

## ***WLRN/Miami Herald News Issues/Programs lists - July-Sept. 2014.***

WLRN Radio News produces two hour-long programs that focus on community issues. They are The Sunshine Economy (TSE) and The Florida Roundup (TFR).

TFR: Fridays at noon on WLRN 91.3FM

[TOM HUDSON](#), HOST

Each week a panel of journalists from South Florida and around the state discuss the week in news. Listeners can join the conversation by:

- Phone (800) 743-WLRN or (800) 743-9576
- Email [thefloridaroundup@wlrnnews.org](mailto:thefloridaroundup@wlrnnews.org)
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Sept 19<sup>th</sup> –

On the Florida Roundup, a WLRN-Miami Herald investigation [finds hundreds of arrests by the Florida East Coast Railway Police](#) are for pedestrians illegally crossing train tracks in Miami-Dade County, mostly at one spot. Often the charges are thrown out of court but kept on the record.

Floridians trying to find costs to health care services find it complex, confusing and secret. Miami Herald and WLRN reporters explored price transparency is its [Power of Price series](#). We find out why one hospital CEO won't release what insurance companies pay his facility.

Also, we discuss the changing rules for [Florida's Bright Futures college scholarships](#).

Sept 12<sup>th</sup> - On the Florida Roundup, President Obama will not take executive action on immigration until after the midterm elections, breaking a pledge he made in June. We will discuss how this will affect votes in our swing state.

Help is wanted in Florida higher education. We'll talk about the politics in the search for new presidents at three Florida universities, the University of Miami, University of Florida and Florida State University.

Also, [Florida prisons release data on inmate deaths](#) that reveals new insights.

Sept 5<sup>th</sup> - On the Florida Roundup, Steven Sotloff, from Pinecrest, is the second [American journalist murdered](#) by the Islamic State. Florida Senator Bill Nelson wants to give President Obama authority to use air strikes against the group in Syria.

There's been a sharp increase in Cubans taking to rafts this year, hoping to make it to Florida. The Coral Gables man behind Major League Baseball's steroid scandal admits to juicing. Plus are there too many tests for Florida kids?

Aug 29<sup>th</sup> - On the Florida Roundup, we will discuss how the next governor of the state of Florida has already been on the job before. Gov. Rick Scott and former Gov. Charlie Crist will be on the ballot for the seat in November.

We will review the results from Tuesday's primary votes. But few voted. It was a record low voter turnout.

And Burger King has it its way. The company buys Canadian restaurant chain Tim Hortons and will move its corporate headquarters to Canada, but it says the move isn't about paying less in taxes.

School districts are testing the waters on skipping the state-required exams. On Wednesday, Lee County became the first school board to reject the state exam.

Aug 22 - A Coral Gables woman found seven strangers standing in her bedroom in the middle of the night. After she screams, they run. The police do not arrest them.

Some question the government's response after a group of Hispanic teenagers snuck into the home of former Miami Heat player Ray Allen.

In the midst of heated discussions about race and policing because of events in Ferguson, Mo., the Coral Gables incident highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between prosecutorial discretion and discrimination. Days later, the teenagers were charged with trespassing.

Primary voting starts Tuesday with a slate of intra-party contests from attorney general to judges and school board members to local referendums. Though the state's highest executive office of governor is included in the bunch, few think there's much contest there in the primaries.

Aug 15 - Florida lawmakers' redraw the state's Congressional districts. It's now up to a judge if it will be used in the fall's elections.

One of the worst mass shootings in Miami's history has left residents of Liberty City looking for justice. But a culture of no-snitching is affecting the investigation. One Miami leader describes the summer's shooting as domestic terrorism. How is the community healing? Is it helping police? We will explore how the neighborhood is coping after the shooting.

The Panama Canal celebrates its 100th birthday, and a traveling exhibit remembers the thousands of Haitian refugees at Guantanamo. And we remember Robin Williams on South Beach and T-K Records boss Henry Stone.

Aug 8 - Florida lawmakers race the clock to fix voting maps recently ruled unconstitutional. What could this mean for Sunshine State voters heading into the 2014 Elections?

Join guest host Christine DiMattei and a panel of the region's top journalists for a conversation about how redistricting impacts Florida voters.

