

# RightTrackFlorida

Weekly Newsletter Update Special Edition - March 18, 2009

## SPECIAL EDITION!

We're now in the Third Week of the Legislative Session in Tallahassee. To keep you properly informed; on a regular basis, the *Central Florida Partnership* will be providing this Weekly Electronic Newsletter on *SunRail*.

We invite you to "bookmark" the web site for Right Track Florida at [www.RightTrackFlorida.org](http://www.RightTrackFlorida.org) and "check back" frequently for "daily postings" and "breaking news" between now and the end of the Legislative Session.





Top Photo: Supporters and Advocates for *SunRail* show their enthusiasm at the *SunRail* Rally. Middle Photo: Senator Andy Gardiner (Center) and Senator Lee Constantine (Right) Accept Resolution of Support from Leslie Hielema, President, Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce. Bottom Left Photo: Chamber Presidents from across Central Florida are shown with Senator Constantine and Senator Gardiner presenting their Resolutions of Support for *SunRail*. Bottom Right Photo: Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp speaks at *SunRail* Rally.

#### [It Was a Great Rally!](#)

Today the "*SunRail* Rally," hosted by the [Central Florida Partnership](#) in the Capitol Rotunda in Tallahassee. The "*SunRail* Rally" was part of the Capitol Connection, being advanced by a Coalition of Central Florida Chambers of Commerce. Traveling together as a "team" representing eight (8) different Central Florida Chambers of Commerce were over 130 Civic, Business, and Community Leaders.

Senator Andy Gardiner, Honorary Chair of the *2009 Capitol Connection* welcomed Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Chairman of the Central Florida Rail Commission, along with Senator Lee Constantine and Chamber Leaders as they presented local Resolutions in Support of *SunRail*: Paul Seago, Apopka Area Chamber of Commerce; Maritza Martinez, East Orlando Chamber of Commerce; Gaby Ortigoni, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando; Leslie J. Hielema, Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce; Cory Skeates, Oviedo - Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce; John Ashworth, Seminole County Regional Chamber of Commerce; Stina D'Uva, West Orange Chamber of Commerce; and Patrick Chapin, Winter Park Chamber of Commerce.

"This is historic to have these Central Florida Chambers, which represent large and small business, civic and community organizations, and everyday people who understand if we are to remain competitive on the economic front, we must pass commuter rail," said Senator Andy Gardiner. "*SunRail* is not just about moving people, but about jump-starting Florida's economy."

"Once legislators grant *SunRail* the same insurance authorization that not only Tri-Rail enjoys today, but also the vast majority of the commuter lines across the country, then we may begin putting thousands of Floridians to work," said Mayor Buddy Dyer, Chair of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission. Senate sponsor Lee Constantine reported that "*SunRail* will boost the economy, protect the environment and help meet Florida's transportation needs. The day this passes, we will be able to bring thousands of desperately needed jobs to Floridians."

The *Central Florida Partnership* was delighted to host this event; some of the other "folks" who were in attendance included: the Board of Directors of the [Central Florida Partnership](#), Representatives from the

Central Florida Transportation Corridors "Task Force," Core Strategy Team (CST) for Commuter Rail, Council of "Great Thinkers," Advocates and Supporters of [SunRail](#), along with other Business, Civic and Governmental Leaders from across the Central Florida Region.

[Tampa Bay Partnership Says, "Full Steam Ahead!"](#)

Thank you to the incredible efforts of the *Tampa Bay Partnership*. In a recent "Call to Action" to their Members, Investors, Regional Partners, Elected Officials and Supporters, they report, "The *Tampa Bay Partnership* fully supports the completion of the [SunRail](#) Project. Providing transit alternatives to move residents and visitors efficiently and effectively within and between regions is essential to our economy as well as to building connectivity within our state."

The *Partnership* has drafted a letter of support, and is encouraging their Members, Investors, Regional Partners, Elected Officials and Supporters to "sign on" with their name and company affiliation. They will also be hosting a "Tallahassee Fly-In" on Wednesday, March 25, 2009, and talking about [SunRail](#) encouraging their Members, Investors, Regional Partners, Elected Officials and Supporters.

