



NEWS CLIPS

Your "Voice" for Transportation!

MONDAY, 8/2/04

Cheaper gas? Few notice it

(08/02/2004 © Florida Times-Union)

A month long gas tax holiday began somewhat quietly Sunday, with consumers pleased but far from euphoric at the thought of saving 8 cents per gallon in August.

Tax break relieves the pain of high prices at gas pumps

(08/02/2004 © Miami Herald)

Most gas stations throughout Miami-Dade and Broward dropped prices Sunday to reflect an 8-cent cut in state taxes passed by Florida lawmakers in the spring -- even if consumers, for the most part, barely noticed.

Tow crews dedicated to keeping road open

(08/02/2004 © Miami Herald)

There's no more avid supporter of Florida's "open roads" program than Drew Zuccala. A couple of years ago, the Boynton Beach towing operator attended meetings around the state with police and transportation officials to help devise guidelines to clear most lane-blocking crashes within 90 minutes.

Naples-area gas customers revel in, criticize gas price tax-cut

(08/02/2004 © Naples Daily News)

It was a welcomed relief to some, an ineffective effort to others. Some customers who filled their gas tanks at Naples gas stations Sunday were the unknowing benefactors of the first day of the Florida Motor Fuel Tax Relief Act of 2004, Florida's first-ever gasoline tax cut.

Voters to face 8 ballot measures on Election Day

(08/01/2004 © Lakeland Ledger)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. Wages, gambling, medical malpractice, teen abortions and high-speed rail: These are the topics waiting for Floridians on Election Day. The Nov. 2 ballot will have eight proposed changes to the state constitution.

TUESDAY, 8/3/04

Gas Tax Break Off to Shaky Start

(08/03/2004 © Lakeland Ledger)

The Associated Press TALLAHASSEE -- The opening days of Florida's monthlong gasoline tax break were accompanied by complaints that the 8-cent-per-gallon cut wasn't being passed on to motorists, a state official said Monday.

Editorial: Gas tax break

(08/03/2004 © Naples Daily News)

Motorists awoke Sunday to a surprise — an overnight 8-cent drop in the price of a gallon of gas. It wasn't a dream. Or Christmas. Sunday marked the start of August — a month declared a no-gas-tax zone, just like the no-back-to-school-tax zone two weeks before it, by the Florida Legislature. Such a deal.

Loan to pave way for building trails

(08/03/2004 © Daytona Beach News-Journal)

DELAND -- Volusia County residents won't have to wait until the moon is colonized to get a network of walking and biking trails. The County Council gave preliminary approval Monday to a plan to borrow \$11.2 million and move up construction of one-fourth of the 120-mile project -- which, at its current pace, would have taken until 2259 to complete.

CSX, rail industry struggle to keep up with record loads

(08/03/2004 © Florida Times-Union)

What should be a spectacular time for the nation's biggest railroads has turned out to be anything but, as record-high freight volumes confront an industry without enough train crews and locomotives to get the job done. The resulting congestion and delays have meant lost business and frustrated customers.

Gulf Breeze discusses red light videotaping

(08/03/2004 © Pensacola News Journal)

The City of Gulf Breeze wants to continue exploring the idea of using video equipment to enforce traffic light violations. The City Council voted unanimously Monday night to have staff study the issue and develop an implementation plan.

Gas Tax Holiday Draws Complaints

(08/03/2004 © Tampa Tribune)

TALLAHASSEE - For some motorists, the big savings they were expecting this weekend at the gas pump never came. Dozens of complaints have been made to the Florida Attorney General's Office, which is responsible for making sure that a monthlong, 8-cent a gallon reduction in the state's gas tax that began Sunday is passed on to consumers. The number of complaints had reached nearly 80 by Monday.

WEDNESDAY, 8/4/04

Beltway route plan hits bumpy road

(08/04/2004 © Florida Times-Union)

A growing Lake Asbury group is trying to derail southern beltway proposals that would disrupt the area's scenic neighborhoods. The long-range plan to build a highway through Clay County linking Interstate 10 in Jacksonville with I-95 in St. Johns County across the St. Johns River has the support of county and state transportation officials.

