

A Race to the State House

Candidates Tell Road Builders Why They Should Be Florida's Next Governor

With Florida Gov. Jeb Bush's term coming to an end in 2006, the race is on to select a new leader for the Sunshine State. Term limits restrict Gov. Bush from running again, so four candidates – two Democrats and two Republicans – are competing in a political race in which analysts are calling “close.”

The future governor will have a strong impact on Florida's transportation system, determining budgets and controlling the decision of whether to delve into the Transportation Trust Fund for general purposes, so it is important to elect a candidate who understands the transportation needs of the state.

Florida Transportation Builder recently conducted a Question and Answer interview with the candidates to get their views and perspectives on transportation issues. Following is background on each of the candidates and their responses:



Charlie Crist – Republican

Charlie Crist, a Republican gubernatorial candidate, had a penchant for public service early, serving as class president at St. Petersburg High School and student body vice president at Florida State University. Born in 1956 in Altoona, Pa, Crist's family moved to St. Petersburg, where he would build a career of public service.

A starting high school quarterback, Crist also played football at Wake Forest University before transferring to Florida State where he received his undergraduate degree in 1978. He then went on to earn his law degree at Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Ala. Crist interned in the State's Attorney's Office, where he gained experience in the criminal justice system, before accepting a position as general counsel for the minor league division of the Baseball Commissioner's Office. He began his government service as state director for U.S. Senator Connie Mack before later returning to the private practice of law with the Tampa firm of Wood and Crist.

His desire to serve the public remained strong, and in 1992 he campaigned and won a seat in the Florida Senate where he served for six years, serving as chairman of the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee and the Appropriations Criminal Justice Subcommittee.

After Crist completed his Senate service, Gov. Jeb Bush appointed him Deputy Secretary of the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. In 2000, Crist won a special election and became Florida's last elected Commissioner of Education. In 2002, Crist was elected as Attorney General, a position he holds today.

As Attorney General, Crist is an advocate for consumers, law-abiding citizens and innocent crime victims. He has recovered millions of dollars for consumers who have lost money to scams; prosecuted or sustained the convictions of murderers, rapists and other criminals; crafted agreements that have protected the state's environmental resources and taxpayers; and promoted effective new tools to combat domestic violence, stop child abductions, prevent Medicaid fraud and address numerous other problems. Crist believes in less taxes, less government and more freedom.

Crist recently participated in a Question and Answer interview with *Florida Transportation Builder*:

Florida Transportation Builder: How important do you believe a good transportation system is to Florida? Do you consider it a priority issue?

Charlie Crist: "I believe that Florida needs an infrastructure that serves all Floridians. It is a fact of life that touches every person and every business. Families, who commute to school and work, will benefit by having more time at home when there is less traffic. Businesses need an effective transportation system to conduct commerce, to create jobs and to keep our state's economy moving."

Florida Transportation Builder: The Florida Legislature created the State

Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) which dedicates gasoline tax money to road construction and maintenance as well as other transportation improvements in Florida. But in 2003, the governor proposed and the legislature approved the use of \$200 million STTF dollars to supplement general revenue instead of cutting spending, raising taxes or a combination of both. How do you feel about shifting money from the STTF to cover other services? Would you support such a maneuver in a period of economic downturn and shrinking tax revenues?

Crist: "I firmly support limited government, as Gov. Bush has during his two terms. With that principle, when possible, government services should be paid for by those that directly benefit from them. So, I would prefer to maintain the link, as closely as possible, between gasoline tax revenues and road construction projects."

Florida Transportation Builder: According to the Florida Department of Transportation,

Florida needs an additional \$23 billion or more in transportation funding over the next 10 years just to maintain today's road conditions – that's without improvement to traffic delays. In recognition of this stunning fact, how would you propose to "fill" this multi-billion dollar "pothole" in the road to Florida's future?

Crist: "Florida is such an attractive destination for tourists and potential residents. With this opportunity, we face specific challenges. Using new technology and working with stakeholders in the transportation industry, we must address these financial challenges. The new Growth Management legislation will supplement our funding needs to help close this gap."

Florida Transportation Builder: Between 1999 and 2005, toll revenue sources in Florida accounted for 18 percent of the state's transportation funding revenue and that figure is expected to increase to 23 percent over the next five years. Given this trend, what are your views of tolling and toll roads as a way of meeting Florida's growing transportation funding needs?

