

History of State Roads in Florida

Prior to 1923:

Roads in Florida were built by the city, the county, the state, or by private individuals/companies. Many, but not all of these roads, were identified by a road number. This helped when traveling between two or more counties; however, there was no formal system to the road numbering.

1923:

Chapter 9156, Laws of Florida, identified many of the roads in the state as State Roads. It defined "State Roads" "to mean any part of any road, including the bridges hereon, heretofore or which may hereafter be designated by the legislature or by the State Road Department, in accordance with law, as a State Road, which has been or may be hereafter be constructed, maintained, or otherwise improved by the State Road Department, or which is now, or may hereafter be, in course of construction, maintenance or improvement by such Department."

Chapter 9311, Laws of Florida (1923), established the System of State Roads and identified 38 roads.

1925-1939:

Chapter 10269, Laws of Florida, extended this System and identified 62 roads. The System continued to grow and summaries were issued in **1935** (increased to 269 roads); again in **1935** (increased to 312 roads), and in **1937** (increased to 390 roads). In **1939** (increased to 540 roads) a compilation of all the "State Roads" was made by the legislature and passed under various acts for each county. This included not only roads on the State Road System, but also all roads identified as "State Roads."

The Florida boom started and Florida lands were sold. Beginning in **1928**, with the collapse of the boom and the depression that followed the non-payment of taxes put the State in a serious financial situation.

1937:

Chapter 18296, Laws of Florida, enabled the delinquent tax certificates for the land be sold to the highest bidder. The original owners were advised and given notice of the sale. The State of Florida, through the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF) were authorized and empowered to sell these lands to the highest and most eligible bidder if certain procedures were followed. These are now known as "Murphy Act Lands." Deeds issued under this Chapter (Murphy Act) since **May 1, 1940** have contained the following statement:

"Reserving unto the State of Florida easement for State Road Right of Way 200 feet wide, lying equally on each side of the center line of any State Road existing on the date of this deed through so much of any parcel herein described as is within 100 feet of said center line."

Relief from the Reservation can be obtained by filling out a form, paying a fee, and having it investigated. Part of this investigation is the determination of the location of the road and if it was a "State Road."

1941:

Chapter 20720, Laws of Florida, authorized the State Road Department to renumber any or all roads on the State Road System.

1955:

Chapter 335, F.S. was revised. It divided all "State Roads" into four classes:

1. The State Highway System further divided into the primary and secondary road system. The distinction between each system shall be as prescribed by regulations of the board.
 - a. the primary road system (shall be divided into arterial highways and other primary roads)
 - b. the secondary road system (shall consist of such county roads selected by resolution of the county commissioners of the several counties of the State).
2. The state park road system 3. The county road system 4. The city street system

With the new State Highway System came some confusion concerning problems or questions on State Roads - when the subject pertained to a TIITF deed, it involved "State Roads." If it pertained to the history of a road, it usually pertained to the road being "A State Highway System Road."

1955-1977:

During this time, roads were occasionally changed from one system to the other. If a secondary road increased in importance, it was elevated to the primary system and if a primary road had reduced importance, it was reduced to a secondary road.

Chapter 77-165, Laws of Florida, eliminated the State Highway Secondary System which consisted of county roads that were maintained by the State utilizing the county's 5th and 6th cent gasoline tax fund to pay for the operations. When **Chapter 77-165** went into effect (7/1/1977), these roads returned to the County Road System.

Note: This material was compiled by Raymond Harris Jr. (1927-2007). Ray retired from the Florida Department of Transportation in 1993, after providing 25 years of service. His contributions do not go unnoticed. His compiling and categorizing of State Historical Road documentation has aided countless requests from FDOT staff, legal, and public entities over the years. We thank/remember Mr. Harris for his contributions.