IMPROVING REGIONAL MOBILITY THROUGH INNOVATION
MDX Expressways

SR 112 Airport Expressway
SR 836 Dolphin Expressway
SR 874 Don Shula Expressway
SR 878 Snapper Creek Expressway
SR 924 Gratigny Parkway

Other Miami-Dade Expressways
Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike
SR 826 Palmetto Expressway
Interstate 95

MIAMI-DADE EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman’s Letter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction/Engineering</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll Operations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Communications, Marketing &amp; Public Affairs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Friends:

MDX® continues to lead Miami-Dade County into the future of transportation. With a steadfast commitment and clear vision of improving transportation mobility in the region, MDX has set a course that implements technological innovations and introduces creative transportation solutions that will continue to elevate our community to “world-class” status. Our development plans have been formulated with accountability and cost effectiveness as value drivers.

Few things are more important and have a greater impact on people's lives than transportation, particularly ground transportation. Roads and highways are vital arteries for moving people and goods. Everyday, MDX is working to keep South Florida’s most critical arteries operating at peak efficiency by significantly enhancing mobility in the region.

As detailed in this report, we have begun construction of infrastructure which will allow for full Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) and Open Road Tolling (ORT) on our roadways. With ORT, vehicles travel at highway speeds while passing through SunPass collection points, eliminating the need to stop and pay tolls. We have also laid the groundwork to bring Managed Lanes, a revolutionary traffic management system, that will bring free flowing traffic and guarantee motorists’ travel times.

With the vision that technology is one of the ways we can boost efficiency and maximize mobility, we have taken aggressive, industry-leading actions to increase the speed at which we travel through our region. MDX continues to implement a master transportation planning approach that utilizes all that technology currently has to offer to revolutionize travel on our roadways.

Our fiscal year ending 2004 has proven to be a successful year at MDX. We opened the first Open Road Toll plaza in an urban setting in the State of Florida with the completion of the SunPass Express Lanes on SR 836 (Dolphin Expressway). Through the implementation of our SunPass outreach programs, usage on our roadways is at an all-time high, with almost 52 percent penetration, and growing. And, MDX is working diligently to ensure that all segments of the community have access to ETC. In the future, technology will allow drivers to purchase Electronic Toll Collection devices as conveniently as the purchase of a pre-paid telephone calling card.

While MDX takes pride in leading the transformation of Miami-Dade County’s roadway infrastructure, we do not work at this mission alone. MDX works in conjunction with all of the transportation agencies in our region. Congestion mitigation can only be effectively addressed through the cooperation of different agencies and through the use of multiple modes of transportation, including roadways for commerce and increased transit for commuters. Together, with a full complement of recourses and ideas, we will beyond doubt implement regional, system-wide surface transportation congestion solutions.

In 2004, MDX successfully passed a two-step toll adjustment, which will ensure the completion of several essential mobility projects, such as the western extension of SR 836. In July 2004, side-by-side with Miami-Dade County, the Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise, we broke ground on this extension, a project, which will bring traffic relief to residents and businesses alike in the western part of Miami-Dade County. This is the first new expressway construction in Miami-Dade County in over a decade. This is a prime example of what can be realized when our regional transportation entities work together toward a common goal.

Together with Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise and the Florida Department of Transportation, MDX held a workshop with the Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to introduce the concept of Managed Lanes. A proven success in other metropolitan cities of the country similar to South Florida, we believe that Managed Lanes are a key method of maintaining free-flow capacity on new lanes in our system where future demand will continue to outstrip the capacity on new regular lanes.

During the course of the year, MDX increased its debt coverage ratio to 1.84. This indicates strong financial performance and enables us to issue bonds at some of the most competitive interest rates. Additionally, in an effort to ensure that MDX is accountable to our customers and the community in accomplishing our mission of improved mobility, the Board has implemented a leading financial and management tool known as the Balanced Scorecard.

Our recent accomplishments would not have been achieved without the tireless work of my fellow MDX Board members. I want to take this opportunity to recognize four departing Board members for their distinguished service to MDX’s mission: Congressman William Lehman for his seven years of service to the Board; Carlos A. Penin, P.E., who served as Chairman in 2001-2002; Thomas K. Murphy, who lead our Operations Committee; and Rafael Rodon who headed our Property Acquisition and the Policy and Planning Committees. On behalf of our Board, we wish them continued success.

