

RightTrackFlorida

Weekly Newsletter Update – April 8, 2009

News

We're now more than halfway through 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 and "check back" frequently for "daily postings" and "breaking news" between now and the end of the Legislative Session.

This edition of our Weekly Electronic Newsletter for **SunRail** provides highlights of the tremendous support **SunRail** now enjoys across the State of Florida.

Support for SunRail Grows All Across Florida





Top Left: Senator Lee Constantine answers questions from the media as support for *SunRail* grows. **Top Right:** Senator Lee Constantine (left) shown with Jacob Stuart, President of the *Central Florida Partnership Commission*; all supporters of *SunRail*. **Middle:** Supporters of *SunRail* at *SunRail Rally* held at the Capitol Rotunda. **Bottom Left:** Senators Lee Constantine and Andy Gardiner shown with Presidents of Chambers of Commerce from across Central Florida; all in support of *SunRail*. **Bottom Right:** Orange County Mayor Rich Crotty (left), Vice Chair of the *Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission*, shown with Ray Gilley (right), President of the *Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission*, both strong supporters of *SunRail*.

What's Next for SunRail?

It's now official, Senate Bill 1212 (*SunRail*) will be heard at the next meeting of the Senate Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations (TED) Committee. It will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2009, from 9:45 a.m. until 11:45 a.m., in Room 309 of the Capitol in Tallahassee. We urge you to pick up the phone today and call or email each of the members on this important committee and ask for their support of SB 1212 (*SunRail*).

Chairman: Senator Mike Fasano (R)

District Phone: 727.848.5885

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5062

Email: fasano.mike.web@flsenate.gov

Vice Chairman: Senator Anthony C. "Tony" Hill, Sr. (D)

District Phone: 904.924.1646

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5024

Email: hill.tony.web@flsenate.gov

Senator Alex Diaz de la Portilla (R)

District Phone: 305.643.7200

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5109

Email: portilla.alex.web@flsenate.gov

Senator Paula Dockery (R)

District Phone: 863.413.2900

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5040

Email: dockery.paula.web@flsenate.gov

Senator Andy Gardiner (R)

District Phone: 407.428.5800

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5047

Email: gardiner.andy.web@flsenate.gov

Senator Christopher L. "Chris" Smith (D)

District Phone: 561.650.6801

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5112

Email: smith.chris.web@flsenate.gov

Senator Ronda Storms (R)

District Phone: 813.651.2189

Capitol Phone: 850.487.5072

Email: storms.ronda.web@flsenate.gov

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](#).

Get the Word Out About SunRail

Everything you need to help "get the word out" is at www.RightTrackFlorida.org. Sample Resolutions of Support, important "Talking Points," recent News Articles, significant Letters of Support to Legislators, and most importantly, a place where you can reach out to the Governor, Cabinet, Members of the Florida House of Representatives and Members of the Florida Senate. With just "one click," you can let them know your feelings about [SunRail](#),

Resolutions of Support for SunRail

With over 70 Resolutions and Letters of Support from across the State of Florida; **SunRail** continues to enjoy a wide body of support. This includes Resolutions of Support from the [African American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida](#), the [Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida](#), [Workforce Central Florida](#), and [Amalgamated Transit Union \(ATU\) #1596](#) along with Counties, Cities, and Civic and Community-Based Organizations representing hundreds of thousands of individuals who want **SunRail**.

Congressional Leaders Urge Support for SunRail

Earlier this week, [Congressmen John Mica](#) (R-Orlando), [Congresswoman Corrine Brown](#) (D-Jacksonville), [Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart](#) (R-Miami), [Congressman Vern Buchanan](#) (R-Sarasota), and [Congressman Connie Mack](#) (R-Cape Coral) sent a Letter of Support with answers to FAQs to Members of the Florida Senate. As Florida Members and Leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, they ask, "With improvements to congestion, the environment, and energy use, and as a major infrastructure and economic investment, we urge your help in final approval of this important transportation project (**SunRail**) for our state."

Facts and Figures About SunRail

SunRail means jobs, jobs, and more jobs. And, it means business opportunities, too, for working families all across the State of Florida. The economic impact during the construction, operation and maintenance of **SunRail** in the Central Florida Region alone is more than \$981 million in commercial business sales, and more than \$295 million in household earnings. To learn more, check out the one page fact sheet, "Strengthening our Economy" at www.RightTrackFlorida.org along with the **SunRail** Economic Study, which provides an overall summary and County-by-County "breakouts" of what **SunRail** means to the economic vitality of Florida.

