

# the Quarterly Commute

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

## Make a New Year's Resolution to Share the Ride



### Tips to get started and make it work

The beginning of the New Year presents an opportunity for us to look back and see what aspects of our life we can improve moving forward. Popular resolutions include losing weight, quitting unhealthy habits, and of course, saving money. Unfortunately many of us start with good intentions but may lack a strategy to incorporate our goals into our everyday life. With proper planning, we can have a better chance that those resolutions won't fizzle out in February.

Did you make any resolutions for 2007? If one of your goals is to spend more wisely in 2007, then a change in your commute can be a step in the right direction. RideShare offers these ten basic tips to ease smarter commuting into your daily routine.

**1. Start small.** If you are used to having your car as your sole companion, the idea of sharing the ride everyday can be overwhelming.

Consider carpooling, transit, biking or walking to work just one or two days a week.

**2. Plan ahead.** Make an appointment with yourself the day(s) you will change your commute mode and mark it on your calendar.

**3. Outline your plan.** If you usually use your vehicle to run errands during your lunch break, come up with an alternative such as taking a walk or saving errands for the days that you drive.

**4. Talk about it.** Letting your friends and co-workers know about your plan helps support your decision to change. You will also be leading by example for others considering a change in their commute.

**5. Track your progress.** Take note of money saved that would have been spent on gas each week or those 10 minutes of exercise you added by walking to the bus stop.

**6. Reward yourself.** Set aside money you would normally spend at the pump, use it to buy something nice for yourself, or you could even save for a vacation!

**7. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!** Perhaps your carpool is not working out due to a conflict in your route or schedule. RideShare's carpool matching database is growing everyday, and you may request a search for another match that may be more convenient.

**8. Stick to it.** It takes time for a new activity to become a natural part of your routine.

**9. Get your backup plan in place.** Once you are using alternative transportation at least twice a week, you are eligible for RideShare's Guaranteed Ride Home program. If you need to leave work due to an emergency, RideShare covers the cost of a taxi or rental car.

**10. Give us your feedback!** If you were successful, RideShare would love to share your story with others. By working together, we can reduce traffic congestion and make a difference in our communities. •

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## Keeping Your Car In Shape

These tips from [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) will help you get the most out of your vehicle in 2007.

### Keep Your Engine Properly Tuned

Fixing a car that is noticeably out of tune or has failed an emissions test can improve its gas mileage by an average of 4 percent, though results vary based on the kind of repair and how well it is done. Fixing a serious maintenance problem, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve your mileage by as much as 40 percent.

Fuel Economy Benefit: 4%  
Equivalent Gasoline Savings: \$0.09/gallon

### Check & Replace Air Filters Regularly

Replacing a clogged air filter can improve your car's gas mileage by as much as 10 percent. Your car's air filter keeps impurities from damaging the inside of your engine. Not only will replacing a dirty air filter save gas, it will protect your engine.

Fuel Economy Benefit: up to 10%  
Equivalent Gasoline Savings: up to \$0.23/gallon

### Keep Tires Properly Inflated

You can improve your gas mileage by around 3.3 percent by keeping your tires inflated to the proper pressure. Under-inflated tires can lower gas mileage by 0.4 percent for every 1 psi drop in pressure of all four tires. Properly inflated tires are safer and last longer.

Fuel Economy Benefit: up to 3%  
Equivalent Gasoline Savings: up to \$0.07/gallon

### Use the Recommended Grade of Motor Oil

You can improve your gas mileage by 1-2 percent by using the manufacturer's recommended grade of motor oil. For example, using 10W-30 motor oil in an engine designed to use 5W-30 can lower your gas mileage by 1-2 percent. Using 5W-30 in an engine designed for 5W-20 can lower your gas mileage by 1-1.5 percent. Also, look for motor oil that says "Energy Conserving" on the API performance symbol to be sure it contains friction-reducing additives.

Fuel Economy Benefit: 1-2%  
Equivalent Gasoline Savings: \$0.02-\$0.05/gallon

**Note:** Cost savings are based on an assumed fuel price of \$2.31/gallon. Estimates for fuel savings from vehicle maintenance, keeping tires properly inflated, and using the recommended grade of motor oil are based on studies and literature reviews performed by Energy and Environmental Analysis, Inc., Washington, DC.

## RideShare Contest Winners Announced

### Thanks for participating in RideShare Awareness and Appreciation Week!

RideShare's 3rd Annual Awareness and Appreciation Week was held in October 2006 and was a fun event for all involved. During this annual event, RideShare awarded commuters for using smart transportation options and spread the word about our services to Central Virginia commuters.

Participants were invited to register for contests both online and at their places of employment. RideShare recognized four carpools, two vanpools and two bike commuters, awarding them each a grand prize with RideShare travel items and a \$25 gas card.

Information tables were set up at LexisNexis and SNL Financial during the contest week, allowing employees to gain information and ask questions about RideShare's services. In addition, Albemarle County employees had the opportunity to attend a lunch workshop on the benefits of RideShare. Thanks to all the employers that participated in this event.

Congratulations to our contest winners! We are all winners when we choose smart transportation options. Do you have a fun idea for the next RideShare Awareness and Appreciation Week? Let us know! We are always looking for new ways to spread the word about better ways to get where you're going. •



Scott Clark won a grand prize in the random drawing for Albemarle County employees. Scott commutes on his bike to downtown Charlottesville five days a week.



Melanie Brede, a nutritionist at the UVA Student Health Center, bikes to work most days of the week. Melanie won the random grand prize drawing from entries received at [www.rideshareinfo.org](http://www.rideshareinfo.org).



