

Spreading The Word

The NMA needs your help. And, this time we aren't asking for money (although if you want to send some, that would be fine too!).

As it stands now, the NMA is growing, but slowly. In order for the NMA to be effective and make the changes that you want, the NMA needs to expand.

Here's how we can do it. Spread the word.

Do you have a friend or family member who might be interested in the NMA? Tell them about the NMA and encourage them to join. Don't settle for the response of, "I'll think about it." Follow up in a day or a week and send them a brochure from the NMA or better yet, send them a past issue of *NMAF NEWS*. The NMA office has many brochures and issues of *NMAF NEWS* that we would be happy to send

to you for this purpose. All you have to do is contact the NMA office and we'll ship them right out.

Is there a car club in the area? Maybe there is a racing event. Passing out free issues of *NMAF NEWS* would be a great way to inform them of an organization that represents their interests.

Another use for *NMAF NEWS* or other resource materials could be educating an elected official on a particular motorist topic. If you can convince these officials to see the NMA as a source of reliable and accurate information, you are helping the NMA to grow.

The same principle applies with the media. When you see or hear reporters relaying incorrect information on motorist issues, let them know where they can get the information that they

are missing. You can also send them an NMA brochure, a past issue of *NMAF NEWS*, or direct them to the NMA web site (www.motorists.org).

If we all start to do just a few of these actions, the NMA could become the household name that it deserves to be. Please take advantage of the many NMA resources available to you.

Newsletters, brochures, information on motorist issues, studies, articles, the NMA web site, and more are all at your disposal. To order any of our free information, please call 800-882-2785 or email us at nma@motorists.org.

Remember, every member who joins because of you is an extra three months added to your membership. It's our way of saying, "Thanks!" Please, spread the word. ☺

Wrongfully Posted

By Greg Mauz, Florida Activist

An elderly gentleman phoned me to help shed some light on a traffic problem. He received a citation for driving 50 mph in a 35 mph zone in Boca Raton, Florida. I was familiar with the area and knew that it was normally posted at 45 mph, so I asked if there had been a construction zone. The answer was no. I found out later that several hundred tickets were reported to have been written at this location.

I thought this was worth looking into. Upon surveying the area, I found a poorly-posted reduced speed zone that was 150 meters long, but with no construction or other factors that would justify the slowing down of traffic.

I consulted with the District Traffic Engineer on August 3, 2001 about this. A check by Department of

Transportation (DOT) personnel found the 35 mph signs to be there in error and they promptly removed them on August 7, 2001. Their promptness in removing the signs was refreshing.

As satisfying as their actions were, I was still curious as to how this incorrect posting could occur.

For the sake of having this on record, I asked for and received a letter from the Florida DOT which stated, "The permittee (Palm Beach County) failed to remove the subject signs upon completion of the project."

Inquiries to the DOT permit office uncovered more confusion. After checking their records, an employee said that he "was not aware of any warrant permit issued to reduce the speed limit at that location."

It seems the county illegally established the 35 mph zone and

then conveniently "forgot" to remove the signs.

If you notice excessively long construction zones with no actual construction occurring in your area, I would suggest that you contact your local Traffic Engineer to discover if the zone is legal or not. A few phone calls could fix the situation in a matter of days. If this can happen here, it's a sure bet that it's happening elsewhere as well. ☺

With just the click of a button, renew your NMA membership online!
www.motorists.org



Florida Department of Transportation

JEB BUSH
GOVERNOR

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS-DISTRICT 4
7900 Forest Hill Boulevard
West Palm Beach, Florida 33413-3342
Telephone (561) 432-4966, ext. 1120

THOMAS F. BARRY, JR.
SECRETARY

August 27, 2001

Mr. Greg Mauz
3102 Cardinal Drive
Delray Beach, Florida 33444

Dear Mr. Mauz:

SUBJECT: State Section 93210; State Road 7 (US 441),
Northbound State Road 7, South of Glades Road (State Road 808),
West Boca Raton, Palm Beach County

REMOVAL OF SPEED LIMIT SIGNS

This is in response to our telephone conversation on August 24, 2001, requesting a letter as to the removal of the 35 MPH Speed Limit signs at the subject location.

