



# florida public transportation association

MAY 2004



## "From The Capitol"

By: Wes Watson

As this is being written the Legislature has just finished its Session. The last major item, the implementing language for the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), was among the last bill's passed. Most of the controversial language was eventually deleted, i.e., that relating to MPO's, the SCET's tax, and several new incentive grant programs. Essentially the SIS will be funded from the old TOPS program funds at \$100 per year.

FPTA achieved a solid legislative victory in fending off a strong effort by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), to discontinue the immensely successful Medicaid Bus Pass program. Elimination would have meant the loss of \$8 million to our participating transit systems, and an additional burden on the neediest members of our society - those who are both ill and indigent.

Lobbying on the Bus Pass issue was a team effort. We worked closely with the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission as well as lobbying teams from several of our transit systems. The membership of the respective Health committees dictated those systems who needed to be most active, and each responded very well. Lee, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties had multiple members, and their transit system directors and lobbying teams

*Continued on page 2*

## Secretary Mineta Announces \$28.8 Million for Tri-Rail

During a visit to the construction site for Tri-Rail's expanded Delray Beach Station, United States (U.S.) Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta delivered a \$28.8 million federal grant to pay for a massive expansion of the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC).

The \$28.8 million federal investment by the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will help fund the final phase of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA)/Tri-Rail's Double Track Corridor Improvement Program.

Secretary Mineta re-marked on how transit improvements would help promote a stronger economy by linking more commuters to a growing number of jobs, and luring more businesses throughout the Rail Corridor in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties. "The work being done by the men and women here amounts to more than the creation of new tracks and badly needed station upgrades," said Secretary Mineta. "The work here serves as an investment in a stronger America."

Since work on the rail system began in 1995, the federal government has invested a total of \$81.2 million. SFRTA Board Chair Michael Masanoff was pleased to have someone of Secretary Mineta's magnitude visit the Project site and

*Continued on page 2*



*U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta spoke to an audience of elected officials, including SFRTA's Board Chair Michael Masanoff and United States Representative Mark Foley, along with members of the Segment 5 Project's construction crew, Tri-Rail passengers and other transit supporters concerning the importance of federal investments for South Florida's transportation projects.*

## FDOT Commits \$100M to MIC Link

The Florida Department of Transportation, in February, 2004, committed \$100 million in Intermodal funds toward development of a critical Miami Intermodal Center linkage to Metrorail. In a letter of thanks to DOT Secretary, Jose Abreu, George M. Burgess, Miami-Dade

County Manager stated: "I want to sincerely thank you, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the State of Florida for FDOT's financial support of the Earlington Heights/Miami Intermodal Center

*Continued on page 2*

## From the Chair

By Steven Neal



I would like to commend us, as a group, on the great association that we belong to. When we were in Washington D.C. at the A.P.T.A. Conference, I observed

what a close-knit group we really are. Our group, with different needs and issues, stood as a state, supporting each other to ensure that we received our fair share and that each member was not over looked or over shadowed.

The many issues that are currently facing us and or association, make it imperative for us to keep the lines of communication open so that every member is heard and included. If you have a question, need, or concern, please let me know.

As we continue through the rest of the year let us remember we have the best association in the nation and it is because of the great members in it.

With that being said, I would like to let Jerry in Monroe County know that he will be truly missed. Jerry, if your budget allows funds in the future, we will be eager to welcome you home.

## From The Capital

*Continued from page 1*

pitched in with solid efforts. But there was support from other systems as well - and it did take everyone. This is a far cry from the days when transit had one lonely person (me), carrying the load. It shows how far we have come, and that transit is now a recognized 'player' in Tallahassee.

Many legislators helped us in the Bus Pass issue. But Rep. Carol Greene, Appropriations Sub-Committee Chair from Lee County, was *the* major player supporting us.

Another legislative win for FPTA and Transportation, was being part of a coalition fighting to keep \$100 million of the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) from being diverted to General Revenue programs. We were part of a group of transportation interests spear-headed by the Floridians for Better Transportation and Doug Callaway.