Crist: "All across our great state, we have seen the positive results from decisions to build toll roads. I hope that we can plan for our future needs strategically with the use of toll roads as a viable option, where appropriate."

Florida Transportation Builder: The majority of transportation funding in Florida

comes from gasoline taxes. With all of the hybrid cars and alternative fuels being discussed, would you consider alternative transportation revenue sources, such as taxing miles driven?

Crist: "I believe that new innovations and technology are vital to help us reduce pollution and congestion. As these new technologies are emerging, we must help encourage their development, even as we ensure that more traditional transportation means are not placed at a disadvantage. In terms of taxing, I am for less taxes, not more."

Florida Transportation Builder: What types of additional transportation revenue would you be likely to support?

Crist: "I firmly believe in limited government. When possible I think we should reduce taxes, not raise them. Over the last seven years, this economic strategy has given a boost to Florida's small businesses, our engine for job growth. A growing economy gives the state additional revenues to fund the critical needs of the state."

"I hope that we'll continue this sound policy, so that the additional revenue growth can be provided to the ongoing needs of our infrastructure."

Florida Transportation Builder: In 2005, the legislature provided approximately \$540 million in additional recurring revenue for

transportation from documentary stamp revenues. Do you support continuing this revenue stream?

Crist: "The 2005 Growth Management legislation should produce great results for Floridians. The investment that was made should return many dividends. I will work with the Century Commission and seek their guidance and wisdom to continue the progress on the Strategic Intermodal System that is expected from this forward-minded legislation."

Florida Transportation Builder: Recognizing that we do have a limit on revenue, what would your priorities be for transportation funds?

Crist: "Providing for the safety of all Floridians is government's first priority. Educating our children is also a foremost responsibility of government. Ensuring that commerce can flourish in Florida by maintaining and improving our transportation system is another fundamental responsibility of government. We must continue to focus our efforts on the state's multimodal transportation infrastructure program, so that aviation, highway, intermodal, ITS, rail, and seaport projects can be advanced."

Florida Transportation Builder: Among the tort reform issues that Florida's business community is actively working on in the state legislature, a major issue is the repeal of joint and several liability. Do you support the repeal of joint and several liability? What other tort issues could you support?

Crist: "I think we should continue, as Gov. Bush has, to reduce unnecessary regulation and litigation to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of Floridians. I support the repeal of joint and several liability laws and will work with the legislature to pass these reforms. Over time, these laws have had a very negative effect on our economy. While businesses should be held accountable for the decisions that affect their consumers, this proposition of law should be repealed because it forces businesses to be responsible for actions that are beyond their control."

Florida Transportation Builder: Many believe the citizen's initiative process to put issues affecting the constitution on the ballot has gotten out of hand. How do you feel about Constitutional Amendment Reform?

Crist: “The Constitution is the people’s blueprint for how they want to be governed, and they have the right to amend that document. I do not believe, however, that the amendment process should be used as a routine substitute for the normal legislative/lawmaking process. The rights that are conferred in the constitution should give us the framework for a free, just Florida. Our elected representatives are then charged with enacting laws within that constitutional framework.”

“I support the recent efforts to provide Floridians with more time and information to review the costs and benefits of proposed initiatives, prior to voting on constitutional amendments.”

Florida Transportation Builder:

If the Hometown Democracy Constitutional Amendment makes the ballot, would you support it?

Crist: “As Attorney General, I play a role in the process of evaluating the constitutionality of proposed amendments. So, I am careful not to politicize my official role by taking strident positions on constitutional initiatives. I am concerned, however, with any constitutional proposal that could unnecessarily hinder responsible growth in Florida.”



Jim Davis – Democrat

Jim Davis, a Democrat, was born and raised in Tampa, where he graduated from Jesuit High School before attending Washington & Lee University. Davis received his law degree at the University of Florida Law School and went on to practice law from 1982-96. He became a

partner with the firm of Bush, Ross, Gardner, Warren and Rudy in 1988, before turning to a career in public service.

Davis was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1988 and continued to serve in the House until 1996. While in the House, Davis sat on the Appropriations Committee and helped write eight balanced budgets. In his final term, he served as Majority Leader and worked to unite teachers, principals, parents and community leaders to address the problem of increasing class sizes in Florida schools, resulting in a class-size law. He also worked closely with educational leaders to enact a student-centered accountability law. While both of these measures were overturned by the current administration, Davis wants to work to bring the voices of teachers, parents, principals and students back to the discussion of improving education and put Florida’s schools back on a path to success.