Some of the other stories we'll be addressing:

- One year after the death of teenager Israel "Reefa" Hernandez, we're taking closer look at tasers and how police are using them.
- Yet another South Florida judge delivers a ruling against the state's ban on gay marriage. How could that affect the future of marriage equality here?
- "Back to school" will be very different this year for most young people. What students, parents and teachers need to know.

Aug 1<sup>st</sup> - It's been called the "physician gag rule" or a law that pitted "docs versus glocks." And a recent federal appeals court upheld the 2011 state law prohibiting doctors from inquiring about patients' gun ownership. The Florida law was the first of its kind in the U.S.

The Court said the decision "simply acknowledges that the practice of good medicine does not require interrogation about irrelevant, private matters." Medical groups say the law threatens their ability to treat and protect their patients based on their professional judgment and it also chills their constitutional right to free speech.

Plus: Wynwood street artist Ahol Sniffs Glue says retailer American Eagle illegally used his work in its marketing campaign. We look at whether street art is challenging conventions about intellectual property.

July 18 – A judge in the Keys overturns the state's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. But an appeal by Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi calls for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide the matter.

Another state judge rules Florida's congressional map was drawn illegally to primarily favor Republicans. But state leaders ask to wait until after this fall's election to redraw the districts.

Both running mates for gubernatorial candidates Charlie Crist and Rick Scott are from South Florida. And the battle of the budget in Miami-Dade continues.

July 11<sup>th</sup> - It has been two years since the death of a mentally ill prison inmate in a scalding-hot shower. No one has been charged in that death; the two officers who allegedly punished him with the shower are still working at the facility. The head of the corrections department says he's frustrated that an investigation isn't finished yet. But many question why his outrage about the death comes only now.

Miami-Dade's mayor proposes a budget keeping the county tax rates steady but could cut jobs and hours for some county services.

Plus, how the fall of Brazilian *futebol* in the World Cup may focus efforts on building up the country.

**The Sunshine Economy** – airs at 9 am and 7 pm Mondays from Sept-June

9/29 - *Trade Winds - The Export Business in South Florida*

TSE examines Miami's import-export status and talks with several South Florida small business exporters about the controversial role of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

From cell phones to gold, medicine to aircraft parts, it all leaves the United States from South Florida destined for overseas markets. While the pace of trade is down from a year ago, according to trade media company [WorldCity](#), the seaports and airports here maintain a trade surplus.

That's a rarity in U.S. trade considering that for more than a generation America has been consuming more foreign made services and products than it ships overseas. It's strong ties to South America and the Caribbean that have allowed Miami exporters to boom.

Many of those exporters are small companies with a few to a few dozen employees. These are companies dotting the industrial and business parks surrounding the ports and airports. They make shaving cream like Collection 2000 in Doral or marine lights like SeaVision in Ft. Lauderdale. Surgical sutures at Miami Lakes's Demetech or they grow palm trees in, of course, Palm Beach County like Groundworks.

These four companies also rely on backing from American taxpayers to insure they get paid for their exports.

Collection 2000 finds itself in the middle of a political debate that will be brewing. The company is one of the hundreds of South Florida companies using the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The bank's charter was due to expire September 30 but it was given a nine month extension. Republican critics of the bank on Capitol Hill argue the bank distorts the market and there are charges of "corporate welfare." While about 90 percent of the companies using the bank's services are small businesses, only about a quarter of the bank's financial resources go toward those small firms.

Giant companies like Boeing and GE use the bank, as does Collection 2000, medical supply maker Demetech, marine lighting company SeaVision and palm tree nursery Groundworks.

Those four South Florida exporters use the Export-Import Bank's credit insurance program. They pay a fee to have the bank insure business it does with foreign companies. If the foreign buyer doesn't pay their bill, the bank will pick up most of the invoice.

Fred Hochberg, chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, tells WLRN there are four areas critics concentrate on: Does the bank take too much risk? Is the bank managed appropriately? Does the bank crowd out private lenders? And is the bank doing enough to help small businesses?

WLRN contacted Florida politicians opposed to continuing the ExIm Bank. Senator Marco Rubio's staff referred us to previous statements he has made, including [this interview](#) with Fortune published in June.

### Sept 12 - **Power Of Price: A Special Hour On Health Care's Complexity, Secrecy And Cost In South Florida**

Almost a year and a half ago, Mt. Sinai Medical Center CEO [Steve Sonenreich](#) pledged on WLRN to make public what insurance companies pay his hospital. He later told us that because of non-disclosure agreements between the hospital and the region's insurance companies, he legally couldn't share that information after all. It turns out these secrecy agreements are standard practice between South Florida insurers and hospitals.