But by far, in an up and down Session, the most curious thing was the passage of a bill that suspends 8 cents of the state gas tax in the month of August. It was an action driven purely by election year politics and gives an insight into the near panic that elections hold for office seekers.

With the Speaker of the House seeking a US Senate seat, what should

happen but that a Democrat suggests some gas tax relief during the upcoming Summer's high prices. Finding it unacceptable for a Democrat to take credit for any tax relief, or the Republicans being cited for opposing one, the Speaker and 108 House Members jumped on the bandwagon, and "me too'ed" it all the way to passage. The, one month, 8 cent reduction, takes place in August. The loss in revenue to the TTF would be \$58 million, and would be replaced from General Revenue. And, yes, it's the same General Revenue that earlier in the Session was contemplated needing \$100 million FROM the TTF. And why the month of August, you ask? Could it be the summer month closest to the election? Now, what will be interesting is to see if the Saudi's raise oil production in order to lower prices for the Presidential Election. That would mean that prices in August would go lower anyway!

FPTA has some busy months ahead. Out Mega-Roadeo will take place May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Mid-Year on June 8-10, and then our 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Expo on September 18-21. All these events are listed on our website's home page. See it for details. [www.floridatransit.org](http://www.floridatransit.org).

## Mineta

*Continued from page 1*

acknowledged the significant role the federal government plays in such a massive transit improvement program. "The mission of the SFRTA's Double Track Corridor Improvement Program is to provide a sound infrastructure and economic opportunity for the people and businesses of this region," said Masanoff. "We are grateful for the support of the federal government, which has made this Program and Segment 5 Project possible."

## MIC Link

*Continued from page 1*

*Extension of Metrorail. FDOT's commitment . . . when matched by \$160 million of local funds, will enable the County to connect Miami International Airport (MIA) through the MIC to our existing Metrorail system. This very important link will provide improved access to MIA for employees, residents, and visitors to our community."*

*Also, according to Burgess, the FDOT grant " . . . will also potentially be a significant portion for our local match for the North and East-West corridors.*

The project is a 2.3 mile extension of Metrorail that will extend from the Miami Intermodal Center on the east side of the airport to the Earlington Heights Metrorail station on NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

The MIC, itself, will be similar in function to New York City's Grand Central Station and will provide safe and efficient transfers for users of various rail systems, buses, taxis, automobiles, bikes, and pedestrians. It will be the nexus for the local, regional, and state-wide rail systems in the Miami area.



Jose Abreu  
DOT Secretary

*Continued on page 5*



## Palm Tran Hires New Assistant Director

Palm Tran, Palm Beach County's public transit system, announces the hiring of a new member of its management team. Joining Palm Tran as Assistant Director is Chuck Cohen. Chuck brings with him 25 years of transit experience with the last 23 years working with Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) in Albany, New York where he was the Director of Program Development. Prior to that position he was Director of Transportation for 16 years at CDTA. Chuck received his Bachelor's Degree from Alfred University and his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Penn State University.



## Upcoming Events

May 20-22, 2004

### **FPTA Mega-Roadeo**

Hilton Hotel • Daytona Beach, FL

Voltran Host

*Golf Tourney May 23, 2004*

May 21, 2004

### **FPTA Board Meeting**

Hilton Hotel • Daytona Beach, FL

2 PM – 5 PM

June 8-10, 2004

### **FPTA-CUTR Midyear Professional Development Workshop**

USF Embassy Suites Hotel • Tampa, FL

September 18-21, 2004

### **30th Annual Conference & Expo**

Indoor & Outdoor Equipment

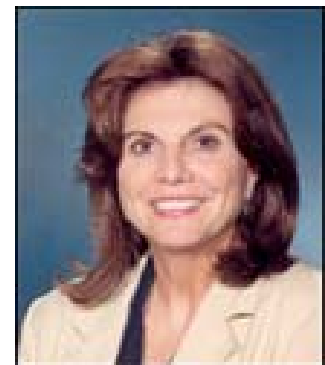
W. Palm Beach Marriott Hotel • Palm Beach, FL