We wish to personally thank Stuart Rogel, President of the [Tampa Bay Partnership](#) for his leadership in this important way, and add my words of appreciation to Ron Pierce, Chair of Public Policy and Advocacy for the *Tampa Bay Partnership*, and to Matt Mucci Vice President, Advocacy for the *Tampa Bay Partnership*. Together, we will get this done for Florida! For the complete call to action, and letter to the Florida Senate, just "click here," [Tampa Bay Partnership Electronic Newsletter](#).

[Congresswoman Brown Says SunRail Key to Economic Recovery](#)

In Tuesday's *News 4 Jacksonville* story, Congresswoman Corrine Brown (D-Jacksonville) was quoted as saying, "What I want to see in the stimulus is more infrastructure." Brown added, "When it comes to transportation and infrastructure, it's not Republican or Democrat, it's bipartisan."

Brown maintained investing Florida's share of the stimulus dollars in commuter railways is the way to go. It will not only create jobs for tens of thousands of Floridians, but will also provide a cheap method of transportation, saving the Sunshine State residents money in the long run. "If we have that commuter line, that is green," Brown said. "Commuter rail is the future and we need to give our whole state a facelift." For the complete story, "click here:" [News 4 Jacksonville Article](#).

[Florida Hit Hard by Recession](#)

According to a *Sarasota Herald Tribune* report, Florida's per capita share of federal stimulus dollars ranks 45th lowest out of 50 states. Only one state in the country has been hit harder than Florida by the combination of unemployment, foreclosures and food stamp requests, according to a recent analysis.

Further, the disparity is most noticeable on highway funding. Florida will receive \$1.3 billion for highways – \$73 per person. Transportation funding is considered a key piece of the stimulus because it creates hundreds of thousands of jobs fast. Florida Officials estimate that \$1 billion in road and bridge funding produces 28,000 jobs.

New York, which has an extensive bus, subway and commuter rail system, will get \$1.2 billion for mass transit. Florida will receive just \$300 million, but it may have itself to blame. The legislature has repeatedly

voted against funding light rail and other alternatives to automobiles. For the complete article, "click here," [Sarasota Herald Tribune Article](#).

#### [What's Next?](#)

Senate Bill 1212 is now headed to the Florida Senate Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee (TED); however, it has not yet been calendared for action. At your convenience, please convey your personal support regarding [SunRail](#) to the following members of the Florida Senate Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee (TED). For your information and review, shown below are the "Member Pages" of the Florida Senators serving on this Committee.

Chair: [Senator Mike Fasano \(R\)](#)

Vice Chair: [Senator Anthony C. "Tony" Hill, Sr. \(D\)](#)

[Senator Alex Diaz de la Portilla \(R\)](#)

[Senator Paula Dockery \(R\)](#)

[Senator Andy Gardiner \(R\)](#)

[Senator Christopher L. "Chris" Smith \(D\)](#)

[Senator Ronda Storms \(R\)](#)

In addition, please continue to email the Governor, Cabinet, and Members of the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives via the Right Track Florida web site, just "[click here](#)," Contact Your Elected Officials.

#### [Don't Forget!](#)

Please go to our comprehensive web site, [www.RightTrackFlorida.org](http://www.RightTrackFlorida.org) to find recent reports, talking points, and articles of interest. In addition, please utilize the "Email Your Elected Officials" page to let Governor Crist, Florida's Cabinet Members, and the Legislature that you support commuter rail!

#### [So You Will Know](#)

As our Governor and Legislative Leaders continue their work in Tallahassee, I will continue to represent the *Central Florida Partnership* "on the ground;" advancing [SunRail](#) and other key issues that will positively impact the Central Florida Region.

#### [Traveling to Tallahassee?](#)

Please let us know if you or your colleagues will be in Tallahassee during the Legislative Session. Here's why – we may need your attendance at a Committee Hearing or a Press Conference at a "moments notice."

So, please let us know if you are "Traveling to Tallahassee" so that we can "link" you to activities and events that will be important to the success of [SunRail](#). Please send us your availability by contacting Pam Clancy at 407.835.2486, or via email at [pam.clancy@centralfloridapartnership.org](mailto:pam.clancy@centralfloridapartnership.org) so we may maximize your "Time in Tallahassee."

#### [Need More Information?](#)

Please let us know please if there is any information we may provide to you and your organization as we work enthusiastically toward successfully advancing [SunRail](#).



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