



Gov. Rick Scott (center with scissors) joined city and state officials to ceremonially open the Butler Boulevard flyover ramp during an Aug. 30 ceremony. (FDOT)

Opening of I-95 interchange delayed

By Dan Scanlan
dan.scanlan@jacksonville.com

A combination of paint problems, and expected wet and windy weather means the first section of the \$78 million Interstate 95/Butler Boulevard interchange won't open Wednesday morning as planned, according to the Florida Department of Transportation.

Gov. Rick Scott joined state and local officials for an Aug. 30 ribbon-cutting on a 1,400-foot, two-lane flyover ramp at the interchange, announcing it would begin carrying eastbound Butler Boulevard traffic from I-95's southbound interchange Wednesday. But unexpected delays completing road

striping means a postponement of the official opening until at least the end of the week. And with Hurricane Irma churning in the Caribbean now, the possibility of future weather issues in Florida means an exact date is unknown at this time, transportation officials said.

The new flyover is part of a transportation project that also includes the reconstruction and widening of the I-95/Butler Boulevard interchange ramps, plus the addition of a westbound overpass to eliminate merging conflicts and congestion issues at Belfort Road. In addition, the reconstructed I-95 northbound off-ramp provides direct access to westbound Butler Boulevard from I-95 northbound.

Scott came to Jacksonville to announce the interchange project in 2013, saying it was needed at an interchange that carries more than 112,000 vehicles a day.

"Since December 2010, Florida has welcomed more than 1 million new residents, and projects like this are necessary for our growing population and economy," Scott said at last week's ribbon-cutting. "Thanks to our commitment to making record transportation investments, critical projects like this will help ensure Florida's transportation infrastructure remains a national leader for generations to come."

Dan Scanlan: (904) 359-4549

Court backs tiny track in horse racing dispute

By Jim Saunders
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE | Videos, in the words of an administrative law judge, showed a "series of races involving — as a rule — tired, reluctant, skittish, or disinterested horses moving at a slow pace down the dust-choked path."

But an appeals court Tuesday said regulators were wrong to try to punish a tiny North Florida pari-mutuel facility that in 2014 turned to slow-motion, two-horse races as it tried to meet the requirements of its state license.

A three-judge panel of the 1st District Court of Appeal, in a 12-page ruling, said the state Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering improperly found Hamilton Downs in violation of its license. The division last year rejected findings of an administrative law judge, who had ruled in favor of the Hamilton County track — but who also described a bizarre scene in which the "races must be seen to be believed."

"Horses often simply stood at the starting line before slowly plodding

down the track," Administrative Law Judge E. Gary Early wrote last year. "In one instance, a horse actually backed up, until a bystander took it by the lead, thereafter giving the horse a congratulatory slap on the rump when it began to move in a forward direction."

Tuesday's appeals-court ruling said the legal dispute focused, at least in part, on the Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering's arguments that Hamilton Downs had violated its license because of a race in which betting could not occur. In that race, both of the horses were owned by the same person — what is known as a "coupled entry."

The ruling said there can be no "meaningful betting on such a race" and a "bet placed on one horse is necessarily a bet placed on both horses, so every betting patron wins."

Months after the race was run, regulators filed a complaint alleging that Hamilton Downs had failed to operate all of the scheduled races in its operating license. But the

appeals court said regulators failed to prove a violation because Hamilton Downs had run a race — not just a race with betting allowed.

"Here, it is undisputed that the ... race occurred on a licensed, approved course," said the ruling, written by appeals-court Judge Harvey Jay and joined by Chief Judge Brad Thomas and Judge James Wolf. "Furthermore, it is undisputed that the race occurred between two horses in the presence of duly appointed racing officials. Finally, the evidence demonstrated that the winner of each race received a purse of \$100, and second place received a purse of \$50. Therefore, the ... race satisfied the definition of a 'race' for purposes of determining whether Hamilton Downs committed the alleged violation."

Also, the court said track owner Glenn Richards had offered to take steps to resolve concerns that racing officials might have had about the "flag drop" race. But it said officials assured him nothing was wrong, and the race

was declared official. The Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering filed the complaint months later.

Hamilton Downs is one of several pari-mutuels across the state that have sought in recent years to add slot machines after voter referendums. Like a track in Gadsden County, it had planned to run controversial barrel races but had to change plans for the 2014 meet after a state rule allowing barrel racing at pari-mutuel facilities was deemed invalid, the appeals court said.

Hamilton Downs then decided to hold flag-drop races. But three weeks before the 2014 meet, an organization that Hamilton Downs relied on for horses and riders pulled out of the event, Tuesday's ruling said.

"Resolving that the show must go on, Richards made alternative arrangements," the ruling said. "He rounded up college students for riders and an elderly herd of untrained horses as their racing steeds. The 2014 meet went off on schedule. Each race consisted of two horses."

26-vehicle accident kills 1, injures 13

By Dan Scanlan
dan.scanlan@jacksonville.com

A Sunday night accident that blocked southbound Interstate 95 left an 18-year-old dead and 13 more injured as overnight traffic was rerouted around the scene and back-ups occurred overnight throughout Nassau County and Southeast Georgia, according to Sheriff Bill Leeper.

