



## NEWS RELEASE



# Florida Transit Agencies Prepare for Record Ridership as Floridians Respond to Record Gas Prices

TALLAHASSEE, FL – March 3, 2011 – The last time gasoline in Florida reached \$4.00/gallon, just about every transit system in the state experienced record ridership. This year might even be worse, as gas prices reached an all-time high for February and are continuing to rise. Sticker-shocked Floridians are expected to place unprecedented demand on Florida's public transportation infrastructure.

Now, with experts like Shell's former CEO predicting \$5.00 per gallon by 2012, the Florida transit industry is bracing for increasing numbers of Floridians who will discover how much money can be saved by taking public transportation to get to work. Public transportation is such a logical alternative to expensive driving that even the American Automobile Association has now placed links to public transportation on their homepage.

Wes Watson, Executive Director of the Florida Public Transportation Association said, "People know they can save a lot of money when they choose to take public transportation to work instead of driving alone." The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reported in December that riding public transportation saves individuals an average \$9,581 annually.

Jacksonville Transportation Authority Executive Director/CEO Michael J. Blaylock said, "JTA is ready and willing to serve when gas prices exceed local motorists' desire—or ability—to pay at the pump. When gas prices soared in 2008, JTA saw a 12 percent increase in ridership. Since then, ridership has continued to grow with many riders still using JTA's service, but now by choice."

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority Interim Executive Director, Denise Skinner agrees. "In 2008, PSTA's ridership jumped by more than 10%. Since that time, we've streamlined service, created a strong social media presence and added a Google Trip Planner to our website – all of which make it easier than ever for people to ride PSTA and save money. Given these improvements and the fact that most people are now spending more on a fill up than they would for a monthly bus pass, I wouldn't be surprised if our ridership gains this year are even greater than those in 2008."

The Florida Public Transportation Association is a nonprofit association whose members include every major public transit agency in Florida, as well as interested citizens and businesses. The FPTA acts as a collective voice in promoting the recognition, use, expansion and enhancement of public transportation in the state of Florida. The transit industry in Florida employs tens of thousands of Floridians, transports about 262 million riders a year, and creates billions of dollars per year in annual economic activity.

For more information visit [FloridaTransit.org](http://FloridaTransit.org)

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