

Hwy. 98: Plans advance to six-lane highway

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The Garcon Point bridge. The meeting was one step in a long process to collect public comments and incorporate them into the proposed \$65 million highway improvements. The engineers involved in the project say they value public opinion and have gone back to the drawing board once already because of it. "There were objections to the way it was laid out," Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) Spokesman Tommie Speights said of a previous plan to widen 98. "The original plan was for six lanes and access roads. The access roads take up more property, more right of way. That was the basic objection."

The latest version of the study is actually a portion of an older study that included a large portion of US 98. It includes adding lanes for traffic, pedestrians and bicycles from Bayshore Road to Portside Drive. Between 1994 and 1996 a preliminary study of US 98 from the Gulf Breeze end of the Pensacola Bay Bridge to Hurlburt Field in Navarre, a distance of approximately 30 miles, was conducted to survey the impacts of widening US 98. The plan called for a tremendous amount of right of way to be purchased and garnered little public support. The right of way cost estimate at the time was approximately \$250 million and the construction cost was esti-

mated at \$144 million. Fast forward 11 years. Inflation has eradicated any antiquated cost estimates and traffic congestion along the corridor has increased. As Jim Clements perused the long maps of the East/West corridor, he spoke casually about what changes the business he was representing could see. "Right now we don't have to relocate," said Clements, who works with Urmos Chiropractic Health Center on Gulf Breeze Parkway. "Right now we're trying to figure out what to do. It depends on how much right of way the state needs. We may have to move our sign." Harvey Jordan, 79, thinks the new plan is "a lot of nothing" and that it will not help with congestion problems already

occurring in the area. "It's going to be a big parking lot," Jordan said. "It's going to bottleneck at the Naval Live Oaks." Speights was more optimistic that the proposed 4.2 miles of improvements would bring relief. "We want to relieve congestion in the area," Speights said. "Our main intent is to improve safety features and relieve congestion." At the April 24 meeting, engineers and consultants from Volkert and Associates and PBS&J collected written comments from the public. The next public meeting is tentatively scheduled for September of this year. The project is currently not on the DOT's five-year work program.

Bus: Driver arrested after school bus flips

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Williams said the accident was the most destructive he'd seen in his 30 years of service but maintained that the accident's impacts were mitigated by the bus' design. "School buses are still con-

sidered the safest vehicles on the road," Williams said. The educational transit manager also said that the bus involved was equipped with seatbelts. However, Williams also commented that most of the children probably weren't buckled up

because there is no policy in place that requires occupants to use seatbelts. School District Assistant Superintendent Tim Wyrosdic praised the school faculty and parents on hand at the scene of the accident, saying, "It's a tes-

tament to the quality of the people dealing with the situation. The way they wrapped themselves around these kids was commendable. Our job as educators is to take care of children and they did a phenomenal job that day."

GBFD: Volunteers support certified firefighters

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firefighters that go through the certification process. We have some guys who have been working with the fire department for years and don't care about going through Firefighter 1 certification now. But they have jobs at a scene they can do that are just as important as going into a hot fire."

"...We value all our firefighters, and we need every one. And I am afraid by having any other department, like Midway, always questioning if they are 'certified' when they arrive, they will say 'forget it', and we will lose firefighters that we need."

- Shane Carmichael
Gulf Breeze Fire Chief

tified personnel to concentrate on direct fire suppression efforts."

Carmichael also said the Midway Fire Chief Stephen Demeter presented him with an automatic aid agreement a few weeks ago that states no firefighters would show up at any Midway Fire scenes from other departments to 'help' that are not certified. "We have automatic aid, which means if we hear a call we go to help automatically. And we have mutual aid, which is when the fire chief from the other district calls for our help. I have not signed that agreement," Carmichael said. "I do not plan to sign it. But we do have a verbal agreement that we will not send any non-certified personnel to a Midway Fire scene, under both automatic aid or mutual aid. So there have already been some calls where we just did not send a truck, because some of our firefighters who showed up for the call were non-certified."

He said they are working under the 'old' automatic aid

agreement. "We will not sign the other agreement, even though we have the verbal agreement, because it would impact us overall, on the rest of our operations."

"We are not a paid department, like Midway. I do this as a volunteer and get no pay myself," Gulf Breeze Fire Chief Carmichael said. "I do not want my volunteer firefighters who are not certified to feel humiliated and that it is not worth getting out of bed to run for a fire call because they don't feel valued. We value all our firefighters, and we need every one. And I am afraid by having any other department, like Midway, always questioning if they are 'certified' when they arrive, they will say 'forget it', and we will lose firefighters that we need."

Midway Fire Chief Stephen Demeter said, "The law regarding mutual aid in Florida states that there is a presumption that all firefighters sent in mutual aid will be certified. If they send non-certified firefighters, the

incident commander on scene then has to pick and choose who can do what task. Simply put, if you are going to send us firefighters we want them to be able to fight fires." He said if a department has no one available certified, then they will call for another department. And it loses "valuable time" if a chief calls for mutual aid and non-certified firefighters show up and he has to call another department to get the help he needs.

Walter Mayo, of the Florida State Fire College, said, "Florida law allows non-certified firefighters on fire scenes, as long as they don't go into hot zones. But most fire chiefs have enough non-certified firefighters of their own at any fire scene, and they would not be calling for mutual aid from another department unless they needed certified people to work as back up to the firefighters in the hot zone. There is only so much time on those air bottles, and the human body can only take so much heat. A chief will call for extra help from surrounding departments if he needs certified people to be ready to replace the firefighters inside the hot zone. The Florida law says there is a presumption when someone calls for mutual aid that all those responding will be certified. Florida departments are facing this problem of certified vs. non-certified more and more these days, as the law changes."