So how can consumers understand the true cost of their health care? And what does it mean for employers and employees who face rising costs for coverage every year?

In this Power of Price special hour, we examine the limits of transparency around health care costs and what that means for our region.

Join us at 9 a.m. and again at 7 p.m. as we explore how the secrecy of health care pricing reverberates through the industry and on to the consumer.

*See all our Power of Price coverage at [WLRN.org/price](http://WLRN.org/price) and see the [Miami Herald's Power of Price series here](#).*

### **Sept 8<sup>th</sup> - How Finance Keeps South Florida Industries Together/ Finance in South Florida**

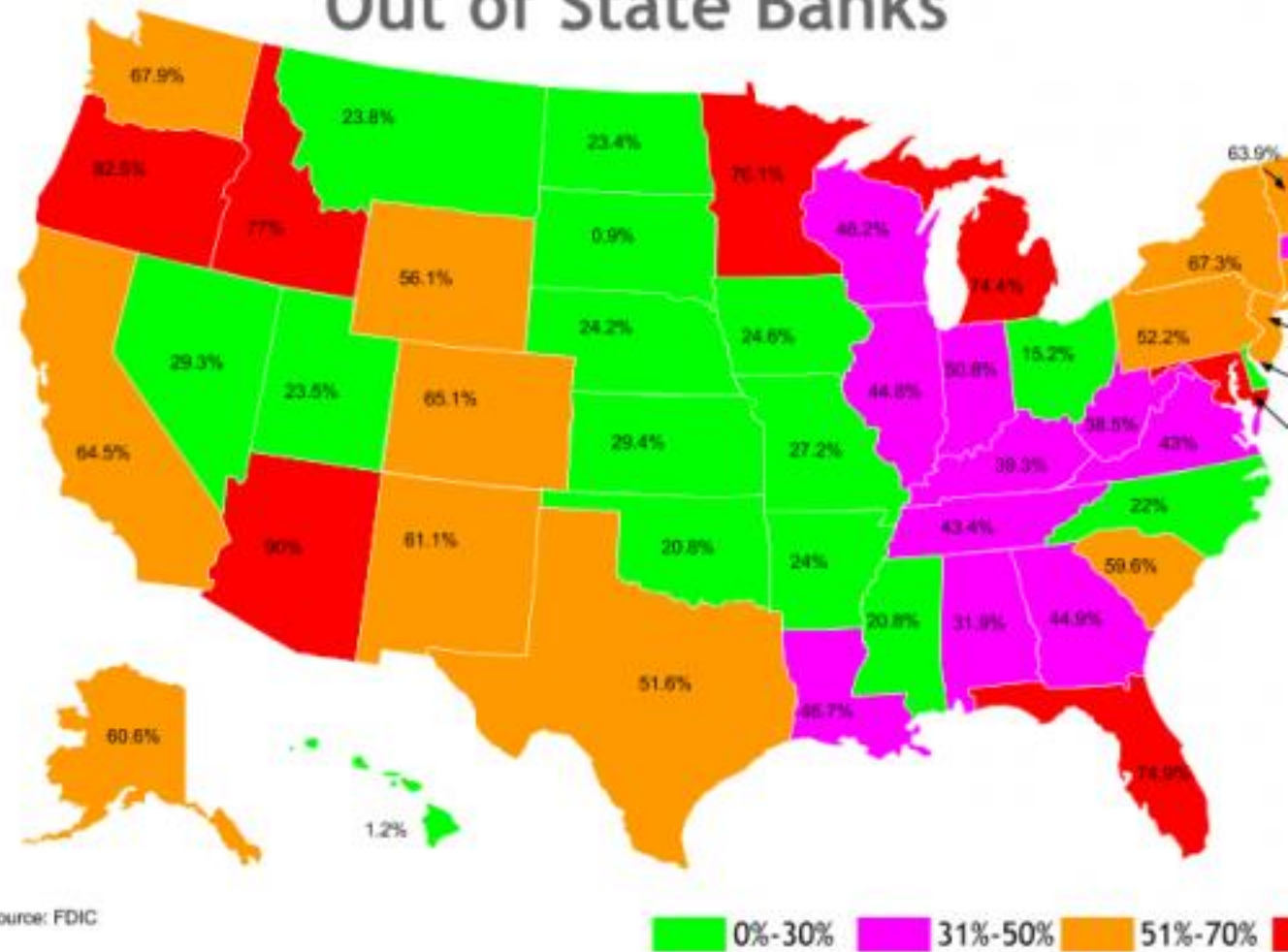
When Hanming Rao was setting up his commodity trading fund, he began the process in Stamford, Conn. After all, Rao had worked for hedge funds in Connecticut after graduating with his doctorate in engineering sciences. But he knew he would move his operations to South Florida soon. This spring, he did becoming another investment professional attracted to the region's weather, source of wealthy investors, global location and no state income taxes.