We welcomed three new MDX Board members in 2004: Cesar Llano, Vice-President of Century Home Builders; Roymi V. Membuela, President of Roymi Membuela & Associates; and Arthur Noriega V., Executive Director of the Miami Parking Authority. I look forward to working with all of them as we face future challenges of making Miami-Dade County a wonderful place to live and visit.

MDX is pleased to present its 2004 Annual Report, a year in which MDX made significant progress in its mission to improve mobility on Miami-Dade’s most critical expressways. With our sustained efforts to implement cutting-edge technology and further enhance our collaborative planning and joint development efforts with our strategic partners, especially the users of our expressways, I am confident MDX will make the quality of life improvements our community so rightfully deserves.

Sincerely,

Daryl K. Sharpton, CPA
MDX Board Chairman
By Servando M. Parapar, P.E.
This was a year of milestones for the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority in our mission to Move Miami-Dade.

We had a break-through year in construction and in our work program. We increased the use of technology and took major strides towards the future of toll operations. We implemented a toll adjustment and authorized another. We worked closer than ever with our partner transportation agencies and with the community. We weathered the disruptions caused to the state’s transportation system by four hurricanes.

We hired two new department directors and increased our overall staff by one-third. And we welcomed three new members of our Board of Directors as we said farewell to a giant in public service and transportation in our community.

The most visible and immediate milestone is the commencement of construction on the SR 836 (Dolphin Expressway) Extension from the Turnpike to NW 137th Avenue. As detailed elsewhere in this report, the extension was the largest design-build roadway project to be awarded in the State of Florida at a cost of $138 million. This is the first extension of the MDX® road system since the agency was created in 1997.

The extension also embodies our heightened degree of cooperation with Miami-Dade County. As part of a joint operating agreement, MDX is building a six-lane county road along 137th Avenue, linking the extension to SW 8th Street. Another example of this cooperation is seen in the planned SR 836 / SR 826 (Palmetto Expressway) interchange. MDX is advancing the Florida Department of Transportation $100 million for this project, which will provide a solution to the Gordian Knot that this incredibly congested interchange represents.

Working with our partners at FDOT and Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, we presented a joint workshop to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on our vision for Managed Lanes, which are new through lanes proposed to be added to sections of the Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike (HEFT) and SR 836 designed to maintain traffic flowing at highway speeds through the use of variable tolls. The workshop brought together MDX Chairman Darryl Sharpton, Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise CEO Jim Ely and FDOT District 6 Secretary Johnny Martinez in a joint vision for the future of transportation. Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) joined in this effort, with the prospect of using managed lanes for express bus service. Already, MDX and MDT are in discussions on how express buses can better utilize the MDX system such as by running on the shoulders of the roads.

A big change to our work plans was the removal by the MPO of the Central Parkway, a proposed new north-south expressway, from the Long Range Transportation Plan of the Urbanized Metropolitan Area.

We have significantly increased our outreach to elected officials, to civic and business groups and to the general public to explain MDX’s work program and plans. The success of this ongoing effort is seen in the smooth and uneventful execution of the toll adjustment at all of our toll facilities in March. Simultaneously, our board approved another toll increase set for July 2005.

We are proud to report that implementation of Open Road Tolling Technology and accessibility of SunPass® in all lanes at the toll plaza on SR 836 has met all of our expectations. It has eliminated back-ups at the plaza even during the height of rush hour. But this success is only a precursor of the future. MDX is planning to implement the same concept on the relocated north and south toll plazas on SR 874 (Don Shula Expressway) and the new bi-directional toll plaza on SR 836 at 97th Avenue.

Technology will play an even greater role in the years to come, as MDX moves towards full Open Road Tolling and the equalization of tolls in the system over the next 10 years. No toll plazas. No slowdowns. Just the open road.

These projects are part of our Five Year Work Program, which in fiscal 2004 included 27 projects for a total of $140.6 million for the year. Our 2005-2009 five-year program totals approximately $857 million.

As MDX’s work program has grown, so has the need to augment our staff. During 2004, we added eight positions throughout all departments. We also hired two excellent professionals as Director of Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs and as Director of Engineering.

