



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - January 21, 2008

Opening Reception of the New 331 Bypass at Owls Head

By: Alan Rosenberg

WHAT: Inaugural Drive and an Informal Reception with Refreshments

WHERE: Owl's Head Welcome Center on U.S. Hwy. 331 in Freeport (Drive starts at the intersection of 331 and State Road 20).

WHEN: Wednesday, January 23 immediately following the 10 a.m. ribbon-cutting event at the corner of State Road 20 and the beginning of the new Highway 331

OWL'S HEAD, Fla. – Throughout history, wayfarers traveling the road that's now U.S. Highway 331 would stop at the Owl's Head spring to refresh themselves, quench their thirst, water their horses, and later to replenish the radiators of their Model T's.

Owl's Head, according to Freeport historian Beckie Buxton, was one of three well-known sources between State Road 20 and I-10, relied on by travelers.

To commemorate that history and celebrate the opening of the 331 Bypass, Owl's Head will host an informal reception following an inaugural drive for the new road's first travelers: government officials, contractors, business leaders and the media.

The drive will originate at the intersection of 331 and State Road 20 in Freeport after a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony. The 5.7-mile stretch of highway passes by Owl's Head's "front door."

"It's really gratifying for us to be able to resume the historic role played by the Owl's Head Spring," says Owl's Head General Manager Shelton Stone. "While we can't recreate the experience of the spring itself, we will always be happy to quench the thirst of travelers with our Owl's Head bottled water."

Owl's Head, located 15 miles from the coast, is an 800-acre, pedestrian-friendly New Urbanism community that will feature an 18-hole Arnold Palmer Signature Golf Course, a beach club on a 19-acre lake, a vast Central Park and a Town Center.

According to historian Buxton, the name that's become associated with the spring at Owl's Head has always been misspelled.

Specifically, Buxton's quibble is with the location of the apostrophe that denotes that the owl in question was singular.

Buxton's recollection is that there was more than one owl involved in the origin of the name. (Her source was local lore.) Having been an elementary school teacher with something to say about grammar, usage and spelling, Buxton reminds us that, with a plural noun, the apostrophe must be placed *after* the *s*.

Buxton provides the background: Long before the automobile and paved roads—and even after the introduction of cars—folks traveling along the Freeport Road would stop or camp along the way beside a plentiful source of water.

“The story, as related to us as children, is that there were some trees near the spring where owls roosted. That's *owls*,” Buxton emphasizes. “*More than one.*”

The spring, says Buxton, is located west of the former U.S. Hwy 331, across from the Owl's Head Sales Center. And, according to a report she received from her husband, “It's still there and the spring still trickles, irrigating the soil beneath the trees in which these nocturnal birds may have nested.”