In 1996, Davis was elected to the U.S. Congress where he still serves. In his first term as a congressman, Davis served on the Budget Committee and worked to pass the first balanced budget in nearly 30 years. He was also selected by the Democratic freshman class to serve as first-class president of the 105th Congress, making him chief spokesman for the group and the liaison to the party’s leadership.

In 2003, he was appointed to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. He also serves on Health; Energy and Air Quality; and Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection subcommittees.

While serving in Congress, Davis listened to his constituents’ needs and wrote and passed legislation stopping nursing homes from evicting low-income seniors and to help schools recruit and train new teachers. He also worked to stop oil drilling off Florida’s coastline.

As an elected leader, Davis believes respect means

giving everyone a seat at the table and a voice in their own government. He and his wife, Peggy Bessent Davis, have two sons, Peter and William.

Davis recently participated in a Question and Answer interview with Florida Transportation Builder:

Florida Transportation Builder: How important do you believe a good transportation system is to Florida? Do you consider it a priority issue?

Jim Davis: “A good transportation system is a top priority for Florida. With 1,000 people moving to the state daily, the demands on our roads and transportation system increase daily. Vehicle miles traveled is increasing at 3.9 percent annually. As governor, it will be a top priority for Jim Davis to develop a quality transportation system.”

Florida Transportation Builder: The Florida Legislature created the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) which dedicates gasoline tax money to road construction and maintenance as well as other transportation improvements in Florida. But in 2003, the

governor proposed and the legislature approved the use of \$200 million STTF dollars to supplement general revenue instead of cutting spending, raising taxes or a combination of both. How do you feel about shifting money from the STTF to cover other services? Would you support such a maneuver in a period of economic downturn and shrinking tax revenues?

Davis: “Jim Davis opposes taking money out of the State Transportation Trust Fund. As governor, Jim Davis would fight any proposal to raid the State Transportation Trust Fund.”

Florida Transportation Builder: According to the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida needs an additional \$23 billion or more in transportation funding over the next 10 years just to maintain today’s road conditions – that’s without improvement to traffic delays. In recognition of this stunning fact, how would you propose to “fill” this multi-billion dollar “pothole” in the road to Florida’s future?

Davis: “As governor, Jim Davis would sit down with the transportation industry and others to come up with reasonable proposals to provide additional transportation dollars as well as how to address potential funding shortfalls.

“Jim Davis has a track record of providing federal transportation tax dollars. As congressman, Jim Davis secured more than \$21 million for road and bridge improvements in the Tampa Bay area (in 2005). In June 2003, Jim Davis wrote to Gov. Jeb Bush urging him and the legislature to spend the \$950 million that the state received in economic stimulus on transportation improvements and other areas, instead of putting it in reserves.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Between 1999 and 2005, toll revenue sources in Florida accounted for 18 percent of the state’s transportation funding revenue and that figure is expected to increase to 23 percent over the next five years. Given this trend, what are your views of tolling and toll roads as a way of meeting Florida’s growing transportation funding needs?

Davis: “Jim Davis believes toll roads are just one portion of the solution as to how the state meets its growing transportation needs. Florida needs a comprehensive transportation plan

that addresses all aspects of Florida’s transportation system.”

Florida Transportation Builder: The majority of transportation funding in Florida comes from gasoline taxes. With all of the hybrid cars and alternative fuels being discussed, would you consider alternative transportation revenue sources, such as taxing miles driven?

Davis: “Jim Davis is open to studying alternative transportation revenue sources.”

Florida Transportation Builder: What types of additional transportation revenue would you be likely to support?

Davis: “The first place Jim Davis would start would be to work to increase Florida’s share of the federal transportation tax dollars and return more revenue to Florida. Florida gets less than 90 cents per dollar of federal gas tax money paid by Floridians. Jim Davis would continue to work to get as close to 100 percent as possible.

“Jim Davis would also explore all potential transportation revenue sources, and work with transportation leaders and the state to come up with fair and reasonable proposals to increase funding.”

Florida Transportation Builder: In 2005, the legislature provided approximately \$540 million in additional recurring revenue for transportation from documentary stamp revenues. Do you support continuing this revenue stream?

Davis: “Jim Davis supports continuing this revenue stream.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Recognizing that we do have a limit on revenue, what would your priorities be for transportation funds?