Margaret Pulles Machado joined MDX to oversee all of our communications and government relations functions. Ms. Pulles previously served at the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Smithsonian Institution, where she headed a national museum outreach program. Most recently, she was Vice President for Strategic Development and Communications at the Miami Museum of Science and Planetarium, where she spearheaded the museum’s plans for the successful general obligation bond and the planned new museum at Bicentennial Park. She earlier worked at Burson Masteller Public Relations and as chief of staff to a Miami-Dade County commissioner.

Also in April, Alfred Lurigados, P.E., joined MDX as Program Manager of Production. He was promoted to Director of Engineering in November following a national search to replace Sam Gonzalez, who resigned to join the private sector. Mr. Lurigados has 10 years of experience working with engineering companies in Miami for the Florida Department of Transportation. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Florida International University (FIU), and is currently working to complete his Master of Science Degree in Transportation Engineering, also at FIU. We want to thank Sam Gonzalez for his many contributions to MDX, helping to take it from a fledgling agency to where we are today.

During 2004, MDX lost the services of a splendid board member when Congressman William Lehman chose not to seek reappointment to the board for health reasons. Having served as an inaugural board member of MDX after his retirement from a distinguished career in the U.S. Congress, Mr. Lehman contributed enormously to the development of this agency.
In 2004, MDX began construction of the SR 836 extension, the largest design-build project awarded to date in the State of Florida at $138 million.
This year brought two milestones to the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority’s work plan, the commencement of the SR 836 (Dolphin Expressway) extension to 137th Avenue and the completion of westbound ramp from SR 112 (Airport Expressway) to Okeechobee Road.

MDX® also continued implementation of the Intelligent Transportation System, the new aesthetic enhancement program and right-of-way acquisition along the SR 836 Extension and the planning activities for the Inter-connector from SR 836 to SR 112.

In all, the MDX Five Year Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2004 consisted of 27 projects for a total of $140.6 million and approximately $857 million for the entire Five-Year Work Program (FY05-FY09).

The SR 836 Extension is the first addition to the MDX system since the agency was created, and the first new expressway segment in Miami-Dade County since the Gratigny Parkway was built in 1992. Programmed for completion by the fall of 2007, the Extension will provide expressway access to the growing residential and business communities in western Miami-Dade County while improving mobility in the area. It actually encompasses three projects:

- A four-lane extension of SR 836 from NW 107th Avenue to NW 137th Avenue, including the construction of 137th Avenue, from SW 8th Street to NW 12th Street, as a 1.8-mile-long, 6-lane arterial roadway in a joint participation agreement with Miami-Dade County. This phase was the largest design-build roadway project ever to be awarded in the State of Florida, at a cost of $138 million.

- The relocation of three westbound lanes of SR 836 east of NW 107th Avenue, a new two-lane exit ramp to NW 107th Avenue, and a new four-lane roadway over NW 107th Avenue. This project is scheduled to be completed in early November 2005.

- Improvements from NW 107th Avenue to NW 87th Avenue, including a bi-directional toll plaza and a bike path. Construction is slated to begin in the summer of 2005 and last approximately one year. The toll plaza is being designed for full Open Road Tolling. It will open with four Express SunPass® Lanes and three manual lanes for users heading west to the SR 836 Extension (SunPass access only) or to the Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike, three manual lanes to the HEFT and southbound NW 107th Avenue and one manual and one SunPass toll booth lane to northbound NW 107th Avenue. Eastbound, the tollbooth will have three manual lanes, one dedicated SunPass lane and four Express SunPass Lanes. All lanes are designed to be used as free-flow lanes when MDX implements full Open Road Tolling, scheduled for 2009/2010.

An ongoing objective at MDX is to deliver projects to the community in the most expeditious manner, with minimum traffic disruptions. Additionally, we work closely with affected communities to ensure that they are informed of all project activities and that the projects contribute to the betterment of the surrounding neighborhoods. Towards that aim, the SR 836 (Dolphin Expressway) Extension project also includes all of the elements of MDX’s Enhancement Manual, which provides aesthetic improvements for MDX projects. The SR 836 Extension will include new signage and lighting, improved landscaping, specially landscaped drainage areas, bridge columns and noise barrier walls with unique design elements such as accent finishes and textures as well as the incorporation of a bike path. These enhancements, incorporated as an integral part of the design, will serve as the model for future construction projects.