(Only FPTA Members May Exhibit)

**DETAILS ON WEBSITE**

**[www.floridatransit.org](http://www.floridatransit.org)**

## LYNX Board Selects New Executive Director



*Linda S. Watson*

The LYNX Board of Directors announced on Thursday, April 22 the selection of the agency's new Executive Director. After the review of five final candidates, the Board selected Linda S. Watson, General Manager of the Corpus Cristi Regional Transportation Authority as the agency's new director. "We are excited about bringing Ms. Watson on board. She will be an outstanding leader for LYNX," said Orange County and LYNX Board Chairman Richard Crotty. Watson previously worked at the Fort Worth Transportation Authority before taking the general manager post at the Corpus Cristi Regional Transportation Authority in 1996.

# A Recipe For Success



Time was running out. Hooters of Channelside in Tampa, Florida was months away from opening its new restaurant. And though the wings and beer were ready to go, there was one miss-

ing ingredient: a shuttle to bring customers to the restaurant. Enter the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HARTline). Add two rubber-tired trolleys. Mix in some dazzling designed signage. And sprinkle with

HARTline's friendly operators and maintenance personnel. Then, roll out a circulator service that would carry thousands of passengers each month between downtown and Channelside. The result? The Hooters-Channelside Express, a lunchtime shuttle service fully funded by Hooters and operated by HARTline. The circulator operates Monday-Friday between 11:30am-2:30pm and is free for patrons.

Since rolling out service in the first week of January 2004, The Hooters-Channelside Express has seen a steady stream of riders. In fact, during its first 15 days, more than 1,788 riders hopped on board. The average daily ridership for the three hour period each weekday has been 119 people. Just goes to show how mixing up a mean marketing plan can produce sizzling results.

## Tourists Thankful For The Bay Town Trolley

Imagine our surprise when a few months back Mrs. Susan John of Wolverhampton in the United Kingdom picked up her phone and called up the Bay Town Trolley to ask for a ride guide. Why did she need one? Because she was coming to Panama City on vacation and had no means of transportation. How did she hear about Bay Town Trolley? She found our information on the Internet!

This unexpected phone call got us all thinking about the impact that the trolley has on the Panama City and Panama City Beach tourist community and the answer is that it plays a large role in how tourists feel about our community.

"I love to travel and have been to 44 states in the U.S.," says Mrs. John. "I always use public transportation because I cannot drive. I must say that the Bay Town Trolley is just lovely. The drivers are very friendly, the trolleys are clean and the routes take me anywhere that I need to go."

Mrs. John's situation is not an uncommon one in Bay County. Many of the seasonal and spring break tourists come to our city without transportation and rely heavily on the trolley to get them around town.

"I will spend about four months in Panama City, most of it without my own transportation, so to get around town I love to walk and use the trolley to go to the grocery store, shopping mall, downtown or just to go for a nice ride. I bought a monthly pass and it works out perfectly," comments Mrs. John.

Many tourists will also benefit greatly from route 5, which includes a stop at the airport. "The airport stop is simply wonderful," says Ms. John. "It is a great benefit for those of us who really don't know the city and who do not have our own transportation or friends or relatives to pick us up from the airport."

Mrs. John, a retired grade school teacher, travels to the United States

every year, oftentimes alone, but also with her husband, children and grandchildren. "The trolley not only offers a great service to tourists but to residents as well. I am always meeting new people and commenting about the trolley and they agree that it is a great benefit to the community. Many people that I've spoken to who live here and have cars even use it to get around because it is so convenient and saves money on gasoline. We do that quite a bit in England but you do not see that much here in the United States."

Bay Town Trolley General Manager Marv Clark commented on public transportation's influence on the tourist community, "Mrs. John's situation is not uncommon. We get quite a few calls every week from tourists wanting more information about the trolley. So far our ridership for 2004 is up 52.5%. We expect this number to increase due in part to tourists' and spring breakers' use of the trolley."

