



# NEWS CLIPS

***Your "Voice" for Transportation!***

Quote of the Week:

**"We will always remember. We will always be proud.  
We will always be prepared, so we may always be free." - Ronald Reagan**

**MONDAY, 12/5/05**

## [Bumpy Roads Are Ahead for State Officials](#)

(12/05/2005 © Lakeland Ledger )

A couple of weeks ago, the Florida Department of Transportation District 1 headquarters in Bartow announced massive cuts in road projects in each of its 12 counties. Polk was hit hard with the Lakeland In-Town Bypass extension, the NorthSouth Route in South Lakeland, the widening of U.S. 17-92 through Lake Alfred and the State Road 559 realignment to Recker Highway in Auburndale all being postponed for more than five years. And some were almost ready for construction.

## [Beachline guardrails address flaw](#)

(12/05/2005 © Florida Today )

By January, new median guardrails on the Beachline Expressway will prevent the type of crossover accidents that cost six lives this year, officials say.

## [Magic bus rigged to control stop lights](#)

(12/05/2005 © Miami Herald )

Imagine a bus designed to operate like an express train, running from Aventura to downtown Miami, or from downtown to Florida's Turnpike on Flagler Street. The buses would travel in the same lanes as everyone else, but equipped with a bit of technological magic to speed the journey: the ability to extend a green light a tad longer, or even trigger a red light to turn green faster.

## [Good news: You can fly with your tools again](#)

(12/05/2005 © Miami Herald )

Last week, the Transportation Security Administration announced upcoming changes to its airport screening rules. Overall, the switch should make it a bit quicker to get through the screening process, though some changes could slow you down.

## [Wilma curtails airport traffic](#)

(12/05/2005 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel )

Fort Lauderdale airport traffic plunged by double digits in October for the first time since the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks. The winds of Hurricane Wilma reduced travel to the bustling airport by 17.5 percent, the first decline of any kind since September 2004, and the largest since the drop of 25.5 percent in September 2001.

[Q&A: Teresa Driskell, senior project engineer at Miami's PBS&J](#)

(12/05/2005 © Ft. Pierce Tribune )

Teresa Driskell oversees the Florida Department of Transportation's \$80 million widening project for State Road 60 between Interstate 95 and Florida's Turnpike. The senior project engineer for the engineering consulting firm PBS&J, of Miami, said motorists may soon see a difference. Work began in June 2002 on the first 11-mile segment west of I-95.

**TUESDAY, 12/6/05**

[Road to relief](#)

(12/06/2005 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune )

*Added gas tax would help reduce congestion, improve safety* - Although gas prices have fallen in recent weeks, many Manatee County residents are undoubtedly grimacing at a renewed proposal to raise the county's gas tax by a nickel a gallon. The reaction is understandable, but shortsighted. Few of us relish paying more taxes, particularly at the pump, but the alternative is less pleasant.

[Board Objects to DOT Cuts](#)

(12/06/2005 © Lakeland Ledger )

*Board Objects to DOT Cuts Resolution asks the agency to "honor its commitment" on road projects.* - LAKELAND -- The City Commission drew a line in the asphalt Monday, issuing a terse objection to road project cuts by the Florida Department of Transportation.

[Hurricane evacuation route on funding list](#)

(12/06/2005 © North Port Sun Herald )

*Transportation program brings aid to local roads* - The Florida Department of Transportation announced the list of local transportation projects that have received funding as part of the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) in District One.

[Road may require Lee loan](#)

(12/06/2005 © Ft. Myers News-Press )

Lee County could help widen U.S. 41 between Estero and San Carlos Park since the state last week refused to loan itself the money to speed up the project. The Florida Department of Transportation was denied a \$24 million state bank loan that would have made construction possible late next year. If another money source is not found, the road won't be widened until 2011.

[Carpooling in Bonita? It would never work, city manager says](#)

(12/06/2005 © Naples Daily News )

As the busy visitor season in south Lee keeps on rolling, Bonita Springs government is working to deal with the growing number of cars on the road. The transportation system is being enhanced with street widenings, pavings and realignments, traffic signals are being added and modified and future thoroughfares are being planned with the next round of construction projects already in discussion.