Mayor Dyer Responds to SunRail Opponents

In Monday's *Orlando Sentinel* "blog," it reports that, "[Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer](#), Chairman of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission (**SunRail**), took exception to comments made by two leading Democrats, both of whom reaffirmed their opposition to **SunRail**. The opponents are Democratic [Senate Leader Al Lawson](#) of Tallahassee and incoming Democratic Leader [Nan Rich](#) of Weston. They contend **SunRail** is too expensive and money set aside for it should be spent on education and healthcare. "This just makes sense," Lawson said. "How can you fund a railroad and not fund kids?"

Dyer, also a Democrat and former Florida Senator said, "Such arguments are not true." He points out, "\$300 million would come from the Federal Government, more than \$170 million would come from the Sale of Bonds and another \$150 million would come from Local Governments." He added, "nearly \$500 million in total, is set aside within the local DOT District - a priority set by Area Leaders and Lawmakers. We want our Number One Priority to be **SunRail**. That's our money," Dyer said.

High Speed Rail and SunRail "Linked"

According to an *Orlando Sentinel* report, "The proposed high speed rail train that would link Orlando with Lakeland and Tampa will never happen if the planned **SunRail** commuter train through Central Florida is killed in the State Senate." "It's a double whammy," said Florida High Speed Rail Authority Chairman [Lee Chira](#). Chira told the Orange County Commission his venture needs "connectivity"—a hook-up with **SunRail** — to be successful."

"They [Federal Transportation Officials] would be out of their minds to consider high speed rail without [SunRail](#). That's as blunt as I can be," said [Orange County Mayor Rich Crotty](#), who is a strong supporter of [SunRail](#).

Floridian's for Better Transportation Supports SunRail

Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT) is a statewide business and transportation association dedicated to making transportation safer and more efficient in Florida. Earlier this week, President [Doug Calloway](#) asked all of his members and supporters to personally contact Florida Legislators and express their support of this "common sense transportation initiative." Mr. Calloway goes on to say, "targeted investments in transportation yield an amazing return, \$5.60 for each \$1.00 invested." Plus, he points out that 28,000 jobs are created for every \$1 billion invested in transportation projects.

FBT has a growing and diverse membership of businesses, organizations, and individuals, including the [Florida Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Florida Transportation Builders Association](#), [Publix Super Markets](#), [SunTrust Bank](#), the [Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers](#), the [Florida Public Transportation Association](#), the [Florida Ports Council](#), the [Florida MPO Advisory Council](#), the [Florida Airports Council](#), and numerous local businesses, Chambers of Commerce, MPOs, and transit providers all across the State of Florida.

Associated Builders & Contractors Says SunRail Helps All of Florida

Recently, [Mark Wylie](#) President of the [Central Florida Chapter Associated Builders and Contractors](#) (ABC) sent a statewide letter to thousands of members asking them to "tell your Florida Senators and Florida Representatives that a vote for [SunRail](#) is a vote for Florida's future."

"[SunRail](#) is the first-step in a future statewide rail network that will one day connect communities across the state. Make no mistake about it – [SunRail](#) isn't just critical for Central Florida. [SunRail](#) is critical to the future of our entire state. We need you to write the State Senate and tell them a vote for [SunRail](#) is a vote for Florida's future."

Regional Realtors Say "Go SunRail"

Next week, the [Orlando Regional Realtor Association](#) (ORRA) will join thousands of their colleagues across the State of Florida in Tallahassee for "Great American Realtor Day."

Earlier this week, in anticipation of their visit to the Capitol, the ORRA sent an alert to Association Members informing them of what [SunRail](#) means for not only Central Florida, but the communities surrounding the planned stops, and what it means for the economic viability of the entire State of Florida.

"For those of you who are unaware of what [SunRail](#) is, it is the first leg of a commuter rail system in Central Florida that will eventually have connectivity to Tampa, Jacksonville and Miami." Association Members were also told, "At a time when Florida is hemorrhaging construction jobs, [SunRail](#) puts people to work almost immediately, within four months of passage."

ATU Local #1596 Supports SunRail

Members of the [Amalgamated Transit Union \(ATU\) #1596](#) are asking elected officials to support [SunRail](#) because it will support tourism in Central Florida and the surrounding areas.

In a letter circulated earlier this week, ATU Local President Paul Wilson says that by "supporting **SunRail** today, you're installing doors of opportunity that will be open for future generations, just as our founding fathers did with the U.S. Constitution."

"**SunRail** will nurture Central Florida students seeking higher education; giving them a chance to commute to BCC (Bethune-Cookman College) in Daytona Beach, Florida, and continue to live at home with their parents in another part of Central Florida; saving money on room and board."

SunRail will also allow Central Florida tourists to visit Daytona Beach, and surrounding areas; which would stimulate Daytona Beach, Florida economy, and areas in between, and will provide our citizens with disabilities faster traveling options, to various locations, such as games, art shows, etc."

Don't Forget!

Please go to our comprehensive web site, 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.

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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