The Department has completed the removal of the above subject signs, which were installed per permit issued to Palm Beach County. The permittee (Palm Beach County) failed to remove the subject signs upon completion of the construction. Therefore, our West Palm Beach Maintenance forces remove the aforementioned signs on August 7, 2001.

But the fact remains, what speed limit is posted at that time, is what is enforced. The signs were regulatory and therefore enforceable.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact this office at the number provided above.

Sincerely,

Roy J. Smith
Area Traffic Studies Engineer

RJS/ms:Greg.ltr

cc: Charles Walker, PBCTE
Paul Blanchard, FDOT
Mike Atkins, FDOT
Rick Mitinger, FDOT
Larry Kelly, FDOT
File



Public Works Department - Office of Transportation

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIVISION

2300 W. Commercial Boulevard • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309 • 954-484-9600 • FAX 954-735-8564

September 18, 2003

Mr. Greg Mauz
3102 Cardinal Drive
Delray Beach, FL 33444

**RE: NW 38th Street between Powerline Road and Andrews Avenue,
Prospect Road between Andrews Avenue and Dixie Highway – Oakland Park
Request for Existing Speed Study Data**

Dear Mr. Mauz:

In accordance with your letter received in our office August 19, 2003, this Division has researched the appropriate files to determine if existing speed study data are available for the above-referenced roadway sections. From our review of those files, we found that no recent speed studies were performed, nor are there any studies pending for these locations.

If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at extension 352, or Marie C. Vincent of my staff at extension 306.

Sincerely,

Andrew G. Sebo, P.E., PTOE
Traffic Operations Engineer

G:\STUDIES\AGS\GregMauz.doc

Note: Ms. Vincent researched both roads in their entirety. There are no records of any engineering studies performed. Federal and State Law require a study in order to set a valid, legal speed limit.

Greg Mauz NMA

Engineers want speed

By JEFF SIELKE
STAFF WRITER

Motorists using a portion of El Clair Ranch Road seem to have lead feet, according to county engineers.

For that reason, engineers Tuesday will ask Palm Beach County Commissioners to increase the speed limit from 30 mph to 35 mph on the road west of Delray Beach. The increase, between Boynton Beach Boulevard and Via Vista, will likely be approved on a

trial basis for 120 days.

But experts and activists both say the increase is minimal, at best, given recent traffic studies.

Dan Weisberg, assistant director of the engineering traffic division, said that in his experience with the county, he has never heard of a trial-basis speed-limit increase.

"Speed increases have never been done on a trial basis," he said. "We rarely increase speeds. I can only think of six,

eight or 10 times when the speeds have been increased. This sounds like the kind of thing that is an issue for one commissioner."

Weisberg would not mention a county commissioner by name, but Burt Aaronson represents the area, and he has been long been vocal about speed limits and traffic-safety issues.

The recommendation for the increase is based on a widely accepted traffic-engineering formula that links the posted

* Sunday, June 4, 2000 **3A**

limit increased

speed limit to the speed that 85 percent of drivers maintain on any given road.

"Those studies show the most of the drivers (on El Clair Ranch Road) were driving in the high 40s," Weisberg said. "Based on that, increasing (the speed limit) to 35 is low. But I haven't surveyed the road."

Even though the posted speed is expected to increase, it is not enough of a hike for Greg Mauz, Florida activist for the National Motorists Association.

And Mauz said he plans to speak out at Tuesday's meeting that begins at 9:30 a.m. in West Palm Beach.

"To start with, it is against the law to set the speed limit on El Clair Ranch Road at only 35 mph," Mauz said. "State laws require that speeds be posted within 8 mph of the speed that 85 percent of drivers use the road at. If 85 percent of motorists travel 48 mph on El Clair Ranch Road, then the speed limit should set at

either 50 or 45 mph, and not at 35 mph."

The speed limit is not the only issue facing El Clair Ranch Road. Residents living near a blinking traffic light at the intersection of El Clair Ranch Road and West Atlantic Avenue have asked the Florida Department of Transportation to change the temporary light to a fully operational light. State officials have promised an answer by the end of the month.

