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Turnpike exit opens at NW 74th Street

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GRAND OPENING: Medley Mayor Ramon Rodriguez and Miami-Dade Commissioner Pepe Diaz stand in front of the newly opened Turnpike interchange at NW 74th Street last Tuesday.

For the first time in 10 years, there is a new entrance/exit to the Florida Turnpike. And on Tuesday afternoon, April 27, many dignitaries were present for the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the 74th Street interchange that will eventually connect Medley and Doral.

On Jan. 22, 2007 construction started on the Florida Turnpike's first open road tolling plaza and the new 74th Street interchange. With the completion of the 74th Street interchange, the \$64.4 million project is near completion, although drivers still cannot access this exit/entrance from or to Medley until NW 74th Street is completed.

Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Miami-Dade County vice chairman and commissioner for Medley and

Doral, was a featured speaker at the ceremony and participated in the official ribbon cutting. Also present was Medley Mayor Ramon Rodriguez, several Doral council members, county staffers, and Florida Turnpike representatives, including Executive Director Jim Ely.

The turnpike interchange at NW 74th Street will feature SunPass-only toll plazas on the northbound exit and southbound entrance ramps. However, motorists wishing to pay cash can do so at the Okeechobee mainline toll plaza if they are entering the Florida Turnpike northbound or exiting southbound at NW 74th Street.

The project also includes the conversion of the Okeechobee mainline toll plaza into an open-road tolling plaza to allow SunPass motorists to travel at highway speeds while the toll is collected electronically overhead — with no gates or toll booths to slow the flow of traffic.

The Florida Turnpike initiated the construction of the interchange to coincide with the extension of NW 74th Street east from Medley, but the construction of the interchange was completed sooner than originally planned.

For information and a timeline on when NW 74th Street east to the turnpike will be completed from Medley to Doral, call Diaz's office at 305-559-1200 or the Florida Department of Transportation, District 3 at 800-435-2368.