

Loudoun County Employers' Transportation News



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Focused on your commute.

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Member of:



Guide to Carpools

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While online searches are useful, employees working similar schedules at the same site may be unaware they also live near one another. Loudoun County can illustrate the potential for carpools with an employee density map showing where employees live throughout the region. These maps are produced from employees' ZIP codes.

One final way to help commuters—inform them about commuter parking. A map of park & ride lots is available on the Loudoun County website. Parking elsewhere in the region can be referenced on the Commuter Connections website.

Offer incentives

How about a free coffee? What about a cash reward for starting a new carpool? Both Commuter Connections and NuRide have incentives to recognize carpoolers.

Loudoun County commuters who join NuRide and take their first "green" trip are thanked with a \$5 Starbucks card. Commuter Connections offers 'Pool Rewards, where new carpoolers can receive up to \$2 a day.

Can we help?

If you have employees in search of a better commute, the Office of Transportation Services is ready to help. Contact Judy.Galen@loudoun.gov or call 703-737-8044.

Ready to save?

Tips for using less fuel

You can't help but notice the price at the pump. If you are looking for ways to save gasoline and improve your mileage, consider these and other money-saving tips at www.fueleconomy.gov.

Slow down—Take a less aggressive attitude when you get behind the wheel. Speeding, rapid acceleration and braking require more fuel than less aggressive driving. For every mile per hour driven faster than 55 miles per hour, fuel economy drops about one percent. Yes, your trip may take a little longer, but you can improve your fuel economy up to 15 percent.

Tire inflation—Check the air pressure in your tires regularly. To confirm the proper tire pressure for your vehicle, refer to the sticker in the driver's side door jamb, or the owner's manual. Do not use the maximum pressure printed on the tire's sidewall.

Lighten your load—Remove heavy items from your vehicle. An extra 100 pounds of items stored in the trunk reduces fuel economy by about two percent. Even though a roof rack or carrier provides additional cargo space, a loaded roof rack can decrease your fuel economy by five percent.

Select the right motor oil—Using the correct grade of motor oil in your vehicle can improve gas mileage by one to two percent. Be sure to look for oil that is marked as "energy conserving" as well.

Combine trips—With a little planning you can save fuel by trip chaining—combining errands into one trip. Multiple short trips driven from a cold start require more fuel than multiple stops made during one trip with a warm engine.

Shop wisely—When selecting a new vehicle, compare the fuel economy of your top vehicle choices. Review gas mileage estimates for vehicle models from 1984-2011 at www.fueleconomy.gov.

Sharing rides—Finally, we can't help but state the obvious. Consider sharing rides to work even once per week and enjoy traveling an extra day without re-fueling your vehicle. Let us help you get started. Visit www.loudoun.gov/commute.

Transportation Connections

Employers' guide to carpools

There are plenty of good reasons to carpool. Sharing rides saves time and money, helps the environment and reduces traffic. But how do you ensure all employees understand these benefits? It helps to have an advocate encouraging carpooling at your workplace. By following a few easy steps, you can serve that role and help others improve their daily commute to work.

Carpool-Friendly Culture

To begin, employees should know that carpooling is accepted and encouraged at your worksite. Include alternative commuting information in new hire packets. Promote ride matching services on bulletin boards and in company newsletters. Further, show appreciation to frequent carpoolers by designating parking spaces for them.

If your organization allows flexible scheduling, suggest employees shift their arrival and departure times to accommodate a carpool buddy. Remind employees to be flexible. For example, extended work days may interfere with one's ability to depart work at the usual time. By planning ahead, employees who

ordinarily carpool can arrange their commuting plans accordingly.

Getting Started

For some people, forming a carpool feels overwhelming. Once they know about available resources, it seems easier. Individual assistance is available through the Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services. Rideshare staff are skilled at helping commuters find solutions for their commutes.

Others may prefer to search online at www.commuterconnections.org. The features of the Commuter Connections site allow you to:

- Calculate commuting costs;
- Search for carpool matches;
- Post messages on a bulletin board; and
- Register for a free Guaranteed Ride Home.

Prospective carpoolers should also visit www.nuride.com. NuRide not only offers online ride matching, but it also rewards commuters for all "green" trips—carpool, transit, telework, bike or walk to work. NuRide works especially well for those looking to share rides on an occasional basis.

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The Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services can help cultivate a carpool-friendly culture at your organization.

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Safety improvement:

Zig-zag experiment proves successful

It seems the zig-zag road markings near the W&OD Trail have captured the attention of both motorists and cyclists.



Road markings near the W&OD Trail were designed to improve safety and awareness of motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Currently, the markings can be seen on Belmont Ridge Road and Sterling Boulevard.