---

# South Florida Turns To Mass Transit As Gas Prices and Congestion Soar

South Florida commuters, tired of emptying their wallets at the gas pump and wasting countless valuable hours stuck on Interstate 95, are turning to public transportation in record numbers. According to the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA)/Tri-Rail, Palm Tran and Broward County Transit (BCT), all registered significant gains in their passenger counts during the month of February and, with the numbers still out, March should be just as impressive. Miami-Dade Transit's (MDT) most recent figures show ridership gains, as well.

For Tri-Rail, February marked the highest daily average in almost a decade. The average passenger count

was 10,151 passengers a day, with records showing that this was the highest daily average for a single month since April 1994. March started out equally as strong. On Friday, March 5, 2004, Tri-Rail carried 11,152 riders, making it the highest "non-event" ridership day since March 28, 1994. Past "event" ridership days included free rides on Valentine's Day past Valentines Days and the January 2003 promotion "Free Rides for Seniors on Tuesdays."

In February, Palm Tran recorded the highest weekday fixed-route ridership numbers in its history. The average number of passengers carried each weekday was 27,297, breaking

the previous record in November 2003 of 25,903 riders per weekday.

BCT recently launched a new tri-county service between Boca Raton in Palm Beach County and the Golden Glades Park and Ride in Miami-Dade County along State Road 7/ US 441. By extending service into Palm Beach County and enhancing frequency, ridership increased 43.6 percent on this route since Fiscal Year 2000.

MDT's most recent statistics show an overall increase in ridership of seven percent. Metrorail leads their service increases with an eight percent growth, followed with Metrobus at 7 percent and Metromover at 5 percent.

---

## HART Partners with Local University to Build Ridership

The University of South Florida (USF) has recently discovered what many other higher learning institutions throughout the nation already know: A partnership with public transit is a win-win situation.

Universities alleviate parking demands and public transit agencies gain more riders. It's a match made in transportation heaven.

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HARTline) recently partnered with USF's Parking and Transportation Services to offer a fare-free bus ride program for members of the USF community. The program allows all currently registered USF students, along with USF staff and faculty who have valid USF identification, to ride HARTline buses – anywhere – for free. (The fare-free rides are not applicable on HARTline's express routes.)

USF pays HART for rides taken through the Bus Ride Program with revenues from the Parking and Transportation Services division. Riders need only show their USF ID card to the bus operator to participate. A special bus pass or fare card is not required.

More than 50 colleges and universities throughout the United

States are participating in similar relationships with their public transit agencies. According to a 1997-1998 study of these types of "unlimited access" or "u-pass" programs, not only did free transit service reduce parking demands and increase students' access to the campus, it also helps colleges and universities recruit and retain students.

On the plus side for transit agencies, the study concluded, was increased ridership and a reduction of the operating cost per rider.

In its first month of inception, the USF Fare-Free Bus Ride program had more than 14,400 rides taken by USF students, faculty and staff. It has grown to more than 21,000 rides in less than a year.

HARTline, in cooperation with USF, created a brochure detailing the USF Fare-Free Bus Ride Program. The brochure was inserted into the USF *Oracle* newspaper at the start of the semester and placed at locations frequented by the USF community. The program is also featured on both USF and HARTline's Web sites and flyers advertise it at all the shelters for the USF Bull Runner, the on-campus shuttle service.

---

## MIC Link

*Continued from page 2*

The first major MIC item to be completed will be the Rental Car Facility, followed by the Central Station. Eventually most internal movements between the airport, rental car facility, and central station will be via a fixed guideway.

In his letter of commitment, DOT Secretary, Jose Abreu, stated: *"The project will serve as a critical linkage to Florida's designated Strategic Intermodal System, and our intent is to advance the Metrorail connection to the MIC and MIA to the extent possible to coincide with the completion of the MIA Mover."*

Also, in keeping with his remarks concerning securing more federal funding for transit starts in Florida, the Secretary added, *"Our support for this project stems from my plans to increase Florida's rate of return from the New Starts category of FTA apportionments."*

FPTA recognizes and appreciates Secretary Abreu's commitment to a multi-modal approach to meeting the transportation challenges of our growing state.