Economic development officials in Miami and Palm Beach County have worked on attracting fund managers like Rao to the region. The **\$6 billion Universa Investments\*** is among the largest to make the move. It left California earlier this set to set up shop in Coconut Grove. But these businesses don't bring with this loads of new jobs. The head counts at these funds can be just three people. But the economic development agencies say what hedge funds don't bring in jobs is more than made up for in the amount of money their payrolls pump into the local economics. The few jobs these funds have tend to come with six and seven figure pay. Monday's Sunshine Economy talks with hedge fund managers about the lure of low taxes and good weather, and why they think their few but high paying jobs are important diversifying the South Florida economy.

Five years after the Great Recession, Florida bankers are optimistic the current economy recovery is sustainable. They point to home buyers using less borrowed money and continued interest in South Florida real estate and other opportunities by foreigners. National banks certainly are interested in Florida. Three of every four dollars Floridians have in bank deposits are in banks headquartered outside the Sunshine State.



# Deposits Held by Out of State Banks



Florida is the most populous state with the highest percentage of bank deposits held at out of state headquartered banks. Critics like independent banking consultant Kenneth Thomas call Florida a banking colony. It is true that the biggest banks in Florida aren't based here. Thanks to banking consolidation and other forces, large national banks like Wells Fargo, Bank of America and Citigroup have big share of Floridians' deposit money.

Bankers agree that regulations have been stepped up since the loose lending days fed into the real estate bubble that popped six years ago. In addition, the South Florida continues to be a magnet for dirty money. Cash generated from illicit business here and abroad has a history in this region and financial regulators pay particular attention to the financial industry here, say banking executives. For good reason, the U.S. Treasury Department's financial crimes unit reports the great majority of suspicious activity reports filed by financial institutions in Florida are generated

from firms in South Florida. Jacksonville and Orlando are a distance second and third.

Bank executives tell the Sunshine Economy they don't want dirty money. But it's here. That's why financial cops pay close attention to South Florida's financial industry. And that attention comes with a higher cost of doing the business of banking.

In 1991, a different recession cost Southeast Bank its business. It has been more than 20 years but in South Florida financial circles, Southeast Bank still is mentioned with reverence. For decades it was the standard in Florida finance, culture and philanthropy. But the real estate bust of the early 1990s hit it hard and federal authorities seized the bank in September 1991. Bill Brandt was eventually hired as the bankruptcy trustee and he didn't make a lot of friends. He sued former bank board of directors and even the FDIC, which seized the bank and sold it. He remembers one meeting of Southeast Bank's creditors as if it were a "Jerry Springer" show. The bank didn't survive but its reputation lives on with financial industry veterans.

## SPECIAL REPORTS:

### The POWER OF PRICE:

The health care industry is a maze of money; confusing, complex and costly. The tangle of employers, insurance companies and providers makes shopping for health care and health insurance difficult enough — but underneath that web is a layer of secrecy that prevents consumers from seeing what actually gets paid for care. WLRN-Miami Herald News and the Miami Herald have been exploring the power of price in health care in South Florida.

With this series, we're examining what the complexity and opacity of health care pricing costs our region.

WLRN

[FULL HOUR: Complexity, Secrecy & Cost](#)  
[A Beginner's Guide To Health Care Pricing](#)  
[When Pricing Transparency Isn't Enough](#)  
[What You Don't Know Can Cost You](#)  
[Price Transparency Varies By State](#)  
[Negotiating In The Dark](#)



# MIAMI HERALD

[Health Care Costs Often Shrouded In Secrecy](#)

[Legal Contracts Veil Parts Of Pricing](#)

[Patients Pay More, Can't Find Prices](#)

The power of price in health care shows up in what patients pay and how they pay. Every worker who gets health coverage through their employer has experienced the rising cost of coverage. Health insurance premiums have spiraled upward as patients increasingly take on more financial risk for their coverage. The Kaiser Family Foundation finds since 2006 the percentage of workers with employer-provided health insurance has risen from 55 percent to 80 percent.

