



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

Quote of the Week: **"A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort."** -*Charlie Daniels*

MONDAY, 6/13/05

[Crunch Time Nears on Transportation Legislation](#)

(The Washington Post - Monday, June 13, 2005)

Congress is trying to wrap up a long-overdue transportation bill, and one good omen is that patience on Capitol Hill appears to be running out. "I just want to get it all over with," Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) said as final negotiations began Thursday.

[Commuters upset -- cheap rides are over](#)

(06/13/2005 © Miami Herald)

The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority dodged a death blow during the last legislative session in Tallahassee. But judging from the one-sided insurrection last week at the Kendale Homeowners Association, the toll-road authority's troubles are far from over. The Kendale homeowners are fuming about systemwide toll increases scheduled for July 3.

[Local commuter rail: Is it full steam ahead?](#)

(06/13/2005 © Orlando Business Journal)

ORLANDO -- After more than two decades of discussion, commuter rail in Central Florida finally may be heading down the right track. And it may happen by 2009. "The stars are sort of aligning," says Tawny Olore, the Florida Department of Transportation's commuter rail project manager. In March, U.S. Rep. John Mica, R-Winter Park, secured \$8.9 million in federal funding for rail stations and supporting infrastructure for the 62-mile, 15-stop system.

[Report: Transport not serving disabled](#)

(06/13/2005 © Bradenton Herald)

WASHINGTON - Disabled people who need to use public trains or buses are not being well served despite billions of dollars spent to improve transportation for the handicapped, government advisers report. Buses leave disabled commuters waiting at stops or may be ill-equipped to handle wheelchairs, the National Council on Disability said in a report being released Monday.

[Volusia needs commuter rail funds fast](#)

(06/13/2005 © Daytona Beach News-Journal)

Volusia County's share to build a \$473.5 million commuter rail system between here and downtown Orlando is \$11.7 million. Volusia County Chairman Frank Bruno said paying up is the "right and responsible thing." However, should the County Council

agree this summer, \$1.5 million is due by December and \$10.2 million is due in September 2006.

[Nassau considers gas tax increase](#)

(06/13/2005 © Florida Times-Union)

Despite an estimated \$7 million windfall from property taxes this year, Nassau County officials are moving ahead with plans to increase the county's gasoline tax by 5 cents per gallon, which could bring in \$1.2 million more in annual revenue.

[Change on the horizon](#)

(06/13/2005 © Orlando Business Journal)

Roger Neiswender knows firsthand the importance of a good transportation network for a city and its residents. "When I was a kid, my family was dependent on the bus system in downtown Birmingham, Ala.," says Neiswender. That's why Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer recently chose Neiswender -- a veteran of Central Florida's transportation industry -- to head up the city's newly created transportation department.

TUESDAY, 6/14/05

[Nassau Commission adopts gas tax increase](#)

(06/14/2005 © Florida Times-Union)

FERNANDINA BEACH -- The Nassau County Commission voted in favor of a 5-cents-per-gallon gas tax increase Monday night during a sometimes heated meeting with residents. The commission voted 4-1 for the increase, which will be take effect Jan. 1.

[Approve sales-tax ballot question](#)

(06/14/2005 © Miami Herald)

Broward County can't pave its way out of growing traffic congestion. Even if it were practical, there isn't enough land to build more roads to accommodate the increasing number of cars as Broward's eastern cities approve more high-density projects and the county itself nears build-out. What can help would be to create a mass-transit network efficient enough to attract high ridership.

[HNTB lands \\$1.9M design contract at OIA](#)

(06/14/2005 © Orlando Business Journal)

The Florida Department of Transportation District 5 has awarded HNTB Corp.'s Orlando office the \$1.9 million design of the new multimodal facility at Orlando International Airport. According to Tawny Olore, a project manager with FDOT, the new facility will house light-rail and high-speed rail platforms, as well as provide connections to OIA's airside terminals.

[Speed limit cushion not so cushy](#)

(06/14/2005 © Lake City Reporter)

We always thought it was an urban legend - well, maybe more of a rural legend - that out on the highway the police would give you a cushion of so many miles per hour above the speed limit before writing you a ticket. Depending who was telling the story, the cushion was 5 mph or 10 percent of the speed limit or some such. Well, it turns out that there is a cushion, generally about 10 mph.

