

the Quarterly Commute

"Keeping you informed on a better way to get where you're going."

RideShare Celebrates Clean Commute Day on May 4

Take the Clean Commute Pledge for a Chance to Win Prizes!

RideShare is excited to participate in the 17th annual Clean Commute Day in the Central Virginia region on May 4, 2007. The event is sponsored locally by the Commuter Information Team and sponsored statewide by the American Lung Association. We hope that all of our RideShare members and friends will join us in the festivities.

This year, area commuters are encouraged to take the "Clean Commute Pledge," promising to use a commute option other than driving alone for at least one day. Participants who submit their pledges before the deadline are eligible to win valuable prizes. The Grand Prize winner

will receive a family-friendly weekend getaway at Massanutten Resort in Elkton, including a choice of activities such as golf, horseback riding, and family fun at the water park.

A Clean Commute Day Celebration will be held at the Community Chalkboard on the Downtown Mall from 11:00 - 1:00 PM on Friday, May 4th. The event will feature activities for commuters and families to enjoy, including a live radio broadcast by 92.7 Kiss FM, games, prizes, and interactive demonstrations on alternative commuting options. Information will also be available from 5:00 - 6:00 PM at Fridays After Five, and the Grand Prize winner will be announced on stage that evening.

To encourage participation, area transit services are helping the community "clean commute" for free. CTS is offering free bus rides on Friday, May 4th, and JAUNT is offering free rides to all commuters boarding a bike the entire week of the event.

Take the "Clean Commute Pledge" and register to win prizes at www.commuterinformation.com. The deadline for online entries is Thursday, May 3rd. If you don't have a chance to register online, pledge cards will also be available at the Clean Commute Day Celebration from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM and at Fridays After Five from 5:00-6:00 PM on Friday, May 4th. We hope you will help us clear the air this spring! •

WIN
Grand Prize is a family-friendly getaway at Massanutten Resort!

For one day you could make a difference
In the air quality of Central Virginia

Clean Commute Day
Friday, May 4th, Downtown Mall, 11am-1pm
Take the Clean Commute Pledge at www.commuterinformation.com

Grand Prize Winner announced live on stage at Fridays After Five! Come groove with the Bootsie Daniels Band as the celebration continues!

Logos for CTS, JAUNT, and RideShare are visible at the bottom.

Inside this Issue:

- Tips for Drivers to Reduce Air Pollution
- Know your options: Clean Commute Alternatives
- Commuter Focus
- Employer Corner

A quarterly publication produced by

ridESHARE

P.O. Box 1505 · Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-295-6165 · 888-974-5500 · www.rideshareinfo.org

Driver tips for reducing air pollution

According to the American Lung Association, more than 1/3 of Virginians live in areas with unhealthy amounts of ozone, a powerful respiratory irritant, which is the primary ingredient in the smog that regularly blankets many urban areas during the summer months. Central Virginia enjoys better air quality than more urban areas such as Northern Virginia, for example. However, as our population grows, we must work together to keep our air clean! Here are some tips from the American Lung Association on how to do just that.

1. Find alternatives to driving whenever possible by taking public transit, telecommuting, and carpooling. Walk, roller blade, or bike while doing errands to keep the air and yourself fit and healthy.
2. Keep your car maintained. A car maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications runs cleaner and more efficiently.
3. Combine trips. Combining your driving trips saves gas, vehicle wear-and-tear, and reduces emissions. Restarting a warm engine produces a lot less pollution than a cold start.
4. When purchasing a new vehicle, look for one with low emissions, such as a hybrid.
5. Fill up your gas tank after dusk on hot summer days. Gasoline vapors can react with sunlight and heat to add to the ozone problem in your community. Filling up after dark takes away one essential ingredient in making ozone: sunlight.
6. Contact your local American Lung Association for more information about air pollution, lung health, and local air quality control at www.lungusa.org.

Know Your Options!

How Many Ways Can You Be a Cleaner Commuter?