Lou Valente carpooled three days during the contest week and won a grand prize in a random drawing held at SNL Financial.



Juan Wade, pictured here with Lisa Horanyi from RideShare, won a grand prize for the most miles logged in his carpool to his job at the Albemarle County Office Building.

# Are you driving to the pump or is the pump driving you?

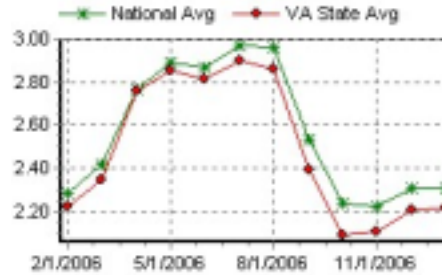
## Trends in Gas Prices are Tricky to Follow

Gas prices, whether they are rising or dropping, remain a hot topic of discussion for 2007. Both experts and average commuters try to predict where gas prices will go, but the only true prediction is that consumers will continue to pay the price as long as we rely on this resource. Consumers can keep an eye on current prices at [www.fuelgaugereport.com](http://www.fuelgaugereport.com), a service provided by AAA and the Oil Price Information Service (OPIS). Central Virginia commuters experienced a welcome drop in the cost per gallon in fall of 2006, but it appears this could be another passing trend.

It may not be surprising that prices at the pump are a driving factor for

those considering alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. In fact, in September 2005, when Central Virginia experienced the highest gas prices on record, RideShare also had a record number of commuters applying for our carpool matching service. Conversely, when gas prices decrease, commuters begin to feel more comfortable about driving alone.

12 month average for Regular Unleaded



While our dependency on oil continues and gas prices remain unstable, it can seem nearly impossible to calculate the cost of our daily commutes. However, if you carpool with another person, you will have the comfort of

knowing whatever the gas price per gallon, you will save 50% on your commute. If you take public transportation, you know exactly what your bus pass will cost each day. Moreover, those that live close enough to walk or bike to work can have the satisfaction of commuting for free. Check out the commuting calculator at [www.rideshareinfo.org](http://www.rideshareinfo.org) to see your current commuting costs and what you could be saving by sharing the ride.

By choosing to not drive alone, you can take back control of your commute. There are so many positive outcomes to sharing the ride that go beyond your budget. You will also be doing a service to your community and the environment by reducing traffic and contributing less to air pollution. Get started today by calling RideShare at (434) 295-6165 or online at [www.rideshareinfo.org](http://www.rideshareinfo.org).

# In Your Neighborhood

## Connecting Neighbors to Share the Ride

Rush hour traffic is something many of us deal with when commuting to and from work during peak times in an urban/suburban environment. Returning home to your neighborhood can be a welcome respite after a hectic workday. However, as population increases, many of us are finding that traffic is not only an urban issue. When you and your neighbors all work similar schedules, this results in traffic congestion in and around a neighborhood. And if your neighbors are like the majority of Central Virginians, the line of cars consists mostly of single occupant vehicles.

Perhaps you are already sharing your work commute with a neighbor or you

have at least thought about it. It can be hard to connect on your own, though. Let's face it, asking a neighbor to carpool involves a larger commitment than borrowing a ladder, and you may feel uncomfortable asking to share in what is obviously their "alone" time! That's where RideShare can help.

RideShare can provide a formal way for neighbors to connect and share the ride. You can find out who is already interested in a carpool. Residents that register with RideShare are sent a personalized match list of commuters who go the same direction at approximately the same time of day. The beauty of a match list from RideShare is that you have the information you need before approaching your neighbor. When you are both interested in carpooling, you already have something in common. That makes it so much easier to make the initial contact, and you may

befriend a neighbor you have not met before.

There are many ways to get involved. If you are part of a homeowners association, RideShare will be happy to attend a meeting to provide information on our services, such as our carpool matching and Guaranteed Ride Home programs. We can also provide information and giveaways at community events, which are a great venue to inform neighbors of a formal way to share the ride. There are also other options such as flyers or newsletters, if you have one in your neighborhood.

If you would like your neighbors to know about RideShare, please give us a call at 434-295-6165. We are happy to work with your neighborhood to spread the word on how easy it is to start a carpool. You may even help reduce traffic around your home, and that's being a good neighbor! •

# ~ The Employer Corner ~

## Traffic Congestion at the Worksite

Many would agree that Central Virginia is a great place to live and work. As population has increased over the past several years, area businesses have grown as well. Business growth seems good for everyone—the economy, consumers, and the job market. These changes are positive for our community, but what about the traffic?

When businesses expand there are more traffic bottlenecks around the worksite. A traffic reduction program can help, but this concept may not be easy to implement. RideShare can help make it possible to create a traffic reduction plan that is most convenient for you, your employees and your office structure.

A RideShare representative can help you assess your transportation needs and gather employee feedback. After reviewing recommendations, RideShare can help you implement an alternative transportation program that will benefit your organization.

## A few things RideShare can offer your organization:

- Employee surveys
- Geocoding of employee home locations (*dots on maps*)
- Carpool matching for employees
- Vanpool start-up programs
- Teleworking and alternative scheduling plans

There is little or no cost to start a program, and the benefits extend well beyond the parking lot. You may also start to see increased productivity and morale at the office since many will have a less stressful commute. You may be able to expand your labor pool by providing transportation incentives. You (and your employees) may also save on taxes for vanpool or bus commuting expenses. All it takes to get started is a call to RideShare at 434-295-6165 or email [rideassistant@tjpd.org](mailto:rideassistant@tjpd.org). 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*



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