Another major expressway project, the westbound exit ramp to Okeechobee Road project was completed on July 7, 2004. This project, which started in January of 2003, extends from NW 32nd Avenue to the Okeechobee Road exit ramp from SR 112 (Airport Expressway). The scope of work included:

- Construction of an auxiliary lane west bound to the exit ramp to Okeechobee Road, extending approximately 2,900 feet to NW 32nd Avenue.

- Widening of the westbound NW 37th Avenue and NW 37th Place bridges.

- Roadway widening, bridge-walls, improved shoulders, milling and resurfacing of roadway surface, improved drainage, improved traffic controls including new signing and pavement markings, lighting and landscaping.

This project provided an auxiliary lane to the Okeechobee Road exit that substantially increased the ramp’s length and allows for easier and safer lane change maneuvers. In addition, a greater separation between the exit ramp to Okeechobee Road and the exit ramp to NW 36th Street will increase the overall capacity thus significantly reducing congestion between these two exit ramps. New landscaping is being placed on both sides of SR 112 between NW 32nd Avenue and NW 37th Avenue. This project was necessary to accommodate anticipated traffic demand from the planned Miami Intermodal Center (MIC), which is currently under construction. The completion of the SR 112 to Okeechobee ramp has eased congestion along the corridor dramatically, particularly for westbound traffic in the afternoon.
MDX adopted a policy this year to achieve full electronic toll collection and eliminate toll plazas by the year 2010.
When it comes to MDX® toll operations, the future is now. Arguably, the greatest advancement in the toll industry is the advent of Electronic Toll Collection (ETC). With the enthusiastic endorsement of ETC by Florida Governor Jeb Bush, MDX embraced the concept and rapidly deployed ETC-only and convertible lanes. MDX was the first to create SunPass®-dedicated Express Lanes in an urban setting in Florida.

In 2004, the MDX Board adopted a policy of implementing Open Road Tolling throughout the system by converting all toll collection to ETC. Under this concept, also known as Multi-Lane Free Flow, drivers will simply pay under gantry-mounted ETC points at highway speeds, as they do now in the SunPass Express Lanes on the east-bound SR 836 (Dolphin Expressway).

The extension of SR 836 to 137th Avenue, now under construction and due for completion in the summer of 2007, will be MDX’s first implementation of 100 percent Electronic Toll Collection. In addition, the new bi-directional toll plaza on SR 836 at 97th Avenue and the relocated north and south toll plazas on SR 874 (Don Shula Expressway) are being designed to have two SunPass Express Lanes in each direction initially, with the other cash/SunPass lanes convertible easily and inexpensively for Open Road Tolling. The two SR 874 projects are schedule to be completed in 2007/2008. Currently, MDX is evaluating a Multi-Lane Free Flow configuration throughout this corridor to enhance mobility and move toward Open Road Tolling (ORT). This will allow for a more equitable pricing format for all system users.

MDX was among the first toll agencies in Florida to introduce Automated Vehicle Identification (AVI) technology. As a vehicle approaches a SunPass Express Lane, the vehicle classification system or Intelligent Vehicle Identification System (IVIS) recognizes the type of vehicle, the number of axles and correlates this with the SunPass reader to charge the toll due based on the classification recorded. Vehicles that are detected without a corresponding SunPass are captured by MDX’s Violation Enforcement System (VES). These Express Lanes provide a number of benefits:

- They allow customers to pass through toll collection points at highway speeds.
- They reduce congestion: A SunPass lane can process approximately six times as many vehicles as a manual lane – 2,400 vehicles per hour.
- They allow for a cleaner environment: ORT reduces fuel consumption thereby reducing motor vehicle emissions and benefiting air quality.

When the system becomes fully operational at all MDX roads in 2009/2010, there will be no more tollbooths. No more delays. No back-ups. No tie-ups at exits caused by drivers getting off before the toll plaza. Currently, approximately half of the vehicles that make up the 500,000 daily trips on MDX roads pay 100 percent of the tolls, while the rest do not pass through the toll plazas. With ORT, all drivers will pay an equitable share of the tolls depending on how many miles they drive on MDX roads.

To work properly and assure the financial integrity of our bonds, the system must collect tolls from vehicles with active SunPass transponders, or capture the vehicles’ identification and then collect the money due from the owners. Already, almost 52 percent of all MDX toll transactions are ETC. In fact, ETC runs as high as 65 percent during the morning rush hour at the SR 874 toll plaza. With the anticipated drop in the price of SunPass transponders in the next five years, the simplified ease of purchase and ever-increasing driver acceptance of the technology, MDX anticipates nearly 90 percent of all vehicles will be equipped with SunPass transponders by the time ORT is implemented.