Time to expose myths of speeding

The government, insurance-funded 'safety' groups, police and media cohorts insist there is an epidemic of dangerous speeders wreaking havoc on our roadways. They preach many other related claims. Speed limits, especially lower ones, enhance safety. Speeding causes a huge percentage of accidents. Hence, for our collective "safety," speed enforcement remains the top priority of most police departments.

The paragraph above contains very little truth. In reality, there occurs an epidemic of unethically underposted speed limits. The Federal Highway Administration Speed Limit Survey of 1992, completed over five years in 27 states, remains the most comprehensive objective study ever done on the subject.

Conclusions include: more than 90 percent of speed limits are set too low, speed limits have no real effect on highway speeds or safety and need to be set according to proper engineering criteria, not political mandate.

It says, "The posted speeds make technical violators out of motorists driving at reasonable and safe



Greg
Mauz

speeds."

Speed survey readings, recorded by Florida's Department of Transportation at 11 freeway sites in May 1999, showed no clear majority compliance (more than 51 percent of motorists) anywhere! The average zone achieved only 30 percent adherence to the speed limit — the same as in 1992. Four locations garnered less than 20 percent. This epidemic of malpractice makes criminal the reason-

able, safe behavior of the vast majority of motorists.

The correct method for setting a speed limit involves a traffic engineering study to measure and determine the free-flow travel speeds on a given road. The limit should then be posted at the 85th percentile speed, the speed at or below which 85 percent of people drive. This happens to be the universally accepted, proper, scientific, democratic and safest method for posting the speed limit.

Studies consistently prove that, on most roads, from five to 10 mph above average (+ 12 mph on freeways) reflects the safest travel speeds. This speed coincides with the 85th percentile on all roads and the 90th percentile on Interstate highways. The slowest drivers crash the most, not the fastest.

According to the Maryland Department of Transportation's "Drive to Survive, A speed limit based on the 85th percentile speed offers the greatest chance of achieving some uniformity in speeds." Less speed variance reduces tailgating and lane surfing, thereby increasing safety.

'safety' lobby

Will drivers always do 10 mph over? No. An Arizona Department of Transportation study (Oct. 1997) says, "Before and after studies consistently demonstrate that there are no significant changes in traffic speeds following the posting of new or revised speed limits." Real world examples include I-95, Yamato Road and Montana.

Lower speed limits cannot enhance safety. After the National Motorists Association inspired repeal of the 55 mph speed limit Nov. 28, 1995, "safety" groups screamed, "6,400 lives will be lost."

Over three years have passed with more than 40 states raising limits. Results: about 500 fewer fatalities on all U.S. freeways. Montana achieved a record safe year during 1996, with no daytime speed limit. Over 65 percent of the German autobahns contain no speed limits, yet maintain an equivalent death rate to our interstates.

Contrary to "speed kills" propaganda, only 1.77 percent of all drivers in 1998 crashes were assigned 'speed too fast' as a contributing cause.

So why do police spend 60-70 per-

cent of their time writing speeding tickets as compared to all other moving violations? Money! Florida police wrote 733,087 speeding citations in 1997, netting more than \$95 million. All states combined extort more than \$2 billion annually. Insurance gouges more than \$6 billion.

In Florida, failure to yield, resulting in a crash, receives a \$78 fine. Speeding 20 mph over the limit while driving safely results in a \$168 fine. Justice? Safety? Furthermore each speeding fine feeds 12 different government agencies, with about half benefiting the locality of the infraction.

It's time for this "safety" facade to meet the wrecking ball. The real issue concerns citizen rights vs. government/insurance power and money. Let democracy be more than rhetoric. Make people more important than money. Accomplish both by passing the Model Speed Zoning Bill, which would require, by law, setting properly engineered 85th-90th percentile speed limits.

Greg Mauz of Delray Beach is the Florida activist for the National Motorists Association.

News-Sun

Serving Highlands County for more than 70 years

News-Sun, Friday, December 24, 1999

State ignores its own rules to lower speed

To give the community what it wants, FDOT ignored its own rule for determining safe speed

By STEVE REEVES
News-Sun

SEBRING — By agreeing to lower the speed limit on U.S. 27 north of Sebring to 60 mph, the Florida Department of Transportation went against one of its most basic rules.

