



## *Florida Department of Transportation*

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#SafePhoneZone

### **FDOT and GEICO Unveil "Safe Phone Zones" at Florida Rest Areas, Welcome Centers and Service Plazas as a Kickoff to Summer Driving Season**

*New signs encourage safe driving practices as part of innovative public-private partnership*

**ORLANDO, FL** – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) today, in a public-private partnership with GEICO Insurance, unveiled a statewide safety campaign to tackle the problem of distracted driving on Florida’s roads. As part of a national effort to encourage drivers to pull into a safe location to use their phone for calling, texting and accessing mobile apps, Florida has designated 64 Rest Areas, Welcome Centers and Turnpike Service Plazas throughout the state as “Safe Phone Zones,” more than any other state. (see attached map)

The new highway signs sponsored by GEICO can be seen along the highways leading to those FDOT facilities. Additional signage within the facilities reminds motorists to take this opportunity to use their cell phones in a safe location.

“Motorist safety is our top priority and we are committed to reducing distracted driving on our roads,” said FDOT Assistant Secretary for Engineering and Operations, Brian Blanchard. “By calling our Rest Areas, Welcome Centers and Service Plazas ‘Safe Phone Zones,’ we are saying they are much more than just Rest Stops – they are Safe Stops.”

This morning, Assistant Secretary Blanchard was joined by representatives from the Florida Highway Patrol, the Federal Highway Administration, GEICO Insurance and Travelers Marketing. 71 Safe Phone Zone signs have already been installed along FDOT highways and Florida’s Turnpike mainline; nine additional signs will be installed at a later date.

“Distracted driving crashes in Florida have increased 25 percent since 2012. DHSMV applauds the Department of Transportation and GEICO for providing ‘Safe Phone Zones,’ and reminding drivers to do the right thing and pull over if they need to use their cell phones,” said Florida Highway Patrol Major Cindy Williams. “FHP wants to remind motorists that when driving, always keep your eyes on the road, your hands on the wheel and your mind on driving.”

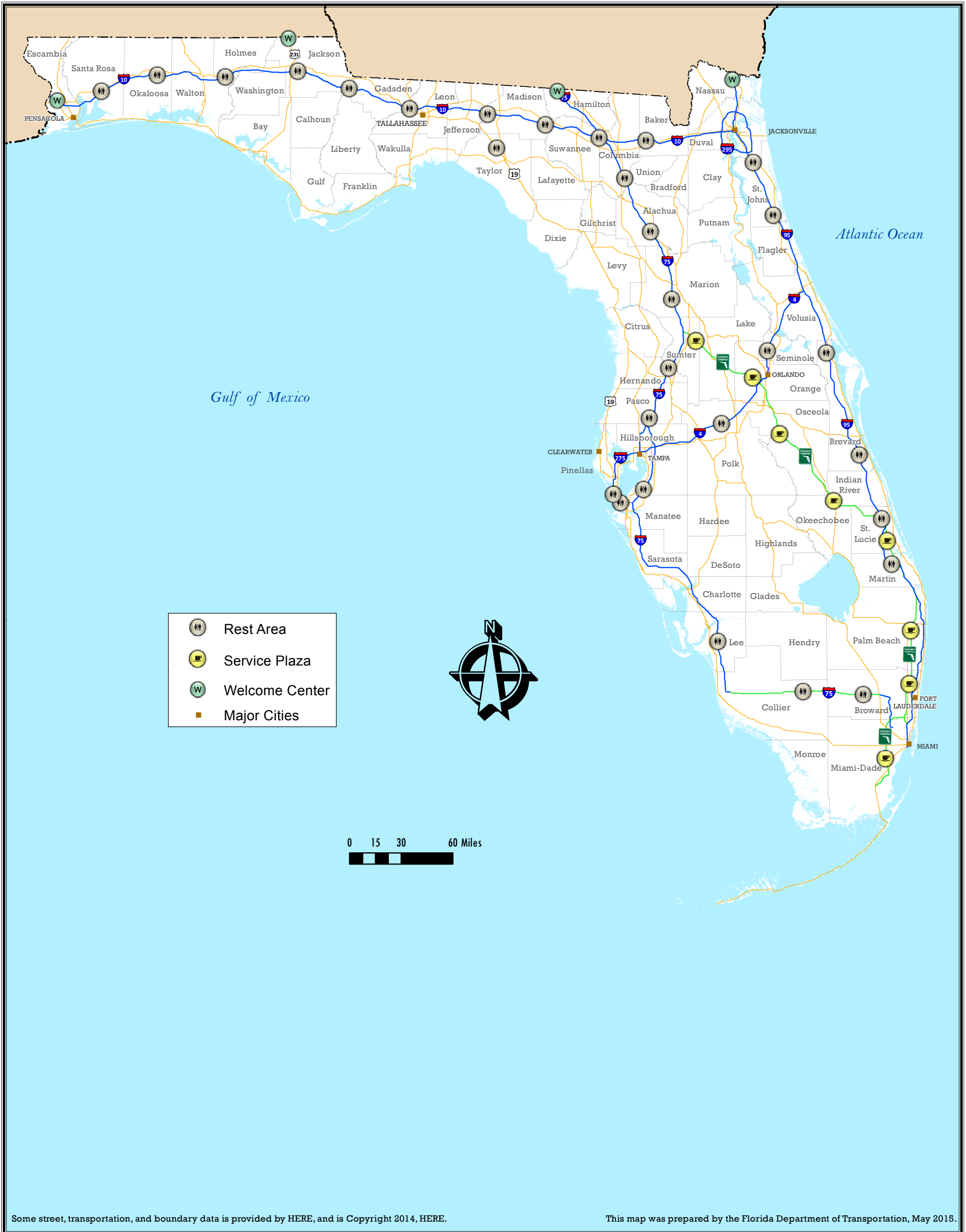
“Distracted driving is a major concern for motorists in Florida and across the country. Each year, there are a growing number of injuries and fatal accidents directly related to this issue,” said George Rogers, GEICO regional vice president. “GEICO is proud to partner with the Florida Department of Transportation to create Safe Phone Zones throughout the state, where motorists can answer texts and make phone calls, all in a safe and convenient environment.”

The Safe Phone Zone sponsorship program was implemented by Travelers Marketing, the winning firm selected by FDOT to manage Statewide Sponsorship Opportunities. “GEICO fully embraced these sponsorships as another way to promote traffic and highway safety,” said Darren Helder, VP of Sales at Travelers Marketing. “We are proud to stand with Florida DOT and GEICO today in announcing the sponsorship.”

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# Safe Phone Zones



Sponsored by GEICO





**George Rogers, GEICO regional vice-president, the Gecko, and Brian Blanchard, FDOT assistant secretary of engineering and operations, today unveiled the new Safe Phone Zone safety initiative that will be available throughout the Sunshine State. As part of a national effort to encourage drivers to pull into a safe location to use their phone for calling, texting and accessing mobile apps, Florida has designated 64 Rest Areas, Welcome Centers and Turnpike Service Plazas throughout the state as “Safe Phone Zones,” more than any other state.**