[New Bus Route, Road Improvements Planned](#)

(06/14/2005 © Lakeland Ledger)

New Bus Route, Road Improvements Planned Transit amenities are intended to help a new upscale mall.

WEDNESDAY, 6/15/05

[Penny tax hike plan in slow lane](#)

(06/15/2005 © Miami Herald)

A plan to put a penny transportation sales tax question on the 2006 ballot moved forward Tuesday, despite reservations by county commissioners who fear the list of improvements the tax would pay for isn't detailed enough. Broward County commissioners backed away from allowing the county administrator to hire consultants to persuade voters to support the tax.

[St. Johns, Clay fret beltway route](#)

(06/15/2005 © Florida Times-Union)

Charging tolls along a proposed outer beltway through their back yard didn't prompt criticism from elected officials and community leaders in St. Johns and Clay counties Tuesday, after they heard a report from Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. Their main concern continues to be the question of where to build the beltway in the first place.

[Oil prices cause paving costs to rise](#)

(06/15/2005 © Bradenton Herald)

CABOT, Vt. - Warning to motorists this summer: Rough road ahead. From New England - where the punishing winters leave roads rutted, cracked and riddled with potholes in the spring - to the Deep South, repaving projects are being canceled or postponed because of the rising price of oil, which is used to make asphalt as well as diesel for dump trucks, steamrollers and other heavy equipment.

[County concedes on runway](#)

(06/15/2005 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

Faced with the worst travel delays in the nation, Broward County commissioners agreed Tuesday to meet federal aviation administrators halfway in expanding the use of secondary runways at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

[Legislator pushes public input on HOV-lane hours](#)

(06/15/2005 © Palm Beach Post)

A state lawmaker wants to postpone extending the car-pool hours on Interstate 95 until commuters can weigh in on the issue. "The public is not sold on the fact that it's a good thing," Sen. Ron Klein, D-Delray Beach, said Tuesday. The state Department of Transportation plans to double the hours of the left-lane travel restrictions between Boynton Beach and Miami beginning July 1.

[Study shows transportation costing South Florida families more](#)

(06/15/2005 © Palm Beach Post)

Debbie Hodge was on the verge of quitting her job at a Pompano Beach housing company because it was costing \$110 a week to drive from West Palm Beach in her 1995 Jaguar. Her boss suggested she give Tri-Rail a try, and Hodge has no regrets.

She saves nearly \$400 a month and met her fiance, Mike Touchette, on the train. She's using the extra money to fix up her home and plan her wedding.

[6/15: Letters to the Editor](#)

(06/15/2005 © Orlando Sentinel)

Too good to pass up - One key to smart growth in Central Florida is a transit plan to help alleviate congestion on our roads and highways and to get people to and from the key areas of the region. But now we hear that Orange County Mayor Rich Crotty has doubts about the details and costs of the commuter-rail project. What is he talking about?

THURSDAY, 6/16/05

[Crist finds no antitrust violations by oil companies](#)

(06/16/2005 © Bradenton Herald)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - An exhaustive study into gasoline prices in Florida produced no evidence of antitrust violations, Attorney General Charlie Crist said Wednesday, but he said the industry puts shareholders' profits ahead of the interest of customers at the pump.

[New rules of the road](#)

(06/16/2005 © Gainesville Sun)

Changes to Florida traffic laws will require some slow pokes to speed up, red-light runners to pay up, kids to buckle up and boom-boxers to stop cranking it up. During its 2005 session, the Florida Legislature passed a raft of revisions to statutes governing motor vehicles and driving. Most of the changes go into effect July 1.

[Lawmakers Fund Roads But Pass on Class Size](#)

(06/16/2005 © Lakeland Ledger)

CHAMPIONSGATE -- The growth in Four Corners has put increasing pressure on state lawmakers to help fund new schools and transportation improvements needed in the region, said state Rep. John R. Stargel, R-Lakeland. "In the area of growth management, we all wanted to make sure something happened," said Stargel, who represents the Polk County side of Four Corners.