A FDOT spokesman said Wednesday that even though the agency considers 65 mph the safest speed for the six-lane section of U.S. 27, it agreed to lower the speed limit to 60 mph because of local concerns about crashes.

"A six-lane highway is designed to handle 65 mph," said FDOT spokesman Gene O'Dell. "It's built for 65 mph."

The FDOT set the speed limit according to the "85th percentile rule." Engineers studied driver's speeds for a 24-hour period and then determined the average

speed.

The agency then invoked the "85th percentile rule," determining that 65 mph was the appropriate speed because that was how fast 85 percent of motorists on that section of highway drive their vehicles.

"Speed limits are basically set by majority rule," O'Dell said. "The speed limit has got to be set high enough so that what most people are doing is legal."

FDOT agreed this week to lower the speed limit on U.S. 27 north of Sebring to 60 mph for one year. It will then determine

whether the speed limit should stay at 60 mph or be put back to 65 mph.

O'Dell said lower speed limits do not guarantee fewer crashes or safer highways.

"Speed, per se, is not the cause of traffic accidents," he said. "What causes accidents is different speeds being driven in the same area."

O'Dell said it is important that a speed limit reflect the speed at which most drivers are comfortable traveling.

See SPEED, page 7A

SPEED

Continued from page 1A

"Regardless of what is on the sign, people are going to drive what they think is right," he said. "What we need to do is set a speed limit most people will abide by."

O'Dell said FDOT stands by its earlier determination that the 65-mph speed limit is appropriate. He said the agency will closely monitor that section of U.S. 27 for any indication of increased crashes since the speed limit has been lowered.

"We're going to see what happens," he said. "We hope it's not unsafe."

Commissioner David Flowers, a member of the Community Traffic Safety Team, is happy that FDOT lowered the speed limit.

"I really think this is going to save

some lives," he said, noting that there are three retirement communities and a hospital within the current 65-mph speed zone. "Sometimes you've got to put aside the data and do things out of common sense."

But Greg Mauz, the Florida activist for the National Motorist Association, a lobbying group, said that lowering the speed limit will likely not cause a decrease in crashes.

"Speed limits have nothing to do with traffic safety," Mauz said. "Careless driving in the state of Florida is the number-one cause of accidents."

Mauz argues that most speed limits are too low and tend to be ignored by most drivers. He, like O'Dell, says most crashes are not caused by excessive speed.

"You have to make laws based on facts and reality," Mauz said. "Not emotions."

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles says that of all auto crashes from 1993 to 1996, only two percent were attributable to speeding. Careless driving and failure to yield were the most commonly cited factors in crashes.

The Federal Highway Administration has conducted several studies this decade and found that a majority of speed limits are actually set too low. Data from that agency concluded that only one in 10 speed zones has more than a 50-percent compliance, and that higher speed limits generally do not lead to an increase in traffic crashes.

Mauz said that FDOT should have stuck with the 85th percentile rule on U.S. 27.

"Speed limits are supposed to be set at the 85th percentile," he said. "That is the safest speed for speeds to be posted at."

Delray Beach News

THE LEADER IN LOCAL NEWS

45th Year / Issue 247

2 Sections / 24 Pages / 25 Cents

Activist threatens suit over speed limits

Accuses county of 'underposting' limits on two county roads

By JEFF SIELKE
STAFF WRITER

A local man said he will take legal action against Palm Beach County if things don't speed up on certain roads.

Greg Mauz, a Florida activist with the National Motorists Association and a Delray Beach resident, said he is unsatisfied with the response from the

county attorney's office about his concerns that speed limits on two county roads are "under posted."

Mauz said that the county must post speed limits no more than 8 mph less than the speed 85 percent of surveyed drivers travel the roadway. He further claims that setting a 35-mph speed limit on El Clair Ranch

between Via Vesta in Delray Beach and Boynton Beach Boulevard breaks state law.

"I feel like the county is trying to whitewash the issue that these speed limits on El Clair Ranch Road and Yamato Road are illegally under posted," Mauz said, referring to a conversation he had with Assistant County Attorney Marlene

Everett.