### [Contract awarded to improve U.S. 98](#)

(12/06/2005 © Northwest Florida Daily News )

The Florida Department of Transportation has awarded a \$14.3 million contract to Archer Western Contractor to improve U.S. Highway 98 across Okaloosa Island from the Brooks Bridge to the Destin Bridge. The work is aimed to prevent the road from washing out during storms. Construction is expected to start in January.

### [Lee pedestrians, bicyclists at greater risk](#)

(12/06/2005 © Ft. Myers News-Press )

Anyone walking along a street or highway in Lee County shouldn't count on motorists to see him or her, let alone stop, says an advocate for pedestrians' and bicyclists' rights. "Motorists are multitasking, so you can't count on them doing their part to protect your safety," said Don Moser, bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for the state health department in Lee County. Nationwide, 14 percent of people who die in traffic accidents are pedestrians and bicyclists, Moser said. In Lee County, that percentage is 23 percent.

**WEDNESDAY, 12/7/05**

### [Manatee County commissioners move gas tax increase into gear](#)

(12/07/2005 © Bradenton Herald )

MANATEE - If raising gasoline taxes was like shopping for a car, then Manatee County commissioners decided Tuesday to stop kicking tires and take a test drive - without making a commitment to buy. Commissioners told their attorney to write a draft ordinance that, if passed by July 1, would increase the county's gas tax by a nickel a gallon beginning Jan. 1, 2007.

### [Money might bring relief for commuters](#)

(12/07/2005 © Orlando Sentinel )

*State grants \$70 million for 7 road projects* - Central Florida is choking on growth -- and Tuesday it got \$70 million in road-building money to help make it easier to swallow. The latest pot of money comes from a new state program that targets high-growth areas.

### [Cities to DOT: 'Are We There Yet?'](#)

(12/07/2005 © Lakeland Ledger )

WINTER HAVEN -- City officials in Auburndale and Lake Alfred want to send a strong message to the Florida Department of Transportation: Keep their road improvement projects in the five-year work plan. Officials in both cities passed resolutions Monday night to encourage the DOT to not eliminate projects.

### [Officials butt heads about road sales tax](#)

(12/07/2005 © Ocala Star Banner )

OCALA - Marion County commissioners agree on the need for some type of sales tax for transportation improvements. But that's about where the road ends. A split commission on Tuesday postponed a vote on a proposed sales tax for new roads until Dec. 20.

### [Big gap in our gas prices](#)

(12/07/2005 © Ft. Myers News-Press )

Gas prices in Lee County vary by more than 30 cents a gallon, forcing drivers in Bonita Springs to spend more on fuel than drivers in North Fort Myers. That means drivers in north Lee can save nearly \$4 every time they fill a 12-gallon tank with unleaded gas, paying \$24.48 to the \$28.20 drivers pay in south Lee.

### [New community set for St. Johns](#)

(12/07/2005 © Florida Times-Union )

ST. AUGUSTINE -- Gate Petroleum of Jacksonville revealed its plans Tuesday to build a 1,637-acre "destination city" of office space, industry, retail, entertainment venues and 4,500 homes at Interstate 95 and Race Track Road. The complex could bring 15,000 jobs here, planners said.

### [Freight train woes double Tri-Rail delays](#)

(12/07/2005 © Palm Beach Post )

Tri-Rail riders were warned to expect delays of an hour this week because of a signal suspension, but no one was prepared for backups of more than two hours during the Monday evening rush.

## **THURSDAY, 12/8/05**

### [Traffic engineers tout roundabouts for safety](#)

(12/08/2005 © Miami Herald )

WASHINGTON - To reduce traffic congestion and get vehicles through intersections faster and more safely, some traffic engineers are very excited about an old idea. Take out the traffic lights, they suggest. Instead, move vehicles around a central circular island continuously at low speeds. Require drivers who are entering the circle to yield to those who already are in it. They're called roundabouts these days, a Britishism that's meant to distinguish the updated concept from the primitive traffic circles or rotaries that your grandfather swore his way around.

### [JetBlue soon may land at SRQ](#)

(12/08/2005 © Bradenton Herald )

MANATEE - JetBlue Airways could join AirTran at Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport by this time next year as part of an industry change that has low-cost carriers taking the lead in domestic expansion, an airport official said. The low-cost JetBlue, which recently bought 100 new, mid-sized Embraer jets, is poised to enter mid-sized markets with smaller, more fuel-efficient planes.