SHARK: Makos hunt with speed, prefer deep water

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Environmentalists suggest that overfishing has caused large predators to come closer to shore in search of food.

The animals are known to peruse temperate and tropical waters worldwide but usually prefer deeper habitats.

Mako sharks are known for their blistering speed and

their ability to leap more than 10 feet out of the water.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' (IUCN) red list of threatened

species, which is the world's standard for species conservation, lists the shortfin mako shark as vulnerable but not yet endangered.

Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office Report

Information provided by the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office.

Felonies	block of Auburn Parkway, Gulf Breeze, sex offense
4/24/07 Carlone, Joshua Michael, 18, W/M, 4500 block of Kelly Lane, Gulf Breeze, property damage, burglary	Pate, Daniel Allen, 48, W/M, 8500 block of Laredo Street, Navarre, violation of probation
Fountain, Bernadette Eileen, 27, 2100 block of Jeannie Street, Navarre, violation of probation	DUI
Perez, Carlos Andreas, 23, H/M, 8100 block of Tortuga Street, Navarre, larceny, less than \$5,000	4/25/07 Lantz, Justin David, 23, W/M, 7200 block of Majestic Boulevard, Navarre, DUI
4/25/07 Folse, Daniel Edward, 38, W/M, 1600 block of Steven Drive, Gulf Breeze, aggravated assault	4/26/07 Owens, Joshua Lance, 28, W/M, 1900 block of Ambassador Drive, Gulf Breeze, DUI
4/26/07 Simpson III, Billy Leon, 24, 2900 block of Sherwood Drive, Navarre, failure to appear	Matheny, Donna Sablan, 48, W/F, 7600 block of White Sands Boulevard, Navarre Beach, DUI
Singley, Catherine Ann, 42, W/F, 3000 block of Saffronia Shored Road, Navarre, child neglect	4/29/07 Harrington, Julie Tankersley, 44, W/F, 7000 block of Calle Ponce De Leon, Navarre, DUI
4/27/07 Nguyen, Hung Thanh, 19, 3100	Sanspree, Roger Dale, 54, W/M, 5300 block of Stagecoach Trail

Managing Editor

Gulf Breeze News, Inc. is now accepting applications for the position of Managing Editor.

Qualified candidates should have a bachelor's degree in Journalism from an accredited college; 3 to 5 years experience working as a journalist and/or editor; be proficient in Quark XPress and PhotoShop software; and be motivated to provide excellent community news on deadline.

Job duties will include reporting on news and human interest topics; managing reporters, writers and columnists; doing weekly page design and layout; appearing on the weekly Gulf Breeze News TV show; helping to coordinate special editions and other duties as assigned by the publishers.

Benefits include a group medical plan, life insurance; optional dental, vision and supplemental insurance; and paid vacation.

Interested applicants should submit qualifications to:
karen@gulfbreezenews.com.

Gulf Breeze News, Inc. publishes Gulf Breeze News and Splash! Magazine. Gulf Breeze News, Inc. is an Equal

Calendar of Events

Thursday, May 3
No meetings scheduled as of press time

Friday, May 4
No meetings scheduled as of press time

Saturday, May 5
Rummage Sale and Bake Sale, E H Pullum Senior Center (across from the Navarre Library). Large variety of items for sale from Furniture to Jewelry, cookware and clothing. Grilled hot dogs and hamburgers for sale. All proceeds benefit activities of the Holley Navarre Senior Assn.

Nearly New Rummage-Type Sale, 8 a.m. to noon, sponsored by the Friends of the Navarre Library, weather permitting, at the Navarre Library, 8484 James M. Harvell Road in Navarre. Details: 939-2199

The Santa Rosa County Democrats' Monthly Yard Sale at 5746 Stewart Street, Milton, will be held on 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Details: Harold Webb, 572-6029 or 623-8040.

Sunday, May 6
No meetings scheduled as of press time

Mon., May 7
City Council Meeting and Town Hall Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Gulf Breeze City Hall, 1070 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze

Santa Rosa County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m., Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

Tuesday, May 8
Bands on the Beach, Gulfside Pavilion, 5 to 7 p.m. "Midnight Confessions"

"Banking on Life and Debt," a free film presentation, 7 p.m. at the End of the Line Cafe, 610 E. Wright Street. Details: 474-1495

EMS Transport Provider Interviews, 9 a.m., Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

Wed., May 9
Santa Rosa Island Authority Board Meeting, 5 p.m., SRIA Administrative Office, 1 Via De Luna, Pensacola Beach

Thursday, May 10
Santa Rosa County Commission Regular Meeting, 9 a.m., Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

Santa Rosa School Board, 6:30 p.m., School District Administrative Offices, 5086 Canal Street, Milton

The Santa Rosa Quilters' Guild will meet on in the fellowship hall at St. Paul United Methodist Church, 4901 Gulf Breeze Parkway. Everyone interested in quilting is invited to attend, regardless of their level of expertise. For further information call 939-5196

Andrew's Institute Aquatic Therapy Summit through May 12

To submit an event for publication in the calendar, email news@gulfbreezenews.com with the subject "Calendar." Items must be received one week prior to publication date.

May is bike month

It's bike month! Come ride your bike with the Mayor of Gulf Breeze. In celebration of bike month, Mayor Lane Gilchrist will lead a bike ride from the Rec. Center off Shoreline Dr. to the Gulf Breeze Chamber of Commerce Office. Bikers will assemble around 7:30 am on Friday, May 18 and leave promptly at 8 a.m. Gulf Breeze police will be

escort their bikes. At the Chamber office, there will be refreshments and prizes. Call 932-7888 for details.

CORRECTIONS

Gulf Breeze News strives for 100 percent accuracy and we regret any errors in our publication. To report an error, please call 850-932-8986.

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