"I really feel like Marlene Everett was skirting the point when she said there was nothing the county could do," Mauz said.

Everett said the only thing she told Mauz was that Palm Beach County was reviewing his concerns.

"Mr. Mauz and I had a lengthy discussion," Everett said. "The

only thing I told him was that our engineering department was in review mode, and that when that review is done is up to the engineering department."

To that end, Dan Weisberg, assistant director of the department of engineering's traffic

See Speed/

4A

National Motorist Association support lawsuit, says Mauz

Speed / from

1A

division, said a traffic review will be conducted on El Clair Ranch Road at the end of a 120-day waiting period.

"The speed limit was changed on that road at the direction of the board of county commissioners," Weisberg said. The local County Commissioner (Burt Aaronson) requested that change because of the number of seniors living in the area, and we serve at the pleasure of the commissioners."

But Mauz is not waiting for further county action.

"The last thing I want to do is bring Palm Beach County into a lawsuit," Mauz said. "But if some action isn't taken by the beginning of October, I will go ahead with filing a lawsuit."

If Mauz does decide to file such a lawsuit, he claims to have at least two lawyers ready to present his case. He also said he has the support of the National Motorist Association and local members who have offered Mauz money to fight the county.

A representative of the NMA said the organization supports Mauz' efforts, but it has yet to consider joining in a legal battle.

"Greg Mauz knows speed-limit laws inside out," said Eric Skrum, communications director for the NMA. "So, if Greg says there is a problem with the posted speeds, we would tend to believe it. But before we would support a lawsuit, we would like to sit down with Mauz to get the details."

Greg Mauz
FL NMA



Florida Department of Transportation

JEB BUSH
GOVERNOR

605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

THOMAS F. BARRY, JR.
SECRETARY

September 25, 2000

Gregory F. Mauz
3102 Cardinal Drive
Delray Beach, FL 33444

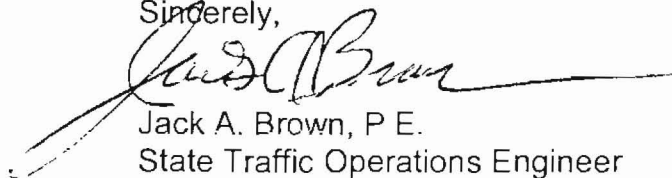
Dear Mr. Mauz:

I was asked to respond to your recent letter to Secretary Tom Barry on speed limits in Palm Beach County. As the head of the office that publishes the Speed Zone Manual, I thank you for your letter, which endorses the method we use. The 85th percentile method is recognized throughout the country as the best basic element for determining speed limits, and we specify its use in the Speed Zone Manual.

As you point out, Florida Statute 316.189, requires that both cities and counties must comply with the criteria developed by the Department of Transportation, but the Statute does not specify any sanctions against them if they do not. When Florida Statutes do not authorize an action, we sometimes must rely on case law to interpret what should or should not be done.

The Department cannot withhold highway funds as you suggest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack A. Brown".

Jack A. Brown, P.E.
State Traffic Operations Engineer

JAB:da
File: 01-00-42569

cc: Freddie Simmons

Florida

TRAFFIC CITATION 000011064

YOU GOT THE TICKET, WHO GETS THE MONEY?

Let's say a 'friend' is ticketed doing 80 mph in a 55 mph zone in Palm Beach County. The fine is a whopping \$170.75 without traffic school.

Who gets the loot?

\$ 1.00 County Clerk Communication Fee
\$10.00 County Court Cost
\$11.50 County Communication Fund
\$ 2.00 Juvenile Justice/Child Welfare
\$ 6.25 Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund
(25¢ per mile over the limit)

\$30.75 Subtotal

The remaining \$140 is distributed this way:

\$78.96 (56.4%) County or City Fine
\$28.84 (20.6%) State General Revenue Fund
\$10.08 (7.2%) Emergency Medical Services Trust Fund
\$ 7.14 (5.1%) Additional Court Cost Clearing Fund
\$11.48 (8.2%) Impaired Drivers & Speeders Trust Fund
\$ 2.80 (2%) Florida Endowment for Vocational Rehab
\$.70 (0.5%) Clerk Administrative Cost (County)

And what do they do with it?