To collect tolls from the rest, and to deter toll evasion at current SunPass lanes, MDX has devised a state-of-the-art Violation Enforcement System. In conjunction with Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise and using the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles’ database, the system works as follows:

- A photograph is taken of the license plates of all vehicles as they pass the collection point.
- If the system does not receive SunPass confirmation, the photograph is processed and the license plate matched against SunPass records; all other photographs are deleted.
- If the plate number is linked to an active account, the toll is deducted from the balance. SunPass users will see this as an “I-Toll” on the SunPass account, which is available on the web at www.sunpass.com.
- If the plate is not found in the SunPass database, the license is matched against the vehicle registration and the violator is issued a Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC).

SunPass customers who receive a UTC should contact SunPass to update their account. This action may resolve the citation. However, customers who use MDX’s SunPass lanes without a valid SunPass have three options when they receive a UTC. They can either elect to pay $25.00 within 30 days from the issue date of the UTC directly to MDX or pay a civil penalty of $85.50 to the Clerk of the County Court after 30 days, but no more than 75 days from the issue date of the UTC. In either event there is no adjudication or points assessed to the driver’s license record. Customers also have the option to plead not guilty and request a court hearing. However, if the County Judge/Traffic Officer determines that the UTC is valid, the Court may impose a penalty of up to $500.00 and points will be assessed.

MDX has begun a public information campaign to educate customers about the importance of properly maintaining their SunPass transponders as well as keeping their account information updated. Customers are also invited to get additional information from MDX’s violation enforcement center at (305) 639-6008.

MDX also is reminding drivers that it is not necessary to purchase a separate SunPass for every vehicle. Customers can register multiple vehicles on a single account and simply transfer the transponder between vehicles as needed. Customers who have a valid account and receive a violation notice can call 1-888-TOLL-FLA (865-5352) to have the tolls paid from their account and have the violation dismissed.
Among other duties, the Finance Department manages the ratio of net revenue to debt service on outstanding bonds and works to secure the most attractive interest rates and the highest bond rating possible for MDX.
MDX® finances virtually all of its operations and work program from the tolls it collects and from proceeds of bond issues backed by the anticipated revenue of future tolls. The Finance Department manages the fiscal operations of MDX. It works to secure the most attractive interest rates and the highest bond rating possible and fulfill the fiduciary responsibility of maximizing the value attained for each dollar of the $49.5 million the agency collected in toll revenue in fiscal 2004. Its activities allow MDX to fund our five-year work program of $857 million.

The Finance Department works closely with the MDX Board Treasurer and our financial advisors to issue tax exempt revenue bonds, structure interest-rate swaps, issue short-term Commercial Paper Notes and participate in state funded Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Fund and Infrastructure Bank loans. It also manages the agency’s finances to assure MDX maintains appropriate debt coverage ratios and meets all of its current and long-term obligations. For fiscal year 2004, this ratio was 1.84.

To fulfill its mission, the Finance Department contracts nationally renowned engineering firms and financial consultants and underwriters who conduct forecasts of future traffic and revenue, examine bonding capacity and advise MDX on the best short-term and long-term actions to fulfill its mission.

Highlights of Finance Department activities during the fiscal year include:

### Interest Rate Swap with Citigroup
On June 30, 2004, MDX executed an amendment to a swap agreement to effectively change the tax-exempt variable interest rate on the proposed Series 2004A Bonds, into a synthetic fixed rate of 5.352% by replacing the payment received from Citigroup from a taxable-based rate to a tax-exempt-based rate in anticipation of the tax-exempt issuance of the Series 2004A Toll System Refunding Revenue Bonds. This swap allowed MDX to take advantage of current low interest rates and is expected to save MDX millions of dollars in interest expense.

### Commercial Paper Notes
On March 23, 2004, the Board authorized the issuance of $105,000,000 in Toll System Commercial Paper Notes (the “Notes”) with maturities not to exceed 270 days from the date of issuance. The proceeds of the Notes provide short-term funding of MDX's capital improvement program. The Notes and accrued interest are payable solely from future bond issuances. On March 25, 2004, MDX issued $40,000,000 in Notes at an interest rate of 0.95%. An additional $40,000,000 in Notes was issued on June 22, 2004 at an interest rate of 1.11%. On June 30, 2004, MDX had $80,000,000 in outstanding Notes plus accrued interest of $110,415. The $80,000,000 in outstanding Notes, plus accrued interest was repaid on August 2, 2004. In connection with the Notes, on March 25, 2004, we executed a Letter of Credit and Reimbursement Agreement securing the principal and interest on the Notes.

### Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Fund Loan
On December 31, 2003, the Florida Department of Transportation approved MDX’s application for an additional non-interest bearing Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Fund loan in the amount of $1,500,000 to conduct preliminary engineering studies, traffic and revenue studies, environmental impact studies, financial advisory services, engineering design, right-of-way map preparation, project-related professional services, and advanced right-of-way requisition activities.

### State Infrastructure Bank Loans
On August 4, 2003, MDX entered into an unsecured State Infrastructure Bank loan agreement with the State of Florida Department of Transportation in the amount of $20,000,000. The loan is in two installments of $12,500,000 in 2004 and $7,500,000 no earlier than April 2005. The loan requires annual principal payments beginning June 30, 2010 and ending June 30, 2011 of $7,000,000 and $5,500,000, respectively. As of June 30, 2004, MDX has received the first installment totaling $12,500,000.

On November 2, 2004 the Florida Department of Transportation executed a loan to MDX from the State Infrastructure Bank loan in the amount of $11,613,000 at an interest rate of 2.5%. The loan will be made in installments based on the reimbursement construction expenditures made by MDX on the project specific to the loan agreement. As of June 30, 2004, there were no construction expenditures.

### Subsequent Events
On July 29, 2004, MDX issued $68,200,000 in Toll System Refunding Revenue Bonds, for the purpose of providing funds to refund the total outstanding principal amount of the (Taxable) Series 1996 Bonds. The Series 2004A Bonds consist of $68,200,000 in Serial Bonds maturing between July 1, 2005 and July 1, 2019, bearing interest at a tax-exempt variable rate.

On July 29, 2004, MDX issued $175,000,000 in Toll System Revenue Bonds, Series 2004B for the purpose of providing funds to pay:

- A portion of the cost of certain improvements to the system included in MDX’s five year work program.
- Pay at maturity MDX’s outstanding Toll System Commercial Paper Notes.
- Pay the cost of a debt service reserve facility.
- Pay costs and expenses relating to the issuance of the bonds.

The bonds, net of unamortized net premium totaling $2,809,283, consist of:

- $103,445,000 Serial Bonds maturing between July 1, 2014 and July 1, 2027, bearing interest between 3.85% and 5.25%.
- $71,555,000 fixed term bonds at 5%, with semiannual interest payments each January 1, and July 1.

On October 28, 2004, MDX entered into three “forward starting” interest rate swaps totaling $241,390,000. Under the swap agreements, MDX will owe interest at a fixed rate of 4.313% to the counterparties of the swaps beginning March 1, 2005, the anticipated issuance date of the MDX Series 2005 Bonds. In return, the counterparties will owe MDX interest based on the variable Bond Market Association Municipal Swap Index (BMA) rate that approximates the tax-exempt variable rate anticipated on the Series 2005 Bonds.
The Office of Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs has been transformed into a pro-active and dynamic division with public relations and public affairs capabilities that have enabled communication with all spheres of the community.
The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority is a public institution and as such, it is committed to inform and respond to the general public, and of course, its loyal and dedicated customers. The MDX® Office of Communications’ functions manifest themselves in many forms: from educating the public about MDX and the inherent transportation technologies and solutions that comprise the work program, to becoming a trusted and responsive community partner.

This year MDX has made a concerted effort to reach out to all sectors of Miami-Dade County’s culturally and ethnically diverse community. We have also instituted communications systems to keep individuals in the public and private sectors informed about MDX and all it entails. MDX is committed to informing the public and those it serves. We understand that each of these opportunities brings their own resources to the table, and that communication is the key to ensuring that the common goal of enhancing our region’s quality of life is realized.

In April 2004, MDX appointed Margaret Pulles Machado as Director of Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs. Under her stewardship, the Office of Communications has been transformed into a pro-active and dynamic division with internal public relations and public affairs capabilities that have enabled communication within all spheres of the community.