Court: Bullet Train Ballot Item Must Be Rewritten

(08/04/2004 © Lakeland Ledger)

TALLAHASSEE -- A November ballot paragraph that puts a price tag on Florida's high-

speed rail project must be rewritten because it goes too far in describing the financial impact, the state Supreme Court ruled Tuesday.

Safety board suggests cars carry black boxes

(08/04/2004 © Miami Herald)

WASHINGTON - The National Transportation Safety Board on Tuesday recommended for the first time that the federal government require passenger vehicles to be equipped with black boxes that record speed, seat belt use, braking and other factors.

Beach Drive bridge opens

(08/04/2004 © Northwest Florida Daily News)

PANAMA CITY The orange 'detour' signs in the vicinity of Johnson Bayou finally disappeared Tuesday afternoon. More than four months behind schedule, the Johnson Bayou Bridge reopened to through traffic, though the project is not finished.

More Airports Test Tracking of Foreigners

(08/03/2004 © Orlando Sentinel)

WASHINGTON -- The government's system for ensuring that foreign visitors leave the country when expected will be expanded to 11 more airports and two seaports, a Homeland Security Department official said Tuesday.

Bonds to speed up roads

(08/04/2004 © Orlando Sentinel)

DELAND -- Through the years, county officials have envisioned all sorts of new and better ways for drivers to get around Volusia County. But the plans haven't turned into asphalt fast enough for some officials and drivers. On Thursday, County Council members hope to speed up the pace by officially approving a plan to issue \$65.5 million in bonds for road construction.

Consumers lodge 184 gas pricing complaints

(08/04/2004 © Florida Today)

TALLAHASSEE -- Florida's 8-cent gas-tax holiday, and consumers' fears they're not getting it, led to 184 complaints filed with the state's attorney general by late Tuesday. But those complaints may be jumping the gun, before the full force of the month-long 8-cent reduction makes its way to the pump from wholesalers where the tax was reduced beginning Sunday.

THURSDAY, 8/5/04

Bullet train foes launch voter awareness drive

(08/05/2004 © Boca Raton News)

The movement to kill Florida's high-speed rail project has made its first stop – on the Nov. 2 election ballot.

Phase 2 of the effort – a voter awareness campaign – left the station Wednesday with bipartisan cargo on board.

Democratic Sen. Ron Klein joined Florida's Chief Financial Office Tom Gallagher, a

Republican, early in the day to begin whistle-stopping around the state, telling the electorate to vote “yes” on a ballot question that will eliminate the bullet train.

Bullet Train critic suggests alternatives

(08/05/2004 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel)

What could you do with the billions of dollars it would take to build a high-speed rail system? According to opponents of the proposed bullet train, you could pay the annual salaries for 44,700 Florida teachers, keep 82,200 Florida felons behind bars for a year or pave Interstate 4 with gold 19 times over.

\$5 million grant boosts airport road project

(08/05/2004 © Ft. Myers News-Press)

A link between Interstate 75 and the new terminal at Southwest Florida International Airport got put on a faster track Wednesday. That’s when airport officials learned they’d landed a new, \$5 million state grant for a connector-road system.

Duval, Nassau land \$10M for road projects

(08/04/2004 © Jacksonville Business Journal)

The state has chosen 10 road projects in Duval and Nassau counties worth more than \$10 million to fund from a \$100 million appropriation from the legislature. A total of 36 Strategic Intermodal System projects will be funded around the state, part of Gov. Jeb Bush's directive to state agencies to focus on statewide and regional priorities.

Ramp will ease airport traffic

(08/05/2004 © Orlando Sentinel)

The busy highway interchange at State Road 436 and the Bee Line Expressway will get an \$18.5 million overhaul to make it easier for drivers to get in and out of Orlando International Airport, Gov. Jeb Bush announced Wednesday. Money for the project will come from a new \$102 million state fund set up to tackle congestion in and out of ports and terminals that serve as transportation hubs.

