

## Session 2004 Report 6

### Week 5 & 6 Activities

There are no meetings in the Legislature this week in observation of Passover and Easter. When they return on April 12<sup>th</sup>, only 3 weeks will remain in the 2004 Session. It will be fast paced!

### Legislative Reception

On Monday we held our annual Legislative Reception. Unfortunately we didn't have as many Legislators attend as we hope. What lacked in quantity was made up for in quality. Among those attending were President of the Senate, Jim King (R-Jacksonville), Senate Transportation Chairman, Jim Sebesta (R-St. Petersburg) and his wife, Jean, and House Transportation Chairman, Dave Russell, (R-Spring Hill). FDOT Secretary Jose Abreu attended with several Assistant Secretary's and his Chief of Staff.

### March Madness and April Fools Day

One of the highlights of last week was a meeting with Governor Bush and the FTBA Board of Directors. Later in the week both the House and Senate did their budgets. That's where the Madness and April Fools Day come in. Early in the week we learned of a House amendment to the Appropriations Bill that would suspend the gas tax for a month or two during the summer. Sounds warm and fuzzy in an election year, but would wreck madness on the work plan. We handed out a sheet to every member of the legislature with 10 reasons why this was not a good idea. We met with the bill sponsors and learned they did want to do that but would replace the money with money from the Working Capital Fund, with other restrictions. Still not a good idea. So on April 1, the amendment was offered by Rep. Ron Greenstein (D-Coconut Creek) and Rep. Bob Henriquez (D-Tampa).

To our surprise, the Speaker opened the board up to allow every member of the House of Representatives to become a co-sponsor of this amendment. It was overwhelmingly co-sponsored (remember it is an election year). ***We would like thank the following Representatives who DID NOT co-sponsor this amendment:*** Thad Altman (R-Melbourne), Allan Bense (R-Panama City), Don Brown (R-DeFuniak Springs), Nancy Detert (R-Venice), Andy Gardiner (R-Orlando), Dudley Goodlette (R-Naples), Charlie Justice (St. Petersburg), Marcelo Llorente (R-Miami), Joe Pickens (R-Palatka), Nan Rich (D-Weston), Dennis Ross (R-Lakeland), Dave Russell (R-Spring Hill), and Joe Spratt, (R-Sebring). Fortunately, the Florida Senate did not take up a similar amendment, BUT since it has passed one house it will be an issue for the Appropriations Conference.

Another amendment offered in the House that we liked was defeated. It gave the \$100 million sweep back to the State Transportation Trust Fund. That amendment was offered by Rep. Suzanne Kosmas (D-New Smyrna). The vote was 44 Yeas and 70 Nays. 40 of the "yea" votes

were Democrats; the 4 Republicans voting “yea” were: Rep. Nancy Detert, Rep. Andy Gardiner, Rep. Jerry Paul and Rep. Dave Russell.

### **Work Zone Safety**

[HB 1103](#) by *Representative Dave Russell (R-Spring Hill)*

[SB 2414](#) by *Senator Jim Sebesta (R-St. Petersburg)*

HB 1103 should be heard in the House Finance and Taxation Committee next week. We are hoping SB 2414 will be withdrawn from the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice.

For more information on the Legislature, please use the following links:

[Florida Senate](#)

[Florida House of Representatives](#)