Environmental issues are becoming more prevalent in the news worldwide and in our communities. Smarter commute options are one way to help, but most Central Virginians continue to drive alone. Here are many options available through RideShare and our transportation partners. One of them may be the solution for you!

Carpool

Carpooling is the simplest and most common "ridesharing" arrangement, consisting of two or more commuters riding in a private vehicle on a regular basis. Registering with RideShare is an effective way to form or join a carpool. RideShare works to find carpools for anyone who lives, works or attends school in Charlottesville, Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa or Nelson. Carpools are flexible, and you'll typically save hundreds of dollars a year in commuting expenses.

Vanpool

If your commute is 35 miles or more one-way and you know others making the same commute, you are a good prospect for a vanpool. In a typical vanpool, seven to fifteen commuters ride together, each contributing a low monthly fare that gets them a comfortable van, and covers all maintenance and repairs, and all insurance, too. RideShare can help coordinate the formation of a vanpool with the leasing company and assist with subsidies to get a vanpool started.

Transit

Transit is a popular option in large metro areas but is a growing transportation mode in the Central Virginia region. The most recent development is the opening of the Downtown Transit Station Charlottesville, which now serves as the main hub for CTS routes, replacing previous transfer points in downtown Charlottesville. Call CTS at 434-296-7433 for more information. Several other transit services are

available for residents in both Charlottesville and surrounding counties. JAUNT (434-296-6174) offers commuter routes, inter-county transit, and paratransit serving Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Louisa, Nelson, and Buckingham. Greene County Transit (434-985-5205) offers commuter routes, inter-county transit, and paratransit serving Greene County. UTS (434-924-7711) operates bus service in and around the grounds of the University of Virginia. All of these area transit services, along with RideShare, work together as members of the Commuter Information Team as a transportation information and referral center for the region.

Telework

Teleworking is an extension of the workplace, enabling employees to be productive in a location other than the normal "office" by using the phone and the computer. The spread of home-based businesses has done much to enhance the image of teleworking, and many preparedness experts tout the value of decentralized office environments. Advances in technology have also made it easier for valuable employees to work from home, often just a few days during the week. RideShare provides both individuals and employers with information and assistance in implementing telework policies and programs. Visit www.rideshareinfo.org for more information.

Biking and Walking

If you live close to where you work, walking or riding a bike to work are great ways to be kind to the environment and to your health! Fitness experts recommend getting 30 minutes of aerobic activity each day, but to meet this goal, it is not necessary to



Charlottesville's new Downtown Transit Center

do 30 minutes all at once. Therefore a 15-minute walk or bike to work one way could do wonders for your health. If you choose to bike to work, CTS and JAUNT make it easy for you to combine biking with transit by providing bike racks on all buses. The Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation (ACCT) is another agency that encourages these modes by providing a free Regional Mobility Map for greater Charlottesville. For more information on ACCT, visit www.transportationchoice.org.

Alternative Fueled Vehicles

Much advancement has been made with alternative-fueled vehicles in

recent years, including options such as natural gas and biodiesel fueled vehicles. There are already many fleet vehicles in our communities using natural gas and biodiesel. For example, CTS and UTS have biodiesel buses serving commuters in Charlottesville, and the City of Charlottesville now has two school buses running on natural gas. Consumers in California and New York can now purchase the natural gas powered Honda Civic GX, which is considered the cleanest production vehicle on the planet by the EPA. The market for individual commuters will grow along with the increase of fueling options for natural gas and biodiesel.

Hybrid Electric Vehicles use a combination of gas and electric power to reduce fuel consumption, lower emissions and provide great gas mileage to drivers. Hybrids are currently the most practical option for Central Virginia commuters wanting a more environmentally friendly vehicle. There are also federal tax credits available to owners of hybrids that may offset the additional cost of a hybrid over a regular gas-fueled vehicle. If you must continue driving alone, hybrids are a great option. If you carpool using a hybrid, you'll play an even bigger part in helping to clear the air! •

Commuter Focus:

Charlottesville Residents Share the Commute to Richmond



Jason Brege, Lori Garrett and Ann Benner

RideShare members Jason Brege, Lori Garrett and Ann Benner are saving on their commute by sharing the ride from the Pantops Shopping Center Park & Ride Lot to their jobs in downtown Richmond. Their group has transformed over the past year, but flexibility and a unique way of distributing the driving have helped this carpool succeed.