Davis: “Jim Davis would prioritize the maintenance of existing roads and the building of new roads, as well as ensuring that the state can manage growth on its roads. He would also prioritize increasing Florida’s share of federal transportation tax dollars. In addition, Jim Davis would sit down with transportation leaders to get input on their priorities.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Among the tort reform issues that Florida’s business community is actively working on in the state legislature, a major issue is the repeal of joint and several liability. Do you support the repeal of joint and several liability? What other tort issues could you support?

Davis: “There have been significant changes in joint and several liability in the last several years. Jim Davis has worked with lawyers and the business community to come up with proposals to make joint and several liability fair to everybody.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Many believe the citizen’s initiative process to put issues affecting the constitution on the ballot has gotten out of hand. How do you feel about Constitutional Amendment Reform?

Davis: “Jim Davis believes that the citizen’s initiative process is an important part of the political and democratic process and supports it.”

Florida Transportation Builder: If the Hometown Democracy Constitutional Amendment makes the ballot, would you support it?

Davis: “Jim Davis believes that voters should have a voice in community development and growth plans, but that putting up each plan to a vote in a local election is not the best way to go about it.”



Tom Gallagher – Republican

Republican gubernatorial candidate Tom Gallagher is a native of Wilmington, Del., who

came to Florida in 1961 to attend the University of Miami with a partial athletic scholarship for swimming. Though not originally from Florida, Gallagher has spent his career serving the state.

After graduation and service in the military, Gallagher returned to Miami and made Florida his home as a businessman, but he quickly moved into the political arena. He was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1974 where he served the Miami-Dade area for 13 years, including a term as Republican Whip. He was also elected by his colleagues as the most effective in committee.

During his time in the Florida Legislature, Gallagher established a record of fighting for tax relief, as well as encouraging economic expansion, protecting consumers and defending families.

In 1987, Gallagher was appointed to head the Department of Professional Regulation by then-Gov. Bob Martinez. In 1988, Gallagher was elected as the State Treasurer, Insurance Commissioner and Fire Marshall, followed by service as the Florida Commissioner of Education in 1998. In 2001, he returned to the position of State Treasurer, which was combined with the State Comptroller position in 2003 creating the position of State Chief Financial Officer. Gallagher ran for that position and won, becoming the state's first CFO, a position he holds today.

As Florida CFO, Gallagher serves on the Governor's Cabinet and oversees the state's fiscal health, keeping track of more than \$60 billion coming in and out of state government annually and auditing state programs to make sure taxpayer dollars are accounted for and appropriately spent. In his position, Gallagher believes in doing more with less, reducing the size and scope of government while meeting the needs and reducing the tax burden of all Floridians. His conservative agenda includes protecting seniors and families, expanding educational opportunities, creating a strong business climate and strengthening families.

Gallagher married his wife Laura, a native Floridian and telecommunications lawyer, in 1998, and together they have a 6-year-old son, Charlie.

Gallagher recently participated in a question and answer interview with *Florida*

Transportation Builder:

Florida Transportation Builder: How important do you believe a good transportation system is to Florida? Do you consider it a priority issue?

Tom Gallagher: "A good transportation system is essential to Florida's future if we intend to be a worldwide economic leader for the 21st century. A good transportation system is an intrinsic part of a strong quality of life and a successful business climate. If our citizens can not get to and from work, if we can not efficiently move goods from our ports and distribution centers, and if our 80-million yearly visitors can not easily arrive at our beaches and attractions, Florida will lose much of the competitive advantage that currently makes us the United States' economic leader."

Florida Transportation Builder: The Florida Legislature created the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) which dedicates gasoline tax money to road construction and maintenance as well as other transportation improvements in Florida. But in 2003, the governor proposed and the legislature approved the use of \$200 million STTF dollars to supplement general revenue instead of cutting spending, raising taxes or a combination of both. How do you feel about shifting money from the STTF to cover other services? Would you support such a maneuver in a period of economic downturn and shrinking tax revenues?

Gallagher: "As a general practice, I am extremely concerned whenever revenue is removed from any state trust fund and spent on matters for which it was not previously designated. Speaking specifically of the State Transportation Trust Fund, I believe Floridians rightfully expect their gas tax monies to go toward solving their transportation needs; that is how they have been told their gas tax dollars will be spent. Because of that commitment we have made to the taxpayers and the significant importance of improving our present transportation system for the future, I would be supportive of efforts to protect the State Transportation Trust Fund from being diverted for other purposes."

