

# The County Commuter

Winter 2008

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## Annual Transportation Survey Results

A huge THANK YOU to all employees who completed the annual transportation survey last September! This year we achieved an 88% response rate to the survey, over 1,115 requests for additional rideshare information, and nearly 550 suggestions or comments.

During the five-day survey week, nearly 44,500 employee trips were made from home to work. Since some employees did not drive a vehicle and/or shared the ride, a vehicle trip number of 36,200 was used to calculate the average vehicle ridership. The ratio between the two numbers, or the average vehicle ridership, was 1.23 during the survey week. Our goal is to achieve a 1.50 average vehicle ridership which means reduce the vehicle trips during a typical week by 6,500.

But more importantly, it means that by not driving a vehicle or by ridesharing to work, County of Orange employees helped eliminate over eight thousand trips during that week. Based on an average round trip distance of 34 miles, that translates into nearly 275,000 miles! That's over 14 million miles a year.

The 2007 survey also revealed that 11% of employees are carpooling or vanpooling to work, 2% are taking Metrolink or public transit, and 1% walk or ride their bike to work. Keep up the great work and thanks for choosing alternatives to driving alone!

The good news is that all employees who submitted a survey were automatically entered into a drawing to receive an Apple i-Pod, and the lucky winner was **Thelma Torres** with the Social Services Agency – congratulations!



### Add one of these goals to your list of New Year's Resolutions:

- Carpool to Work One Day per Week
- Try Taking the Bus to Work
- Start Taking a Metrolink Train to Work
- Get Healthy! Try Walking or Biking to Work

# Changes to Rideshare Program

In 2008 you can expect to see more communication pieces that promote ridesharing, an increase tax savings to those purchasing transit passes through payroll deduction process, more ways to find carpool partners, enhancements to the County Commuter Newsletter and website, a push to start new vanpool groups, and additional merchants that offer discounts to Commuter Club members. Thank you for all your suggestions, and thanks for ridesharing!

# New Vanpool Groups Form



The City of Santa Ana is in the process of forming a new vanpool group from Mission Viejo to the Santa Ana Civic Center. County of Orange employees have been invited to join the vanpool if you are interested:

**Vanpool Departure:** Oso Parkway & Felipe Rd in Mission Viejo at 6:45 am  
**Vanpool Arrival:** Santa Ana Civic Center, near City Hall at 7:45-8:00 am

If you join the vanpool, you will have the option of paying for your monthly vanpool fare with pre-tax dollars through the Commuter Choice payroll deduction program. The Commuter Choice program is available to all County employees who take public transit or vanpool to work. If you decide to enroll in the program, you'll receive your first month's vanpool fare for free!

For additional information about the vanpool, please contact Norma Iniesta at the City of Santa Ana at [niniesta@santa-ana.org](mailto:niniesta@santa-ana.org) or call her at (714) 647-6998.

# Commuter Choice Program Update



The County of Orange Commuter Choice payroll deduction program has been available to all employees since 2005. The program helps employees that ride an OCTA bus, Metrolink train or a leased vanpool to work to save money by reducing their taxable income. It's a voluntary program that allows you to purchase your passes or vanpool payment with pre-tax dollars through the convenience of a monthly payroll deduction. In January 2008, the maximum amount that is considered pre-tax increased by \$5 to \$115 per month.

Click [here](#) to be linked to the Commuter Assistance Program website for more information about the Commuter Choice program, or send an e-mail to [rideshare@ocgov.com](mailto:rideshare@ocgov.com), or call the Message Center at (714) 647-1931.



# Website Enhancements

Do you manage or supervise employees? If so, we have a new tool to help you – the Manager’s Rideshare Tools web page! This new web page provides you with all the “tools” you will need to answer questions you might receive from employees and to generally promote ridesharing. The web page includes the following:

**Overview of Rideshare Program** – this is an overview of the program and the various incentive and benefits that are available to all employees

**Important Forms** – this includes links to the guaranteed ride home form and other essential forms including one that you can use to order materials

**Rideshare Posters** – these are great themed posters that you can print and post in your work areas to help promote ridesharing

**All Employee Transportation Survey** – look here to answer questions about the transportation survey distributed to all employees each fall

**Carpool Classifieds Listing** – this is where employees can list their contact information or look up fellow employees that want to carpool

**Display Rack Locations** – shows where you can direct employees for bus books, Metrolink schedules, all-in-one applications, and much more

**Request a Presentation or Assistance** – if you have a question, or would like a representative from the rideshare office to make a presentation to your employees, you can contact us directly

Click [here](#) to view the new web page. Your help in promoting ridesharing can make a big difference.