As more workers take on the financial risk of paying a deductible before their health insurance coverage begins to pick up the tab, they're also paying a higher average deductible. The same Kaiser Family Foundation study found the deductible for workers with single health insurance coverage has almost tripled since 2006.

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## Aftermath

### BEYOND THE BULLETS IN LIBERTY CITY

In Miami's Liberty City neighborhood, gang members are feuding over drug turf. On June 24, two men jumped out of a black SUV, spraying a crowd of people with bullets from high-powered rifles. Their intended target was not there, police said.

But seven innocent bystanders were injured, and two died. In the aftermath of the mass shooting, residents and community leaders are calling for a change.

This series looks at the neighborhood beyond the bullets. *Click on the map for more information about the neighborhood and its shooting victims.*

### PART ONE

[How A Pastor Rallies His Community After The Murders](#)

## PART TWO

Commissioner: AK-47 Shootings Are Domestic Terrorism

## PART THREE

Police Frustrated By Liberty City's No-Snitch Culture

## PART FOUR

A Victim's Mother Vows To Get Her Son Justice

SOUNDBITES: POLICE

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## WHAT'S THE STORY?

WLRN-Miami Herald News employs your curiosity about South Florida to guide our reporting. What we've investigated:

- [95](#)
- [animals](#)
- [cars](#)
- [florida history](#)
- [florida solar](#)
  - [food](#)
- [fort lauderdale](#)
  - [music](#)
- [ohflorida](#)
- [relatedofficials](#)
  - [tbt](#)
  - [traffic](#)
- and more....

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# The End of the Road

## Inside "Florida's Toll Lane Boom"

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

As part of our End of the Road series, we've reported extensively on the so-called "Lexus Lanes" on I-95. In the 95 express lanes drivers can pay a toll to get around regular gridlock traffic. That toll varies based on how many cars are piling into the express lanes at that moment. The more demand, the higher the toll -- to keep things moving.

The lanes were the first of their kind in Florida, but [a new report from the Florida Center for Investigative Reporting](#) says 95 Express is the future for Florida's highways.

[Read more](#)

## Audience Feedback: How To Fix The 95 Express "Closed" Sign Problem

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

[An internal FDOT report shows](#) more and more drivers are plowing past bright yellow "closed" signs and getting into 95 Express when the lanes are technically shut down for accidents or broken-down vehicles. But the Florida Highway Patrol can't enforce the signs because they're the wrong color: yellow-on-black instead of black-and-white.

[Read more](#)

## "Closed" Signs Don't Stop South Florida Drivers From Using 95 Express

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

Carlos Lora doesn't care what the electronic toll sign for 95 Express says. Fifty cents, \$6.00, \$10.50 -- it doesn't matter. After a long day at work as a South Beach condo manager, he's getting in his Mini Cooper to go home to Hollywood Beach, and he's using the fast lanes to get there.

"And even if it says 'closed,' I'm guilty of still jumping on," Lora says.

[Read more](#)

## I-95 And Its Eclectic Array Of Road Debris

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

The blonde wig flew out of nowhere, “flapping like a bird” as it lodged in the driver’s side windshield wiper of Jorge Garay’s delivery truck.

“Scared the viva Cuba libre out of me,” Garay wrote.

His tale is one of more than a dozen absurd -- and sometimes harrowing -- accounts of close encounters with road debris on Interstate 95 provided in response to [a Public Insight Network query](#).

[Read more](#)

## Stretch Of I-95 Memorializes Fallen Trooper

BY [JESSICA MESZAROS](#)

Two new signs were put up on Interstate 95 this month. They read “Trooper Kimberly Ann Hurd Memorial Highway” to remember Florida's first female trooper killed in the line of duty 22 years ago.

Kimberly grew up in North Collins, New York. Her mother Beverly Boltz says her daughter was a private person with an adventurous side.

“She was always independent. If she said she was going to do something she'd do it,” says Beverly. “As a small child, I'd find her up in a tree or hanging out from a branch.”