Florida Transportation Builder: According to the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida needs an additional \$23 billion or more in transportation funding over the next 10 years just to maintain today's road conditions – that's without improvement to traffic delays. In recognition of this stunning fact, how would you propose to "fill" this multi-billion dollar "pothole" in the road to Florida's future?

Gallagher: "In many regions of Florida we are steadily approaching the tipping point on transportation. If we stand by and do little, our transportation system will become totally unworkable. In fact, the numbers are worse than your question belies. A 2002 review of Florida's Long Range Transportation Plans actually showed a shortfall of as much as \$37.7 billion, a 43-percent increase over similar estimates in a 1997 review. With daily vehicle miles traveled anticipated to increase by 103 percent from 2000 to 2030, we cannot afford to wait any longer if we want to protect Florida's economic future.

"Clearly, we must significantly renew our commitment to funding Florida's transportation needs if we do not want to experience a total breakdown of our state's transportation systems. First, I would hold firm on my commitment to locking up the State Transportation Trust Fund so that those dollars can only be spent on much-needed road construction and maintenance purposes. Second, we have to be willing to implement other available sources of transportation funding without raising taxes. Those sources include taking greater advantage of public-private partnerships in transportation and the installation of HOT (High Occupancy Toll) lanes and other variable congestion pricing solutions.

“I also believe that we must be open to using surplus state dollars to pay for one-time transportation projects’ costs, as well as using tax breaks to spur renovations in inner suburbs and urban areas to encourage more people and businesses in areas where roads and transit are already in place.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Between 1999 and 2005, toll revenue sources in Florida accounted for 18 percent of the state’s transportation funding revenue and that figure is expected to increase to 23 percent over the next five years. Given this trend, what are your views of tolling and toll roads as a way of meeting Florida’s growing transportation funding needs?

Gallagher: “Tolls and toll roads are not the only answer for Florida’s transportation future, but it is an option that we should consider especially if used as a part of a public/private partnership ‘pay as you go’ system. We need to continue to use one consistent platform for seamless electronic toll payment, be it SunPass or some future alternative.”

Florida Transportation Builder: The majority of transportation funding in Florida comes from gasoline taxes. With all of the hybrid cars and alternative fuels being discussed, would you consider alternative transportation revenue sources, such as taxing miles driven?

Gallagher: “From both environmental and national security standpoints, we should be

encouraging the development of more efficient engines and alternative sources of fuel beyond petroleum. But hybrids and hydrogen-powered vehicles will still need roads to drive on. As long as alternative transportation revenue sources are revenue neutral, I would be willing to consider them if the gas tax proves to be an unstable provider of revenue for transportation because of the increased deployment of hybrids and alternative fuel vehicles.

“Since you specifically asked about taxing based on miles driven, I must point out that I have significant concerns about its efficacy. In addition to the difficulty with collecting miles-driven tax revenues from the tens of millions of visitors who drive to Florida from other states every year, I also have grave concerns regarding personal privacy in the case of monitoring individuals’ vehicles on a miles-driven basis. There is a Big Brother aspect to having the state monitor one’s movements for taxable purposes that diminishes individual liberty in our society.”

Florida Transportation Builder: What types of additional transportation revenue would you be likely to support?

Gallagher: “First and foremost, I am committed to making sure that the revenues in the State Transportation Trust Fund go to pay for road construction and maintenance. Florida’s leaders have made a commitment to the citizens to use their gas taxes for roads, and we ought to keep our commitments.

“Additionally, I understand the value of investing in our highway system and the multiplier effect of those investments. The state will recoup \$5.50 in benefits for every \$1 spent on transportation in our state. That is an excellent ROI (Return on Investment) for our future.

“Second, as we look toward new-road construction in Florida, we have to be willing to implement other available sources of transportation funding without raising taxes. Those sources include taking greater advantage of public-private partnerships in transportation and the installation of HOT lanes and other variable congestion pricing solutions.”

Florida Transportation Builder: In 2005, the legislature provided approximately \$540 million in additional recurring revenue for transportation from documentary stamp revenues. Do you support continuing this revenue stream?

Gallagher: “I am supportive of continuing to use documentary stamp revenue to fund transportation infrastructure.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Recognizing that we do have a limit on revenue, what would your priorities be for transportation funds?

Gallagher: “My priorities for transportation funds are simple. I want to spend our limited transportation dollars where the people of Florida will receive the most return for their investment. If we keep our transportation spending in both a statewide and regional perspective by aligning our resources towards prioritized projects with a significant economic and regional impact, we will go a long way toward building a stronger, more vital transportation system for Florida’s future.

