



95 EXPRESS



News Clip

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Subject: **I-95 express lanes up and running**

I-95 express lanes up and running

Bill Frogameni

After early traffic snarls, confusion, flattened divider pylons and much buzz, Interstate 95's express lanes are finally operational.

Tolling along the two-lane, seven-mile stretch running northbound from I-195 to the Golden Glades interchange opened Friday morning without much difficulty.

No accidents had been reported as of 11:45 a.m., said Rory Santana, a **Florida Department of Transportation** engineer in charge the express lanes. More than 3,250 vehicles used the lanes between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m., he said.

The hope is for the express lanes to ease congestion along I-95 where, on any given weekday, 250,000 to 300,000 vehicles travel in Miami-Dade County alone.

Registered commuters with three or more people in a vehicle can use the express lanes for free. The same applies to registered hybrid vehicles and motorcycles. SunPass users, on the other hand, can use the express lanes for a toll that will vary between 25 cents and \$6.20, depending on the amount of congestion in the regular lanes. Drivers can see toll prices posted on electronic signs.

Express lanes will be added in phases over the next few years, first going southbound on I-95, and then expanding the northbound lanes up to Fort Lauderdale.

During this initial phase of the plan, FDOT projects about 19,000 vehicles will use the lanes each weekday. Once the northbound lanes are extended and southbound lanes are added, that number could exceed 30,000 vehicles each weekday, FDOT spokesman Brian Rick said. He noted that many of these vehicles will carry multiple carpoolers, further reducing the amount of traffic that otherwise would have been on the highway.

Carpool registration is being overseen by **South Florida Commuter Services**, a FDOT-sponsored agency that works with businesses to help promote efficiency in transportation through carpooling and

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mass transit. So far, more than 3,000 participants have signed up, said Jim Udvardy, the agency's executive director.

Udvardy said he expected that number to increase as people become more familiar with the lanes. He also said area businesses — which SFCS has not yet seen offering express lane subsidies to employees — likely will start subsidizing express lane travel, too.

“I think there's been some hesitancy to move forward from an employer perspective, to see how it works first,” he said.