Wondering exactly what the Impaired Drivers and Speeders Fund is? Here is a short guide to those obscure funds getting fat on speeders' excesses.

LOCAL

County Communication Fund - State law allows the county to use speeding fines for construction of a countywide radio system that will be used by general county government, Fire-Rescue and the Sheriff's Office. More than \$2.7 million has been collected in three years.

STATE

Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund - Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission uses fines to help protect all native fish, wildlife and plants.

Child Welfare Training Trust Fund - Money goes to help train people who work with children in foster care, protective services, etc.

Juvenile Justice Training Trust Fund - Same idea, different set of state employees.

Emergency Medical Services Trust Fund - Money goes to a variety of causes associated with trauma care: hospitals, EMS organizations, licensing equipment and medical workers, creating plans for regional and state trauma systems.

Additional Court Cost Clearing Trust Fund - This money goes into two other trust funds - one administered by the Dept. of Law Enforcement and the other by the Dept. of Community Affairs Bureau of Public Safety Management.

Impaired Drivers and Speeders Trust Fund - This fund is still listed on some traffic tickets, but the name was changed two years ago, as was the way the money is used. The Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Trust Fund received \$9.3 million (68 percent of its budget) from traffic fines last year. The fund gives the University of Florida and the University of Miami \$500,000 each year for medical research. The remaining money is used to help people with these injuries in a variety of ways.

Florida Endowment for Vocational Rehabilitation - The money helps disabled people become independent through job training, public awareness campaigns and other programs.

Text by Beth McLeod

Sunday

JULY 15, 2001

Delray Beach News

Yamato Road in Boca Raton is just one of the roads with 'under-posted' speed limits, says a representative of the National Motorists Association.

Yamato speed limit 'illegal'?

600 speeding violations have been written at three sites by Sheriff's Office

ZALMAN GROSS
STAFF WRITER

As the Palm Beach County Sheriff's department's radar rampage continues along Yamato Road, transportation activist Greg Mauz of Delray Beach says the rights of drivers are being violated and their safety compromised

because the speed limit is too low according to Florida law.

More than 600 speeding violations have been written at three sites in the Boca Raton area since Sheriff Ed Bieluch's Safe Roads Initiative began on Monday, July 2.

"They are turning the innocent

into the guilty," said Mauz, a professional driver who is also the "Florida activist" for the Wisconsin-based National Motorists Association.

According to Mauz, several South County thoroughfares west of Boca Raton - including Yamato Road near Lyons Road - have

"under-posted" speed limits.

Adhering to widespread traffic-engineering guidelines, county engineers follow Florida law by posting speed limits on any stretch of road based on the speed that 85 percent of the traf-

 Speed/

11

Letters to the Editor

Traffic-law enforcement harasses taxpayers

The recent story about speed tickets issued by crime-fighting cops justly outraged Traffic Court Magistrate Carl Lipton [who has since been fired]. Police and deputies in most every community have favorite "hiding places," waiting to nail taxpayers for "speeding."

Returning from a high-risk medical procedure at Boca Raton Community Hospital, my wife was ticketed on Butts Road just west of Military Trail. She explained that the medical examiner urged her to get me home immediately. The cop didn't care and ticketed another driver across the street, keeping us waiting 20 minutes while he argued with the other driver. A real cop pulled up and told the officer who kept us waiting to

"lay off and let the poor guy get home into bed." It didn't matter; we were ticketed. I wrote the chief of police, who replied with a lot of drivel.

My solution is for every stupid ticket like the ones on El Clair Ranch Road and other "taxpayer-entrapment" areas, the cops be fined \$50 per ticket, the money going to us to help pay the premium increase on our auto insurance. If he writes more than four tickets in one day, the fine should be \$100 per ticket and suspended without pay for a week. The insanity of allowing two cops to write 175 tickets in one month on El Clair Ranch Road is enough to make the public demand the officers be fired for criminal stupidity.

Why aren't they fighting crime such as rape, robbery, assault, drugs and more?