“We can no longer think of Florida’s transportation system strictly on a county-by-county basis. We have grown too big and too interconnected to let county lines hold us back. We are going to have to work regionally to solve our problems. This means looking to the localities across the state to work together to put forward their regional visions of transportation in their areas and working with them to achieve their vision.”

Florida Transportation Builder: Among the tort reform issues that Florida's business community is actively working on in the state legislature, a major issue is the repeal of joint and several liability. Do you support the repeal of joint and several liability? What other tort issues could you support?

Gallagher: "I am the only candidate for governor that has a consistent and outspoken record of fighting for tort reform. From my time in the legislature to my service in Florida's Cabinet, I have always supported tort reform publicly.

"Last year, I was the only candidate for governor to stand publicly with Gov. Bush in Tallahassee to abolish joint and several liability. I remain committed to abolishing joint and several, and am willing to fight for other important reforms to our tort system – such as class-action reform, expert witness reform, vicarious liability reform, insurance bad faith reform, premises liability reform, and stopping venue shopping – to limit lawsuit abuse in Florida."

Florida Transportation Builder: Many believe the citizen's initiative process to put issues affecting the constitution on the ballot has gotten out of hand. How do you feel about Constitutional Amendment Reform?

Gallagher: "I strongly support Constitutional Amendment Reform. Our state constitution is no place for special interests to try to mandate their pet issues and make the taxpayers and business owners pick up the costs.

"I am proud to have led the efforts in 2004 to repeal the mandate for a high-speed, taxpayer-funded bullet train placed by special interests in Florida's Constitution. With the help of the Florida Transportation Builders Association and thousands of other concerned Floridians, we were able to stop this high-speed boondoggle and save Florida taxpayers tens of billions of dollars. Over 64 percent of Florida's voters realized that the high-speed rail scheme would have done irreversible damage to our state's transportation budget and was a constitutional mandate that we could not afford."

Florida Transportation Builder: If the Hometown Democracy Constitutional Amendment makes the ballot, would you support it?

Gallagher: "The Florida Hometown Democracy Amendment is yet another perversion of our initiative process here in Florida. By attempting to thwart our local governments' authority, the activists behind the Hometown Democracy Amendment are seemingly willing to remake our planning and development processes into utter chaos. I am not supportive of their efforts and would be supportive of any legitimate efforts to defeat this measure."



Rod Smith – Democrat

Rod Smith, Democratic gubernatorial candidate, was born in Southwest City, Mo., in 1949, just across the state line from his family's home in Oklahoma. Before the age of 2 his family moved to Florida – a state he would grow to serve – where Smith grew up laboring in the fields alongside his truck-farmer father.

A graduate of the Palm Beach County public schools, Smith earned a B.A. from the University of Tulsa in 1971 and a law degree in 1975 from the University of Florida. Having practiced law for 17 years, Smith still serves at the law firm of Avera and Avera and has represented the rights of police officers, fire-fighters and public employees throughout the state. Smith also serves as an adjunct professor at the University Of Florida College Of

Law, where he teaches constitutional law and trial practice and supervises the prosecution clinic.

In 1992 and 1996, Smith was elected State Attorney for the Eighth Judicial Circuit in the Gainesville area. While in the State Attorney's Office, Smith created the circuit's first special prosecutions unit to crack down on crimes against women and children. In 2000, Smith was elected to represent Florida's 14th Senate District, covering nine North Florida counties. He continues to serve in the Florida Senate and has successfully led efforts to strengthen programs to help abused children, fight discrimination in housing, protect the privacy of crime victims, improve the state's crime prevention initiatives, protect a woman's right to choose and reinforce homeland security.

Smith has been the recipient of numerous legislative awards. Among them, in 2002, he received the Florida Police Chiefs Association's Legislative Achievement Award for his efforts to improve public safety and fight crime. In 2004, he earned the Voices of Children Foundation's MVP Leadership Award in recognition of his efforts on behalf of abused, abandoned and neglected children. Also, in 2003, the *Miami Herald* named Smith the most effective Democrat in the Florida Senate.

Smith and his wife DeeDee, an attorney and advocate for child abuse victims, live on their farm in Alachua County and have three children – Jesse, Dylan and Alison – and one grandchild, Grace.

Smith declined to participate in the Question and Answer interview with *Florida Transportation Builder*.