## New RideGuides Available

Many employees will soon receive **RideGuides** that they requested through the annual transportation survey process. The RideGuide is a free two-sided brochure from OCTA that provides customized rideshare information for your specific commute, including a list of fellow employees that are interested in carpooling or vanpooling, a carpool lane map, nearby Park & Ride lot locations and more. If you did not request a RideGuide when you completed the annual survey, it’s not too late:

- Call 1-800-COMMUTE, and live operators can provide you with a RideGuide via fax, email or read the ridematching results to you over the phone.
- Go online to [www.ridematch.info](http://www.ridematch.info), where you can enter your home/work locations and get the customized rideshare information you need.

# Commuter Club Update

## New Commuter Club Cards Coming Soon

Your new Commuter Club cards for 2008 are scheduled to be pony mailed to Commuter Club members that renewed their membership through the annual transportation survey process. Your new "2008" Commuter Club card will be good for discounts at all participating merchants that display the OCTA "Destination Partner" decal at the entrance of their establishment.

Click [here](#) for a current list of destination partners that provide money-saving discounts. You can search by area as well as type of service including dining, entertainment, historical, shopping, sports, recreation and much more.



## Get Rewarded for Ridesharing

Not a member of the Commuter Club? Willing to ride-share at least five days per month? If so, be sure to sign up for the Commuter Club to receive your discount card, a \$15 Starbuck Card sign-up bonus and to become eligible for quarterly drawings and more. To sign up, print and complete the [All-in-One](#) application. Applications are also available at the Commuter Information Display Racks – click [here](#) for a list of locations.

## Quarterly Drawing Winners

We're happy to announce the winners of this quarter's drawing for rideshare participants from the County of Orange Commuter Club members! Each quarter we draw eight (8) names of current "active" Commuter Club members and they win a \$25 gift certificate! This quarter's winners are:

- Joel Samonte, RDMD
- Don Willis, OC Sheriff Dept
- Joanna Burchell, DA Office
- Danielle Cota, DA Office
- Teresa Decker, Superior Court
- Helen Fried, OC Public Library
- Agnes Kartika, SSA
- Sonia Munos, HCS / Vets Services

They each won a gift certificate redeemable through [GiftCertificates.com](#), where they can select merchandise from over 20 merchants!



# Refer-A-Friend Winner

Do you know a co-worker who might consider ridesharing? Do they need a gentle push to carpool, vanpool, take the bus or train, walk or ride their bike to work? Tell them about the benefits of ridesharing and the Commuter Club. Not only will you help them with their commute but you'll also be eligible to win a \$25 certificate from GiftCertificates.com where you can select gift cards from a variety of retail stores, restaurants and much more. Send an email note to [rideshare@ocgov.com](mailto:rideshare@ocgov.com) for the required form, list your name and phone number under the "referred by" section, make copies of the form and then distribute to co-workers. When they submit the form to us, we'll enter you into the next upcoming bi-annual drawing.

**Congratulations to our Refer-a-Friend winner, Esmeralda Figueroa—Superior Court!**



# Did You Know?

If you're always talking while you're driving, you may be making traffic worse. That's according to a new study that shows that people who talk on cell phones — even with hands-free devices — go slower than people not on the phone, and they don't keep up with the flow of traffic.

As if dealing with traffic wasn't bad enough, motorists in Southern California also have to deal with inclement weather and the possibility of natural disasters — consider the following advice from experts in the field:

- When driving in fog, the California Highway Patrol suggests that you drive with lights on low beam; reduce your speed and drive with your window partially open so you can listen for traffic
- When driving in the rain, the Auto Club of Southern California recommends that you slow down; keep your distance and drive in the lanes furthest from the curb to avoid water that collects at the curbside



## Commuter Assistance Program

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The County Commuter Newsletter is published by the Commuter Assistance Program Office managed by the Human Resources Department. Our mission is to distribute commuter information to all County of Orange employees so that they can make informed decisions about how they travel to work. For more information about the Commuter Assistance Program, please go to the web site.