

Feb. 21, 2008

Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail gets scenic highway designation

Drivers using State Road 776 in Sarasota and Charlotte counties are now driving on one of Florida's newest scenic highways.

Meeting in Tallahassee Wednesday, Feb. 20, members of the state's Scenic Highways Advisory Committee unanimously awarded the designation to the Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail after considering the designation application. The new scenic highway designation includes S.R. 776 and two loop roads branching from it, Old Englewood Road and Dearborn Street in Sarasota County and County Road 775 (Placida Road) and County Road 771 (Gasparilla Road) in Charlotte County.

Four members of the Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG), composed of residents of Sarasota and Charlotte counties, attended the meeting in Tallahassee to show their support for the designation.

"This is an important achievement for our community and I hope everyone realizes that we have much work ahead to fulfill our responsibility to take care of this highway," said Bret Clark, chairman of the CAG. The group will now focus on organizing a formal ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony to officially recognize the designation.

The Florida Department of Transportation established the Scenic Highway Program to increase awareness of "historical and intrinsic resources -- cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural and scenic -- which collectively enhance the overall traveling experience," according to the agency's Web site.

Both Sarasota and Charlotte counties made acquiring the scenic highway designation goals in their respective 776 corridor plans. The S.R. 776 corridor runs for 25.5 miles through the two counties, beginning at the U.S. 41/S.R. 776 intersection in South Venice and terminating at the U.S. 41/S.R. 776 intersection in Murdock.

FDOT regulations require that an application seeking a scenic highway designation be submitted by a corridor advocacy group.