Connor Jordan Dzion of Saint Johns was killed in the crash, which happened just before 10:45 p.m. near mile marker 374 just north of Yulee, the Highway Patrol reported.

Traffic had backed up due to a previous crash on I-95 southbound, but the driver of a tractor trailer failed to stop for it and hit the stopped vehicles, the Highway Patrol said. That caused an accordion effect of crashes behind it.

Twenty-six vehicles were involved when it was over, three of them commercial trucks, Leeper said. As I-95 southbound closed, Nassau County became the detour through Yulee, Leeper said.

"Traffic was rerouted at the 17 South exit, which is just a two-lane road, so it impacted that road considerably with a heavy volume of traffic," Leeper said. "We assisted in re-routing traffic and making sure it got through the Yulee area in a reasonable amount of time. Camden County also assisted in rescue and so did Fernandina Beach."

All lanes of I-95 southbound reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday, after traffic was backed up for several miles along I-95 and U.S. 17.

Dzion was a Creekside High School graduate and veteran North Florida Junior Golf Tour member.



Fans listen to the Tedeschi Trucks Band during the inaugural concert at Daily's Place May 27 at EverBank Field. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

Symphony to perform first of four concerts

Times-Union staff

Jacksonville Symphony at Daily's Place will premiere a four-concert series Oct. 14 with "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone in Concert," with the orchestra performing John Williams' live to the movie.

Tickets will be available at bit.ly/2w3Mr6J and start at \$28.50 which includes the facility management fee

and parking but not Ticketmaster fees. Exclusive pre-sale opportunities for symphony season ticket holders and Jags365 members begin Thursday with general public sales beginning Saturday at 10 a.m.

Other dates secured for symphony events at Daily's Place are March 10, April 21 and May 12. Concert information for those performances will be announced at a later date.

WOODS

Continued from B-1

exacerbated flooding, all in the name of growth.

Just last year a lengthy series by the Texas Tribune and ProPublica said: "Houston's perfect storm is coming — and it's not a matter of if but when. Why isn't Texas ready?"

Some cities are taking dramatic steps to be ready. Charleston, for instance, is spending about \$250 million — more than 1½ times the city's annual budget — on underground tunnels and pump stations.

Dallas is building a massive park — 12 times the size of New York's Central Park — along the Trinity River. It won't just be an urban playground. It will be land designed to alleviate flooding. The artist renderings actually include what it will look like full of water.

There are a bunch of other examples. I was planning to write something about them before Irma ap-

peared off in the distance. I'll save that column for a sunny day.

Suffice it to say for that we need to have a serious discussion in this state and this city about truly preparing for the worst. Not right now. Now is the time to prepare for Irma, to make plans, to obsessively watch the models, and to hope for the best — a storm that doesn't make landfall anywhere.

•••
Cumberland Island, Take 2: I heard from quite a few of you Sunday morning, telling me that a story I wrote didn't make sense. No, this isn't the first time I've heard this. But in this case, something happened during the production of the paper, eliminating several sections of the story about Carnegie descendants on Cumberland Island. I'm sorry for the confusion. The plan is to rerun the entire column Sunday.

mark.woods@jacksonville.com, (904) 359-4212

FOSTER

Continued from B-1

English," Mosley said. That student now has his own business — a food truck, he said.

"That made me feel ... like I was a giant," he said. Some of his former students occasionally return to Spring Park, just to see Grandpa Mosley.

"I love seeing them. They're part of my family," he said. "To see them come up, it's so powerful."

Teacher Patterson was nervous when she returned to the classroom in 2013 after working in a district-level job. Mosley helped ease her transition and her workload, she said. His impact shows in her still being in the classroom and in the students' improved test scores, she said.

"It's been wonderful," she said. "I was so excited to have the extra help."

She said Mosley "does more than he has to," including leading the school's parent-teacher group when there was no one else avail-



Richard Green (left), program manager for Jacksonville's Foster Grandparent program, talks with volunteer John Mosley Sr. at Spring Park Elementary School. (Bob Self/Florida Times-Union)

able, helping buy shoes for a child who needed them and paying for a class pizza party.

Students Jayden and Sammy said Mosley helped them with reading. Jayden

said Mosley also helped him with math. They gave him the thumbs-up as a classroom grandfather.

"He's a nice, cool guy," Sammy said.

Beth Reese Cravey: (904) 359-4109

JACKSONVILLE FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

The program is funded by a \$365,000 Corporation for National and Community Service grant, with matching funds from the city of Jacksonville. To apply, donate or get more information, contact Program Manager Richard Green at the Mary L. Singleton Senior Center, 150 E. First St., Jacksonville, FL 32206, (904) 630-5450 or rgreen@coj.net or go to coj.net/departments/parks-and-recreation/senior-services.

NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY

ElderSource will hold a free National Grandparents Day event noon to 4 p.m. Sunday at the historic St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 317 A. Philip Randolph Blvd. in Jacksonville, across from Veterans Memorial Arena. There will be food trucks, face painting, yard games, arts and crafts, live entertainment, and a reading nook, among other things. For more information, call (904) 391-6600.

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