[Read more](#)

## What’s With That Insanely Bumpy Section Of I-95?

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

Miami's Southbound Interstate 95 from 153rd Street to 125th Street looks -- and feels -- like it was engineered by Pablo Picasso.

Just south of the Golden Glades Interchange, the pavement turns into a patchwork of concrete slabs. Hundreds of them, jutting up as high as one-eighth of an inch above the expressway’s surface.

“It felt like we were literally traveling over numerous speed bumps,” public safety advocate Mike Arias wrote in an email to the Florida Department of Transportation. “Like if we were riding over a roller coaster and almost ready to puke.”

[Read more](#)

### [How A Driving Instructor Teaches Floridians To Take I-95](#)

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

[\(Take this quiz based off of driving instructor Chris Pearson's own tricks and advice as well as Florida's state driving manual.\)](#)

"I-95 driving is not for the timid or the meek," driving instructor Chris Pearson says. The former cop says new drivers are so scared of I-95 that he has essentially made it his final exam. Or maybe more accurately his final pop quiz.

[Read more](#)

### [How Much Do Free 95 Express Trips Cost The State?](#)

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is finished with free trips in the fast lanes. The newly opened 595 Express and the planned 75 Express and Palmetto Express projects do not and will not include free rides for anyone.

But 95 Express, the first system of its kind in Florida, was the exception. Those lanes were created by converting high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes into toll lanes, so HOV toll exemptions were initially grandfathered in.

[Read more](#)

### [FDOT: Florida In Relatively Good Shape If Highway Trust Fund Goes Broke](#)

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

While state transportation departments around the country have been scrambling in anticipation of a potential Highway Trust Fund insolvency, Florida officials aren't sweating quite yet.

The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that the Highway Trust Fund, which trickles down and helps pay for everything from highways to sidewalks, will run out of money in August. The U.S. House of Representatives has already passed a bill that would temporarily fix the problem.

[Read more](#)

## [Free Rides In 95 Express Lanes Coming To An End For Hybrid Drivers](#)

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

To be perfectly honest, Bobby Wells, a Harley-riding, python-owning Miami lawyer, doesn't really like his Toyota Prius.

But he does love that red and blue "95 Express" registration decal on the bottom left of his hybrid car's windshield.

"Yeah," said Wells, "the reason I bought this car was to get that sticker."

I-95's express lanes — where the price of admission ranges from 50 cents to \$10.50 depending on traffic — are free to registered hybrids. But that's not going to last forever.

[Read more](#)

## [Why Most Highway Signs Aren't All Caps Anymore](#)

The sign at the end of the road.

*Credit Gregory Castillo*

BY [KENNY MALONE](#)

A drive down I-95 is full of dozens, probably hundreds, of tiny design decisions that are ultimately about driver attention. From the lettering on a road sign to the shape of a road, engineers are constantly trying to find a sweet spot between getting a driver's attention and distracting them.

As part of our End of the Road series we wanted to ask an expert about the thinking behind some of the things drivers see everyday on I-95 but aren't supposed to pay much attention to.

[Read more](#)

## [MIAMI STORIES](#)

In partnership with HistoryMiami and the Miami Herald, WLRN shares the oral histories of South Floridians each month.

### [A Cuban Rafter Looks Back, 20 Years Later](#)

BY [LISANN RAMOS](#)

*This story, as told by Pedro Fournier, is part of an oral history series.*

I was born in Guantánamo in 1956. I moved to Havana as a teenager to study and ultimately graduated with a math degree. In 1994, I decided take a raft to the United States.

I had to leave Cuba. I had no future there.

[Read more](#)

### Miami Stories: Granddaughter Recounts Day Trips With Abuela



Family photo taken after Olga's brother Henry's First Holy Communion at Immaculate Conception Church. Pictured from left to right, her father Henry, mom- "Cuqui", Grand Aunt Estelita, Maternal Grandmother Olga, Paternal Grandmother Abuela Nena (on which story is based), Olga in front of her and her two brothers Henry and Dave.

**BY LISANN RAMOS**

*This story, as told by Olga Perez-Cormier, is part of an oral history series.*

It was always exciting when *Abuela* would tell me that she needed to go downtown for the day. This meant she had business to attend to at "*El Refugio*," the Cuban Assistance Center. This also meant that we would do a little shopping. As a reward for helping her translate and get around, she would treat me to lunch at McCrory's.

**Read more**

ADDITIONAL COVERAGE:

Latin America Report

Politics

Key West