### [Scripps picks Abacoa site owned by FAU in Jupiter](#)

(12/08/2005 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel )

The Scripps Research Institute chose the Abacoa development in Jupiter Wednesday as its preferred home for a taxpayer-funded biotech campus, a move that could dramatically alter Scripps Florida's shape, scope and cost. Shifting from a rural orange grove, Scripps would move to 70 acres owned by Florida Atlantic University at Abacoa, which already features a baseball stadium, upscale homes and a town center on Donald Ross Road at Interstate 95.

### [Roads get go-ahead, but funds lacking](#)

(12/08/2005 © Ft. Myers News-Press )

Those wanting an easier, hassle-free drive from Lehigh Acres to Bonita Springs have a reason to cheer. The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization, in approving a new 25-year transportation plan on Wednesday, gave the go-ahead for the construction of two new expressways.

### [Polk land tax hike may pave way for better crossroads on CR 54.](#)

(12/08/2005 © Lakeland Ledger )

FOUR CORNERS -- Making two dangerous intersections on County Road 54 (Ronald Reagan Parkway) safer is going to happen a lot more quickly because of the property tax increases Polk County put into place recently.

### [Group rejects Coconut Road interchange on I-75](#)

(12/08/2005 © Naples Daily News )

Members of the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization once again heard a proposal to put an Interstate 75 interchange at Coconut Road into their long-range transportation plan and once again they chose to deny it. The decision means the county will turn down \$10 million that mysteriously made its way into the recently passed federal transportation bill as an appropriation specifically to study the feasibility of the interchange.

### [State kicks in \\$5 million for C.R. 466](#)

(12/08/2005 © Leesburg Daily Commercial )

TAVARES The process of turning County Road 466 into a thriving commercial corridor received a huge jumpstart Tuesday as the Florida Department of Transportation announced \$5 million to help fund 50 percent of the project.

## **FRIDAY, 12/9/05**

### [Road Panel Rejects DOT Plan](#)

(12/09/2005 © Lakeland Ledger )

BARTOW -- December meetings of the Transportation Planning Organization normally reflect the joyous mood of the holiday season, but Thursday's meeting was different. For the first time in memory, the panel of 20 elected officials unanimously rejected the Florida Department of Transportation's 2006-2011 tentative work program. They also passed a resolution criticizing the recent removal of six key local road projects and requesting their restoration. The projects were the victim of a \$500 million cost overrun in the budget for state road projects in Polk County.

### [Experts stand behind air marshal](#)

(12/09/2005 © Bradenton Herald )

Security experts and industry officials say the federal air marshal who fatally shot an airline passenger at Miami International Airport on Wednesday did exactly what he was trained to do after the passenger claimed to have a bomb and acted erratically.

### [Traffic Safety](#)

(12/09/2005 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel )

*Toll increase would serve a good purpose* - Inflation since the 1960s has raised the

price of just about everything. One notable exception is the toll on Alligator Alley for automobiles. Since 1969, motorists have been able to drive across the state and back for a buck and a half. That's probably about to change. Department of Transportation officials want to increase the toll for automobiles.

#### [Lee property owners to foot bigger road bill](#)

(12/09/2005 © Ft. Myers News-Press )

A taxing authority charged with widening Corkscrew Road is scrambling to fund a shortfall now that Lee County has refused to help. Property owners in the taxing district east of Interstate 75 will have to pay double their original assessment to build the 18-month construction project, expected to begin in the fall.

#### [Lower prices provide relief at pump](#)

(12/09/2005 © Orlando Sentinel )

Metro Orlando motorists hurry to fill up as experts say gasoline costs may have hit bottom for the rest of '05.

#### [Odom: Proceed with bridge](#)

(12/09/2005 © Northwest Florida Daily News )

The Emerald Coast Bridge Authority should forge ahead with its work rather than wait for an eight-county master plan for U.S. Highway 98, a member of the regional panel said Thursday.

#### [Lawmakers OK NASCAR license plate proposal](#)

(12/09/2005 © Orlando Sentinel )

Florida lawmakers overwhelmingly gave the green light today to proposal to begin selling a NASCAR-themed license plate, with proceeds earmarked for a stock-car racing hall of fame in Daytona Beach.