# Harper Re-Appointed JTA Board Chair



Donna Harper

Donna Harper, Chairman of the Board of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), was recently reappointed for a second term by Florida Governor Jeb Bush. During her second term, she will continue to

direct two major initiatives for JTA: implementation of 32 projects under the Better Jacksonville Plan and preparation for Super Bowl XXXIX.

The Better Jacksonville Plan is a \$2.25 billion comprehensive, voter approved, growth management strategy that provides road and infrastructure improvements, environmental preservation and targeted economic development and new and improved public facilities. The Plan is funded through a half-penny sales tax and by leveraging existing revenue sources.

The centerpiece of the Plan is the \$1.5 billion road and infrastructure work. Neighborhoods in all parts of Jacksonville will see a direct benefit from the Plan. Further, targeted

economic development will encourage job growth in areas that have lagged in development opportunities. The project is massive and will take 10 years to complete.

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority, an independent state agency serving Duval County, has multi-modal responsibilities. JTA designs and constructs bridges and highways and provides varied mass transit services.

These include express and regular bus service, a downtown Skyway monorail, the Trolley service, the Stadium Shuttle for various sporting events at ALLTEL Stadium, JTA Connexion for the disabled and elderly, and ChoiceRide that connects employers and employees to job access through customized transportation options.

## Sales Tax Funds Pasco Transit Shelters

On March 9, Pasco County voters approved the "Penny for Pasco," which will add a penny to the current 6-cent sales tax in Pasco for a ten-year period beginning January 1, 2005. This new revenue stream will help fund a number of identified critical projects for the County, Cities and School Board. One of the projects scheduled to be funded under this sales tax involves the design, procurement, and placement of bus shelters throughout some of Pasco County's key corridors. In fact, the promotional video used in the informational campaign highlighted the need for shelters and was presented as the intro to this very impressive visual advertisement. Acquisition of these shelters through this particular funding


source also helps to "free-up" some of our FTA capital monies to be used for other essential purchases. Plans are already underway to begin designing the shelters and most locations have been selected for their placement. These sites include one of our current major transfer centers that accommodate connections between local service and corridor service, as well as locations along U.S. Highway 19 and U.S. Highway 301.

Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT) has implemented a number of improvements in transit service over the past several months. In December 2003, several routes were realigned to add additional coverage of its service area in West Pasco.

## Palm Tran Ridership Breaks Records

Palm Tran, Palm Beach County's public transit system, announces that February 2004 marked the highest weekday fixed-route ridership numbers to date. The average weekday total for February 2004 was 27,297 riders, breaking the previous record in November 2003 of 25,903 riders per weekday.

These records are reflected in all the routes for a systemwide growth. These are the top ridership records since the system began in 1996.



**MICHAEL F. BLONDIN**  
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC SECTOR SALES

**MOTOR COACH INDUSTRIES**

4 KONKEL DRIVE  
DUDLEY, MA 01571  
508 943 2946 PHONE  
774 364 0191 MOBILE  
508 943 2946 FAX  
michael.blondin@mcicoach.net  
www.mcicoach.com

## Your Ad Can Go Here

Business Cards – \$75.00  
1/4 Page – \$150.00  
1/2 Page – \$300.00

# Newly Formed Office of Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (OCITT) Has New Executive Director



*Hilda M. Fernandez*

Just one month after County Manager George Burgess created the Office of the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (OCITT), the County department that supports the citizens' group charged with monitoring the expenditures of the half-penny transit surtax, the OCITT has a new executive director. Hilda M. Fernandez became the first to take the helm of the OCITT, which

provides administrative support to the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (CITT) to ensure that it moves forward and is fully empowered to carry out its responsibilities.