Garrett and Benner were already carpooling with others in the group when Jason Brege joined the carpool. For Brege, carpooling not only saves on his commute, but also saved the expense of purchasing another vehicle. "I am working in Richmond for a year while my wife finishes up

law school at UVA, so the carpool helped enable us to avoid incurring the expense of a second car and helped reduce the expense of my commute. Carpooling lets me cut the cost in a third if not less." Lori Garrett started carpooling to have time to work in the car and has found other benefits as well. "I enjoy getting to know people, it saves gas and wear and tear on the car, and it is good for the environment," she remarks.

The flexibility of any carpool depends on the riders and their demands at work. This group has established times but occasionally flexes to meet unusual schedule changes. Garrett notes, "They even dropped me off and picked me up at a different location on a couple of occasions!"

One of the most unique features of this carpool is the method of distributing the driving burden. A computer program developed by a former rider maintains a point system that has greatly minimized complaints regarding fairness of driving. Of course there are other ways that most commuters share driving, such as taking turns each week. However, this group has functioned with as many as eight participants and was able to distribute driving evenly using this method.

Brege says that the most intriguing side benefits to the carpool are networking and free advice. "We have all been surprised at how many times people have been connected to people or services that they were looking for, just because of who or what somebody else in the carpool knew. Also, we are often able to seek and provide each other advice as confidential, impartial sounding boards regarding a variety of issues we may be facing at work or elsewhere."

These Charlottesville to Richmond commuters would not change much about their group except adding a few more carpoolers to save even more! If this carpool sounds like a good fit for you or someone you know making the commute to Richmond, please contact RideShare. Commuters that carpool at least twice a week are also eligible for the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program, which offers a free ride home in case of an emergency. For more information on carpooling, GRH and other RideShare services, visit www.rideshareinfo.org or give us a call at 434-295-6165. We look forward to helping you have a more enjoyable commute! •

~ The Employer Corner ~

Wellness in the Workplace - How Clean Commuting Can Help

Wellness programs in the workplace have been on the rise in recent years. According to the Wellness Councils of America, more than 81% of businesses nationwide with 50 or more employees have some form of health promotion program. When implementing a wellness program, several components come to mind, including exercise, smoking cessation classes, and stress management. However, transportation programs can also play an important role to promote wellness in the workplace, while also helping air quality in our communities.

For many employees, their commute may be one of the most stressful parts of the day. As commute times and traffic congestion increase, we are spending more time in our vehicles and less time being productive at work and at home. Employees who use an alternative to driving alone have not had to deal with the stress of rush-hour traffic. They arrive in good spirits and ready to work.

Many wellness programs already have an element to promote walking and other physical activities, such as biking, to

better the health of employees. Encouraging walking or biking to work promotes exercise, decreases stress due to commuting, and can help reduce traffic congestion around the workplace.

Transportation alternatives for employees can also increase office morale and bolster productivity. Employees that carpool or vanpool have the opportunity to read, study, work, or relax on the days they don't drive. They arrive at work better prepared to face the day. Telework is another transportation alternative that may remove the commute burden entirely. Studies at major corporations found that teleworkers reported gaining an extra hour of productive time each day.

RideShare can help your organization improve your wellness program by providing information on transportation options for your employees. We would love to participate in your next benefits or wellness fair and demonstrate how easy it is to incorporate smart transportation choices into a healthy lifestyle. For more information, contact RideShare at 434-295-6165. We look forward to working with you!



RideShare is a program of the
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission.

RideShare is a member of the Commuter Information Team (CIT)*, a partnership that works to enhance the quality of life and mobility of people in the region.

**The CIT is RideShare, CTS, JAUNT, UTS, and Greene County Transit*



P.O. Box 1505
Charlottesville, VA 22902