

"This is nothing more than a gimmick to get cash quickly, and just about everyone knows that. Why are they going with this crazy scheme?" — Bob Murray, concerned citizen

# Alligator Alley



Privatization of toll road has certain risks, incentives

BY ROGER WILLIAMS

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We built it, we own it, we pay \$2 or \$2.50 to drive across it, we earned \$23.5 million from it last year, and we're spending \$94 million to resurface it now.

By just after mid-century, we could be taking in almost a billion dollars a year from it.

Whether that long-range estimate is merely futuristic fantasy (it comes from Bill Thorp of the Florida Department of Transportation, whose \$954 million figure is based on a \$10 toll), one thing is certain: The 78-mile artery connecting Naples to Hollywood is a prize, a golden goose worth a lot more than it costs us to maintain.

But come Friday, Jan. 9, we'll consider letting somebody else have the goose. Several foreign companies are bidding to lease the Alley for 50 years, squeezing sizeable profits from it in return for maintaining and managing it, and providing an as-yet-to-be-negotiated sum, probably in the high hundreds of millions, up front to the state.



FLORIDA PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

Travelers in 1969 paid \$1.50 to cross the Alley. The toll did not go up until 2006, when it jumped to \$2.50.

PHOTO CREDIT

Stretching some 78 miles and bridging the coasts of Florida is the Alligator Alley, up for sale to private bidders Jan 9. The sale will increase the toll paid to cross, bringing in revenue both for the state and the private company that buys it.

SEE ALLEY, A8 ►

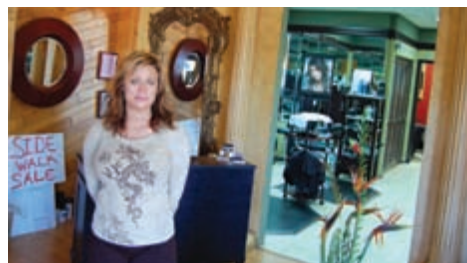
## Salons often get to the root of domestic abuse first

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

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Tina Martellacci-Haworth might spot the signs of domestic violence in some women before their doctors or even their friends and family. Like many hairdressers, she learns some personal things about her clients over casual conversation and through up-close observation.

"A lot of times it's little things," when it comes to noticing telltale signs on body and personality, Ms. Martellacci-Haworth said. "It's squeeze marks on their hands or wrists..." Being aware of the problem puts the owner of Paramount Hair Studios in Estero in a unique position to urge those clients to seek help and leave their violent relationships.



COURTESY PHOTO

SEE SALONS, A13 ► Jennifer Gray, owner of Chameleon Hair Studio & Spa, is trained to spot signs of domestic abuse.

### INSIDE



#### The playwright

Meet A.R. Gurney, whose play "Indian Blood" is on stage at Florida Repertory Theatre through Dec. 21. **C1** ►



#### Distinguished Citizen

And other events in Fort Myers' society. **C27, 28 & 30** ►



#### Watersports revolution

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