STEPHEN SIMON

DELRAY BEACH

S-S 4-11-00

I was leaving my attorney's office, and was in the car about 30 seconds when I was pulled over by a motorcycle policeman. He told me he caught me going through two red lights and I was going 53 mph in a 35 mile zone. I said I was only in the car for 30 seconds and I think I only went a half mile. He accused me of calling him a liar. I

was given a ticket. I also turned and talked to other people who had the same situation with the same policeman. I believe the police are totally out of control and the speeding thing is really going beyond the rules of reason.

Judge's firing over speed limit unfair

In my opinion, Palm Beach County Chief Judge Walter Colbath recently acted in a manner that was unfair and lacking in integrity. His firing of Judge Carl Lipton was either bad management, politically motivated or just mean. Judge Lipton did not have a string of speeding tickets against him, he ran his courtroom fairly and he absorbed much of the workload that the other magistrates did not want. He received no warnings, no private discussion, no chance to stop what Judge Colbath found offensive — just a pink slip delivered by a messenger. In business, we call that bad management, and if done, usually gets the company sued and the offending manager severely reprimanded.

Judge Lipton's terrible sin was writing a letter to Palm Beach County officials asking that the speed limit on a speed trap road, El Clair Ranch Road in Boynton Beach, be increased. County engineers investigated and concurred with Judge Lipton but Colbath couldn't fire them. Judge Lipton acted to correct something he felt was wrong on the road his neighborhood fronts on.

But let's talk about right and wrong for a moment. Setting speed limits unreasonably low to take in the fines sounds more like entrapment than proper use of police resources. But maybe raking in the fines is in Judge Colbath's political interest. If that is so, do we really want him running our traffic courts?

Reinstate Judge Lipton and publicly apologize for acting rashly to soil his good name, and let the engineer raise the El Clair Ranch Road speed limit to 40 mph.

JEFF BOCKOL

BOYNTON BEACH

Outrageous gas prices

It amazes me that there hasn't been an outcry from our political leaders over the outrageous price increase for gasoline. We've been big brother to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries for years and bailed Mexico out of a financial crisis not long ago. They have a strange way of showing appreciation. Maybe they should call us Uncle Sap instead of Uncle Sam.

MARVIN J. SHERVAN

BOCA RATON

Turnpike tolls too high

The tolls on Florida's Turnpike are outrageous. I paid \$11.60 from Mile 99 to Mile 302. I suggest we rename the toll road the Jesse James Turnpike. Furthermore, each collection booth should be named after one of the banks Jesse robbed.

PHIL SPANDORF

WEST PALM BEACH

Stop thinking that people will bike to work

The idea that working people are going to hop on their bicycles and commute to work is absurd. We are already a totally time-pressed culture that barely makes it into work after getting the kids off to school, etc., in the relative air-conditioned, phone-hooked-up, music-amplified comfort of our cars. And what about Florida's erratic (and often dangerous) weather?

The only way to reduce traffic is to truly put more efforts into the "telecommuting" jobs we keep hearing about. Only if employers are given substantial tax breaks to set employees up with home computers and fax machines will things change.

Until such time, the idea of putting bike lanes on roads and (more) showers in office buildings will merely be an economic boon to the road pavers and bathroom contractors.

In the meantime, they should turn Boca Raton City Hall into a multilevel parking lot.

BUD FLEISHER

DELRAY BEACH

JM FL NMA

I-595 speed limit to rise

Switch to 65 mph expected to occur in next few weeks

BY MICHAEL TURNBELL
TRANSPORTATION WRITER

In a few weeks, drivers on Interstate 595 will legally get to do what many do already: drive 65 mph.

The Florida Department of Transportation is raising the speed limit from 55 mph to 65 mph on the full length of I-595 between U.S. 1 and the junction of Interstate 75 and the Sawgrass Expressway.

The change will take effect as soon as new signs are posted. That's expected to happen in the next few weeks.

Rick Mitinger, an engineer for the DOT's office in Fort Lauderdale, said the new 65-mph speed limit will be much closer to the speed that most people drive comfortably.