Highlights of our communications efforts include a joint presentation on Managed Lanes before the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in June 2004. MDX teamed-up with Miami-Dade Transit, the Florida Department of Transportation and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and prepared a comprehensive and compelling argument on the benefits of instituting Managed Lanes on the Turnpike Extension and on SR 836 (Dolphin Expressway).

In addition to briefing members of the MPO, members of the business and non-profit communities, MDX has taken the initiative in securing speaking engagements, to support its communications efforts. As an example, Chairman Sharpton and Vice-Chair Membieu were keynote speakers at the Miami-Dade County Legislative Delegation meeting and the Miami-Dade County League of Cities annual dinner, respectively.

Much of our work program successes are due in no small part to the support and commitment of the MPO members. In July 2004, the Office of Communications coordinated the SR 836 Extension construction project groundbreaking ceremony. Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz and his staff were instrumental in making the kickoff a success. Over 80 people attended, including local residents, officials from partner transportation agencies, county officials and the news media. Many more collaborative opportunities with the MPO members are in the works.

The Office of Communications instituted an energetic community relations program, helping put MDX in the media spotlight. MDX launched the official lighting of the Wing at the SR 836 toll plaza in honor of Informed Families’ Red Ribbon “Just Say No To Drugs” campaign. MDX graced the Wing with Miami HEAT cheerleaders who greeted pleasantly surprised commuters. Most of the time, though, the Office of Communications works with the media to keep the public informed on issues that impact them on a daily basis: The issuance of regular roadway construction and traffic advisories, public announcements and road closures such as the July closure of SR 836 due to the collision of two tractor trailers. At each instance, media relations take top priority, so that the public is always kept well informed.

During this – one of the busiest hurricane seasons in recent history, the Office of Communications instituted an effective crisis communications plan that helped keep the media and the public informed 24/7 about toll suspensions instituted to assist with hurricane evacuations. Tolls were suspended for about twelve hours for Hurricane Charley, and again for more than four and a half days for Hurricane Frances and nearly three days for Hurricane Jeanne. Communications also kept the media apprised of road conditions and the availability of Road Rangers during these states of emergency.

Soon after the storms passed, the Office of Communications initiated a partnership with WFOR – CBS Channel 4’s non-profit organization “Neighbors 4 Neighbors.” Lock-boxes were placed at each toll booth located at the SR 836 plaza to enable monetary donations by citizens who wished to help the hurricane victims. The CBS affiliate continuously aired public service announcements which helped create awareness of the “Collecting 4 a Cause” campaign. Over $20,000 was raised for hurricane relief efforts. But community outreach didn’t stop there.

In September, MDX launched the SunPass® Direct Transponder Accessibility Program (TAP), providing 6,000 SunPass transponders free of charge to Miami-Dade County residents who earn $22,500 or less. The TAP was officially launched with Miami-Dade County Commissioner Natacha Seijas and MDX Chair Daryl Sharpton at the Stephen P. Clark Center. Since then, MDX has participated in more than eight community events distributing much needed SunPass transponders county-wide.

MDX believes that it is fundamentally important to be a part of the community and to support celebrations of our community’s diversity. As such, MDX was proud to be a sponsor of Hispanic Heritage Month hosted by the Miami-Dade Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board. We also gained a tremendous amount of exposure throughout the community by sponsoring community activities such as Cuba Nostalgia and celebrations in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. We supported youth fundraisers such as the Dade County Bar Association’s “Bids for Kids” and Amigos for Kids “Miami Celebrity Domino Night.”

We reached out to the business community by participating in activities at the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and sponsored an event at their annual meeting. MDX continues to be active with local chambers of commerce, including the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. MDX is organizer and sponsor of the January transportation summit where Florida Transportation Secretary Jose Abreu will address the audience and a panel made up of leaders in public transportation will present their vision of the future of mobility in South Florida.

Finally, in an effort to communicate more efficiently, the Office of Communications launched a monthly electronic newsletter which is distributed throughout the community and features timely news on developments, construction projects and community outreach activities.

In the coming year MDX will continue to make every effort to keep the community informed of our ongoing efforts to keep Miami-Dade Moving. We will be launching a new, state-of-the-art, bi-lingual web site and a high-profile public awareness campaign. To that end, the Office of Communications will continue to promote MDX work programs and innovative transportation solutions to the public and our elected leadership as well as increase SunPass market penetration and identify collaborative partnerships throughout Miami-Dade.