In 2009, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) installed the unusual road markings to test for effectiveness at improving safety. According to Lance Dougald at the Virginia Center for Transportation Innovation and Research, there was speculation the markings would initially work, but it was questioned whether the markings would continue to be effective over time.

"It was interesting to see that the markings actually had a sustained positive impact on speed reduction even after the markings had been in place for one year," said Dougald. "One possible explanation for this is that markings installed within the roadway, especially unique mark-

ings, are more visible than signage and are less likely to blend into the roadside environment."

The one-year study indicates the markings installed in advance of the W&OD Trail at Belmont Ridge Road and Sterling Boulevard heightened the awareness of approaching motorists. This was evidenced by reduced mean vehicle speeds within the marking zones. Further, survey results indicated an increase in awareness, a change in driving behavior, and a higher tendency to yield than before.

Motorist awareness was assessed by before and after speed studies. Motorist attitudinal changes were assessed through a survey targeting motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists familiar with the markings. The survey was distributed via links posted on the Loudoun County government website, and electronic newsletters distributed by the Broad Run and Sterling District supervisors' offices. Links were also distributed through bicycle clubs operating throughout the northern Virginia area.

Motorist understanding was assessed through a hand-out survey in a different region of the state that targeted motorists unfamiliar with the zig-zag markings in Loudoun County.

The study recommends that VDOT continue to re-mark and maintain the zig-zag pavement markings at

both test locations and monitor and collect data on crashes at both locations for three years.

The zig-zag pavement markings are a low-cost alternative to other safety improvements at mid-block locations. The pavement markings come in two different styles and were approved for this test by the Federal Highway Administration after seeing the successful use of these markings in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Free coffee anyone?

Be sure to cash in on a free \$5 Starbucks gift card from NuRide, courtesy of the Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services.

The gift card is our thank you for joining NuRide.com (at no cost) and reporting your first "green" commute. Whether you share rides, take transit, telework, bike or walk to work, you'll earn our thanks.

Already a member of NuRide? Just report three additional roundtrips and you will earn a \$5 Starbucks card, too.

Find out how easy it is to try a new way to work. It won't take long to realize the benefits go way beyond a free beverage. We can help you pass the word at your workplace. Contact Judy.Galen@loudoun.gov today.

Bike to Work Day May 20, 2011

Registration opens in March for the annual Bike to Work Day, coming Friday, May 20, 2011, rain or shine.



This annual, regional event is free and open to all. Pre-register at www.waba.org or by calling 202-518-0524 to reserve your free t-shirt at the pit stop of your choice.

Loudoun County hosts two pit stops: one in Leesburg at Raflo Park; one in Sterling, just east of Route 28 near Orbital Sciences. Both pit stops feature food, fun and prizes.

If you've never ridden your bike to work, this is the day to give it a try. Contact Judy.Galen@loudoun.gov or call 703-737-8044 for more details.

Earth Day at Loudoun

The Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services and Clean Air Partners are teaming together to host an information booth at the 2011 Earth Day @ Loudoun. Now in its third year, this event will be held at Willow Creek Farm in Broadlands on Sunday, April 10, 2011.

There's plenty to see at this annual celebration of environmental stewardship. For complete details, visit www.earthdayatloudoun.org.



Help raise Awareness during April

Are you multi-tasking behind the wheel? April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month and DRIVE SMART Virginia encourages you to reconsider your behavior and avoid the unnecessary risks of distracted driving.

Research proves the dangers of distracted driving. Eighty percent of all crashes and 65 percent of all near-crashes recently studied by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute involved driver inattention within three seconds of the crash.

Since cell phone use occurs more frequently and for longer durations, it is the greatest source of driver inattention behind the wheel. According to research conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, using a cell phone while driving increases crash risk by four times.

Further, certain driver behaviors including: texting (which is illegal in Virginia); reaching for a moving object; driving while drowsy; looking at an external object; reading; and applying makeup place drivers at an increased risk for a crash.

DRIVE SMART Virginia encourages these tips for safe driving:

Change your ways—Identify all of your distractions and avoid what you can.

Make a plan—Study your route and the weather prior to departure. Make certain children are buckled up and occupied.

Manage your time—Eliminate the need to multi-task or drive aggressively by allowing enough travel time.

Stay alert—Don't let drive time become your down time.

Scan the road ahead—This helps you prepare for the unpredictable actions of other drivers.

Concentrate—Avoid driving when you are upset or tired.

Pull over to a safe place—If you need to do something that takes your eyes and/or mind off the road, take care of the task safely.

Reduce the use—Use GPS and other technology sensibly.

Take a refresher course—Driver improvement class can raise your awareness and help you assess your driving behaviors.

Buckle up—Every time you drive, make sure you and all passengers are ready for the ride.