The CITT is an independent volunteer watchdog board responsible for monitoring, overseeing, reviewing, auditing, and investigating the implementation of the \$17 billion People's Transportation Plan (PTP) comprised of a public transportation, neighborhood, highway and roadway improvements, as well as municipal component. As executive director, she will oversee and develop policy recommendations to the CITT and administer its operating budget, auditing, investigative, public and legislative affairs functions among many other duties.

Until this November, Ms. Fernandez was a Senior Advisor to Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas. During her tenure, she was chiefly responsible for public policy on issues relating to transportation, as well as housing and homelessness,

consumer services, and parks. In 2002, she served as the Campaign Coordinator of the "Transportation Initiative," the countywide public education campaign on the PTP ballot referendum, which resulted in the overwhelming approval of the half-penny surtax. As Campaign Coordinator, she was responsible for designing and executing the PTP's grassroots educational campaign, as well as creating and implementing its aggressive integrated public information program. Most notably, from 1997 to 2003, Ms. Fernandez was Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust and three years prior to that, served as the Trust's Assistant Director. As executive director, among many other duties, she administered a \$25 million annual budget, coordinated the application for and receipt of State and Federal funds totaling over \$70 million, and developed policy recommendations for the consideration of the Homeless Trust Board.

Ms. Fernandez graduated with Honors from the University of Miami with a Communications degree and two minors in English and Sociology.



**GARY WILLMS**

MANAGER TRANSPORTATION MARKETING

25800 CLAWTTER ROAD  
HAYWARD, CA 94545

TEL: (510) 264-5020  
FAX: (510) 785-6819  
E-MAIL: gwillms@gillig.com



307 Science Park Road  
Suite 211  
State College, PA 16803  
Phone: 570-374-5152  
or 570-850-8769  
Fax: 814-234-3393  
Email: tpw@AvailTec.com

**Troy Whitesel**  
Corporate Account  
Manager



**Mark S. Gambaccini**

Gambaccini Transit Sales  
3376 Green Meadow Circle  
Bethlehem, PA 18017  
Phone: 610-694-9763  
Fax: 610-691-7115  
E-mail: gts@fast.net



DADE 305-754-8646  
WATTS 800-432-3132  
FAX 305-754-6398  
E-MAIL: ESSMIAMI@AOL.COM

**RAY D. IBERSON**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**Electric Sales and Service, Inc.**  
WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS  
*Established 1924*

GENERAL OFFICES  
AND WAREHOUSES

340 N.E. 75TH STREET  
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33138

---

**FPTA Wishes To Thank The Following Sponsors  
For Their Mega-Roadeo Contribution In Addition  
To Major Funding By FPTA & FDOT**

**DIAMOND LEVEL**

Allison Transmissions  
Avail Technology

**PLATINUM LEVEL**

Cintas Uniforms  
Cummins SE Power  
Gillig

**GOLD LEVEL**

Atlantic Bus Shelters  
FPTA / FDOT  
Maxon Mobility  
McDonalds Transit  
Obie Media  
Q Straint  
Raney's  
Thermo King

**SILVER LEVEL**

Florida Detroit Diesel  
Freedman Seating  
GFI  
Interstate Battery  
NOR-PAT, Inc.  
Ricon  
Sure-Lok  
SVI  
TransDiesel  
TransSystem Corp.  
USSC

**BRONZE LEVEL**

American Emergency Vehs  
Lift-U  
Mohawk MPG  
NAPA  
TRS

**IN-KIND**

CUTR  
Daytona International Speedway  
Maintenance Design Group

**Sponsors for the May 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Friends & Supporters of  
Transit Golf Tourney**

Amerex Corp & Twin Vision  
American Seating  
ATC  
Avail Tech.  
Coach Crafters  
CSA Group  
Cummins SE  
Digital Recorders  
Electric Sales/Svc  
First Class Coach  
Freedman  
GENFARE  
Gillig  
Herzog  
Lift-U  
Luminator  
MV  
Q'Straint  
Reliable Transmission  
Ricon  
Transit Marketing Group  
Transmatic  
USSC  
Vapor

---

**Florida Public Transportation Association**

P. O. Box 10168  
Tallahassee, FL 32302

**FIRST CLASS**