At least four speed studies since the first leg of I-595 opened in 1989 have found that 85 percent of the drivers go 70 mph or faster. "Every single time we got the same results," he said.

In 1995, the federal government allowed states to raise limits on certain interstates above 55 mph. But a decision to increase the speed limit on I-595 was put off until a number of safety improvements could be made including the widening of the en-

Quotables
A LOOK AT WHAT NEWSMAKERS ARE SAYING

"It's about time.... Now at least the speed limit will reflect more of reality, and I know a lot of cars are going faster than that."

GREG MAUZ

DELRAY BEACH ACTIVIST WITH THE FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION, ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A 65-MPH SPEED LIMIT ON I-595

*The real story:
The speed
limit was
illegally low!
gjm*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

trance ramp from southbound Interstate 95 to westbound I-595.

"We wanted to make sure the changes weren't going to negatively impact the travel flow before we changed the speed limit," Mitinger said.

Delray Beach resident Greg Mauz, an activist with the Florida chapter of the National Motorists Association, which has lobbied for speed limit increases throughout the country, was happy to hear the news.

"It's about time," Mauz said. "[The 55-mph speed limit] did not reflect the reality of what cars were going. Now at least the speed limit will reflect more of reality, and I know a lot of cars are going faster than that."

Marc Jaro, of Coral Springs, who commutes on I-595 frequently, said it's hard to drive 55 mph when the speed limit on other expressways in Broward is 65 mph or higher.

"If I do drive 55, everyone is passing me, and it is dangerous," Jaro said.

The DOT is waiting for speed limit signs from its shop in Lake City. Mitinger said the new replacement panels will be installed over existing signs. A few new signs, however, will be placed where drivers enter the highway at key points to reinforce the new speed limit.

Mitinger said eastbound I-595 drivers approaching the U.S. 1 North exit will see a new type of warning sign, a yellow diamond-shaped sign, telling them to reduce speed as they approach the end of the highway where it feeds into Eller Drive at Port Everglades.

While drivers might be thrilled with the pending change, law enforcement officers aren't happy about it.

Lt. Bill Ferrell, of the Florida Highway Patrol, said many drivers break the speed limit, cruising at 70 mph or more. "We have a slogan. 'Speed kills.' And it does," Ferrell said.

The Highway Patrol will likely set up stricter enforcement and put more troopers on the road when the new limit takes effect. "We will go out there and do our job and enforce that law," Ferrell said.

In 1997, the DOT raised speed limits on I-95 in Broward from 55 mph to 65 mph.

In Palm Beach County, the I-95 speed limit also was raised to 65 mph from the Broward line to Linton Boulevard and from Northlake Boulevard to

The speed limit was kept at 55 mph between Linton and Northlake because of construction and increased to 70 mph from PGA Boulevard north through Martin and St. Lucie counties to State Road 70 near Fort Pierce.

I-95 in Miami-Dade County retains the 55-mph speed limit, mostly because of congestion, roadway design and the interstate's urban status.

The DOT's District 4 office, which covers Broward and Palm Beach counties, has the final say on setting speed limits on state roads in the district.

In addition to doing a speed study, the state will consider

Highway engineers say it's safer and less congested if speed limits are set at or below the limit that 85 percent of drivers travel when traffic is flowing freely.

Should be: 75 MPH
roadway design, traffic volumes, and whether an area is urban, suburban or rural before adjusting speed limits.

"If conditions get worse in the foreseeable future, we may have to reduce it again," Mitinger said of the I-595 change.

In the traffic engineering world, roads are considered safer if everyone travels at the same speed. That way, there's less weaving and tailgating.

Generally, highway engineers say, it's safer and less congested if speed limits are set at or below the limit that 85 percent of drivers travel when traffic is flowing freely.

Mitinger said he doesn't expect people will drive faster just because the speed limit is raised.

Studies show the average speed of traffic doesn't increase when limits go up.

"It really is a comfort level for most drivers," Mitinger said.

Mauz of the National Motorists Association said he also doesn't expect driving habits to change.

"The numbers change on the signs, but the travel speeds on the road remain the same," Mauz said. "The only thing that changes is the amount of people in compliance to the limit."

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