs of road construction and threatening resident-driven projects. - Unforeseen cost increases killed one county paving project Tuesday and delayed another. Three other projects will go forward despite cost increases of up to 76 percent. The five small paving projects - most less than a mile in length - affect just a handful of rural property owners, but swiftly rising prices have jeopardized road programs throughout the area.

[Counties meet on growth](#)

03/29/2006 © Daytona Beach News-Journal

In 1950, 400,000 people lived in Central Florida. The 3.5 million of us living here today will have to make room for 4 million more by 2050. Where to put all the condos we'll need to live in, roads we'll need to travel on and stores we'll need to shop in will be discussed at a forum today at the Hyatt Regency at Orlando International Airport that kicks off a 15-month process involving seven counties.

[Volusia to discuss toll road](#)

03/29/2006 © Daytona Beach News-Journal

SOUTH DAYTONA -- The Volusia County Council will have the final say next week over whether a private expressway authority studies the idea of building a toll road between Interstate 95 and Seminole County.

[Red light-running group seeks support](#)

03/29/2006 © Englewood Sun Herald

SARASOTA -- A bill floating around the Statehouse in Tallahassee seeks to make cameras a legal way to cite people for running red lights. House Bill 259, "The Mark Wandall Traffic Safety Act," is being promoted by state Rep. Ron Reagan and needs more local support, said Neil Spiritas of the STOP Red Light Running! Coalition of Florida.

[State study supports Manatee River bridge](#)

03/29/2006 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune

The project to link Upper Manatee River Road and Fort Hamer Road by a four-lane bridge was met with fierce opposition in 2004. So much dissent arose that the Federal Highway Administration asked the state to conduct a second, more detailed study of its impact. But that study will hold bad news for opponents of the \$93 million project. A draft of the study supports the earlier conclusion that the new bridge should be built just east of Fort Hamer Park.

TUESDAY, 3/28/06

[WSVN-TV - Florida Senate targets traffic violators, both fast and slow](#)

03/28/2006 © Miami-WSVN (FOX)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) -- The Florida Senate is targeting slow and fast highway drivers. One bill increases fines and points on the driver's license if you're caught going 30 miles-an-hour above the speed limit. Another measure aims to reduce road rage by forcing slower drivers to stay out of the fast lanes on Florida's highways.

[GROWTH MANAGEMENT: On the right track](#)

03/28/2006 © Florida Times-Union

About one year ago, a special City Council committee set out to put its arms around the octopus known as "fair share." This was the method used to allow developments when local roads are congested. Once a road is officially failing, then new developments have to pay a fee.

[Speed limit won't change](#)

03/28/2006 © Bradenton Herald

MANATEE - Drivers routinely break the law on Interstate 75, but not by enough to warrant lowering the highway's speed limit, state transportation officials said Monday. A recent speed study found southbound I-75 traffic averaged 70.6 mph on a 148-mile stretch between northern Manatee County and southeastern Collier County, the Florida Department of Transportation said.

[Letters to the editor](#)

03/28/2006 © Bradenton Herald

Trolley proves transit can work - Who would have thought that the county would be worried that there would ever be too many riders in one day on the Island Trolley? Indeed, that has happened.

[Okeechobee Boulevard widening might start in '07](#)

03/28/2006 © Palm Beach Post

Widening a 3.5-mile section of Okeechobee Boulevard west of Florida's Turnpike is the latest casualty of the soaring costs of road construction, sending Palm Beach County officials in search of an additional \$20 million to begin the work.

[Metro Parkway extension put on hold](#)

03/28/2006 © Ft. Myers-WBBH (NBC)

LEE COUNTY: Metro Parkway was supposed to be extended all the way from Six Mile Cypress to Alico Road and US 41. However, it seems the project has come to a halt but the Department of Transportation explained that the extension is still a top priority. The DOT budgeted \$38 million for the extension but the lowest bid was about still about \$20million more.

[New road access to Disney to open](#)

03/28/2006 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

Western Way, the new rear entrance to Walt Disney World from the new Western

Beltway expressway, is set to open April 4. The four-lane, divided boulevard will give Disney a western entrance for the first time, allowing tourists coming in via Interstate 75 to enter Central Florida on Florida's Turnpike and the Western Beltway (State Road 429), then enter Disney without ever entering Orlando or driving on Interstate 4.

MONDAY, 3/27/06

[Governor: Handling growth depends on regionalism](#)

03/27/2006 © South Florida Business Journal

Gov. Jeb Bush and four of his administration's top officials stressed that regional cooperation and long-term planning will be the key to managing the state's growth - and allowing more large development projects. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) gathered Bush and the heads of Florida's Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development in Miami for the March 17 Symposium on Regional Cooperation. They told the group of developers, business people and public officials that the state is going to be tougher than ever in making projects stick to infrastructure and environmental guidelines.

[Lynx taking hydrogen-fueled vehicles for a test spin](#)

03/27/2006 © Orlando Business Journal

Central Florida's regional transportation authority is taking a stab at cleaner transportation, entering into an experiment to add four hydrogen-fueled vehicles to a stable of mostly diesel buses. The demonstration project, which will kick off sometime this summer or early fall, is a joint effort among Lynx, Orlando International Airport and Orange County.

[PAC fighting proposed 1-cent road tax](#)

03/27/2006 © Ocala Star Banner

Group says too much money will be raised, sprawl will follow. - A new political action committee hopes its cause will have a positive effect on the future of Marion County. And to do that, Citizens Against Urban Sprawl, or CAUS, has organized as a political action committee of the Shady-Greenway Conservation Alliance to defeat the proposed 1-cent sales tax for new roads.

[Finish Crosstown project first](#)

03/27/2006 © St. Petersburg Times

Is there any doubt what the priority should be for an agency whose unfinished elevated roadway hangs over downtown Tampa? The Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority needs to put that project to bed and restore its credibility before biting off another ambitious, expensive, controversial challenge. State lawmakers are getting mixed signals about the authority's Crosstown Expressway project.

[Editorial: Interstate 75](#)

03/27/2006 © Marco Island News

Traffic control still isn't the same as traffic relief - As if Southwest Florida needed any more proof it is becoming truly a metropolitan area, plans for a traffic control station

along Interstate 75 are just that. The Florida Department of Transportation is gearing up for the \$34.5 million project to coincide with the expansion of I-75 in Lee and Collier counties.

[Lee doesn't need more roads; it needs smart growth](#)

03/27/2006 © Ft. Myers News-Press

Only planning that reduces the need for so many trips can prevent Lee County drivers from spending hours in gridlock. There is a management strategy in Japanese industry that roughly translates "Go to the Source." Its underlying premise is that we often spend far too much time inventing ever more clever and elaborate solutions and far too little time trying to understand the core problem. Our traffic woes are a case in point.

[Thaxton warns of clogged roads everywhere](#)

03/27/2006 © North Port Sun Herald

Later apologizes for comparing area to Fort Lauderdale - The dangers of uncontrolled growth are many and the quicksand the county commissioners must wade through can be treacherous. With that in mind, the Sarasota commissioners got into a heated discussion this week about how best to deal with growth, specifically how to pay for the miles and miles of roads needed to handle a ballooning population.

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