[County to study runway extension](#)

(06/16/2005 © Citrus County Chronicle)

Citrus County commissioners on Tuesday hired a consultant to study the potential environmental impacts of extending the Inverness Airport runway. The \$98,700 contract went to Hoyle, Tanner & Associates to collect data on noise and social impacts, impacts on historical facilities, water quality and the physical environment.

[Features add to cost of bridges](#)

(06/16/2005 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

Dressing up two bridges on north Del Prado Boulevard will add 10 percent to 15 percent to the cost, which could range between \$1 million and \$2 million per span, a consultant told a City Council committee on Wednesday. The bridges are part of a larger, \$25 million plan to widen Del Prado Boulevard to six lanes between Pine Island Road and Kismet Parkway.

[Amtrak chief lashes out at 'ideologues' trying to cut funding](#)

(06/16/2005 © Tallahassee Democrat)

WASHINGTON - (KRT) - Amtrak President David Gunn on Wednesday blasted Republican plans to slash funding for the rail system, saying they would create chaos on the Northeast Corridor and were designed by "policy wonks and politicians" with no knowledge of how to run a railroad.

[U.S. to install airport puffer machines](#)

(06/16/2005 © Tallahassee Democrat)

WASHINGTON - Security checks where travelers are patted down will end for many people at 10 more airports by summer's end, the government said Wednesday. Passengers will see "puffer" machines that can detect explosives residue when people walk through. Airport screeners will not have to pat down people to make sure they are not carrying hidden bombs.

FRIDAY, 6/17/05

[Outer beltway cost depends on bridge location, FDOT says](#)

(06/17/2005 © Florida Times-Union)

An outer beltway connecting Clay and St. Johns counties could cost as much as \$464 million and ultimately depends on where the Florida Department of Transportation chooses to build a new bridge across the St. Johns River.

[Congestion, funding problems, poll says](#)

(06/17/2005 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

A survey conducted in April on the future transit needs along the Treasure Coast found that residents are concerned with congestion, but less than one-in-three were willing to pay more for the needed infrastructure. The numbers caught the attention of Martin County officials.

[DOT makes U-turn on HOV hours](#)

(06/17/2005 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

Screech! Forget everything you've seen or heard about the expanded HOV hours on Interstate 95. The hours are not changing -- for now. Two days after Sen. Ron Klein, D-Boca Raton, complained about the changes, the Florida Department of Transportation threw itself in reverse Thursday and postponed the expanded hours for the high occupancy vehicle lanes. They were to go into effect July 1.

[DOT forbids tolls on existing metro highway lanes](#)

(06/17/2005 © Tallahassee Democrat)

ATLANTA - Private groups hoping to partner with the state on projects for metro Atlanta highways will not be allowed to charge tolls on existing highway lanes in the area, the state Transportation Board said Thursday. The new policy is in response to public outcry and will force private road builders to re-evaluate proposals to use tolls to fund projects.

[Evacuation plan: Make 'pike one way -- but not here](#)

(06/17/2005 © Miami Herald)

If a Category 4 or stronger storm is bearing down on South Florida, motorists can

escape north by driving on the southbound lanes of Florida's Turnpike -- but not until they reach Fort Pierce. Florida transportation leaders gathered Thursday at the Turnpike Operations Center near Pompano Beach to talk about "contra-flow" -- the act of allowing residents to drive one way on all lanes.

[Where special interests rule](#)

(06/17/2005 © Orlando Sentinel)

Our position: A bill reducing conflicts in a transit commission deserves the governor's signature. As promised, Florida lawmakers moved decisively this year to curtail the influence of special interests on a state commission that oversees transportation services for the poor and disabled. Lawmakers -- particularly those from Central Florida, Jacksonville and Miami-Dade -- were outraged last year when the little known Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged unilaterally slashed funding in those areas with little public input.

[TPO OKs route](#)

(06/17/2005 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

Proposed toll road that would connect Mid-Bay Bridge to State Road 85 moves to Eglin Air Force Base officials for their review. NICEVILLE — The Mid-Bay Bridge Authority will likely present its preliminary plan for a bypass to Eglin Air Force Base officials later this summer after local transportation planners OK'd a preferred corridor Thursday. The Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization approved corridor "C," the bridge panel's top option to take motorists from the north end of the bridge to State Road 85 at the northern end of Niceville.