Bullet train opponents seek new strategies after setback

(08/05/2004 © Palm Beach Post)

Despite a slight setback by the Florida Supreme Court Tuesday, leaders of DErail the Bullet Train, including Florida Chief Financial Officer Tom Gallagher, gathered Wednesday at Veterans Park in suburban Boca Raton — the group's birthplace in 1996 — to promise supporters that this year's debate over the high-speed train will be a two-way affair.

Port of Palm Beach area included in roads project

(08/05/2004 © Palm Beach Post)

More than \$8 million to widen the main road into the Port of Palm Beach was included in a \$101.8 million state program announced Wednesday to improve connections to Florida's airports and seaports. Three projects in Palm Beach County were among 36 projects statewide.

State Helps Toll Road Plan

(08/05/2004 © Tampa Tribune)

TAMPA - A toll road intended to connect the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway to Interstate 4 got \$9 million in help from the state Wednesday. The money would help pay to design truck lanes for the proposed Crosstown Connector, one of 36 road projects identified by the state as priorities to help traffic near Florida's airports, seaports and terminals.

FRIDAY, 8/6/04

Fiscal Discipline Will Sustain Canadian Ties Without Bullet Train: By Jeb Bush

(08/06/2004 © Lakeland Ledger)

Whether it was an awkward attempt to be clever, or a sincere statement of belief, The Ledger's recent editorial about our trade mission to Canada ['A Visit from Jekyll and Hyde,' Sunday] merely put the paper's weak grasp of the most basic economic principles on display.

County OKs Massive Paving Project Awards \$2.9 Million Contract to C.W. Roberts Company

(08/05/2004 © Apalachicola Times)

After many months if not years of waiting, holding on to their financial resources until Apalachicola had completed its water and sewer rebuilding project, the Franklin County commissioners Tuesday morning moved ahead on a \$2.9 million project to repair and resurface roads throughout the entire county.

Volusia agrees to fund commuter rail study

(08/06/2004 © Daytona Beach News-Journal)

DELAND -- New and wider roads alone will not ease Central Florida's growing traffic congestion, Volusia County and transportation officials said Thursday. To create alternatives, Volusia County unanimously approved spending \$200,000 to help fund a \$4 million study of how a commuter rail on existing tracks would impact the environment.

Group asks county to consider Bonita overpass

(08/06/2004 © Naples Daily News)

Those teeth-gnashing trips trapped in traffic on U.S. 41 in Bonita Springs during congested winter months could become a pleasant turn onto an overpass. Southwest Florida Transportation Initiative, a group of developers and businesses, is asking Lee County's road planners to fast-track a study to build an overpass on U.S. 41 over Bonita Beach Road with connecting ramps.

Weary drivers pleased with gas tax rollback

(08/06/2004 © Palm Beach Post)

BOCA RATON - Area residents were glad to see lower prices at the gas pump this week, thanks to the state's tax holiday, but most said the 8-cent tax break won't leave them with a lot of extra cash.

State helping fund road work

(08/06/2004 © Pensacola News Journal)

The state has taken its first baby steps toward a direct-access interchange at Interstate 110 and Airport Boulevard, appropriating \$3.5 million to purchase right-of-way. That's just part of the \$17.7 million the Florida Department of Transportation estimates it will take to purchase property for the project and does not include the estimated \$20.9 million cost to construct the split-diamond interchange.

DOT, Builders Bridge Causeway Differences

(08/06/2004 © Tampa Tribune)

CLEARWATER - The Florida Department of Transportation and the builders of the replacement Memorial Causeway Bridge agreed to terms for the removal and replacement of the structure's four cracked support pillars Thursday. The plan is to erect the new columns before the broken ones are torn down, a reconstruction method that was not among the multitude of repair ideas bandied about by the DOT.