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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

METRO URGES ANGELENOS TO 'SHARE THE RIDE' DURING RIDESHARE WEEK OCT. 4-8

Metro urges Los Angeles commuters to share the ride the week of Oct. 4-8 and beyond as part of the 18th annual Rideshare Week, a statewide campaign to reduce solo driving that is causing major traffic congestion on the state's streets and freeways.

As Los Angeles County's transportation planner, coordinator, designer, builder and operator, Metro offers an array of ridesharing solutions for daily commuters, including online trip planning and ride matching services, an 800-line phone hotline and rideshare incentive programs for employers.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, solo drivers accounted for 70 percent of the work commutes made within Los Angeles County in 2000. Carpooling accounted for just 15 percent, while public transit represented nearly 7 percent of work commutes. Other means, including walking and bicycling comprised the remaining 8 percent of work trips.

In a cost comparison conducted by Metro earlier this year, daily L.A. County commuters who switch from solo driving to public transportation, carpools or vanpools can save more than \$4,000 per year in commuting costs.

"If commuters shared the ride just one day per week, we would see dramatic improvements in traffic congestion in Los Angeles County," said David Sutton, Executive Manager of Metro Commute Services for Metro. "It would do wonders for mobility in our region."

Metro is working with thousands of employers throughout Southern California on ridesharing programs that include carpooling, vanpooling, taking transit, bicycling, walking and telecommuting. More than 600 employers will be conducting rideshare events within their companies to promote Rideshare Week.

Metro has teamed up with The Walt Disney Company, Farmer's Insurance Group, Kaiser Permanente and The Automobile Club of Southern California to offer incentive prizes for businesses that promote Rideshare Week and employees who pledge to rideshare.

Prizes will include store and restaurant gift certificates, Auto Club memberships, Disneyland packages, weekend getaways and Metro passes.

Participation in Metro's Rideshare programs grows every year. More than 786 businesses with 250 or more employees now participate in Metro Commute Services programs, representing a 68 percent increase within the last two years. An additional 2,000 businesses with less than 250 employees also participate in these programs.

One of the program's newest rideshare incentives provides new employees with an entire week of unlimited access to Metro Buses and Rail. The program seeks to encourage new company employees to explore alternatives to driving alone to work. A Metro travel kit is provided as part of the program.

But Metro's Rideshare programs are not limited to employers. Metro School Pool is a service offering free, voluntary and confidential matching service to parents interested in organizing school carpools. The program is open to students in all participating public and private elementary, middle and high schools in Los Angeles County. Parents share the task of driving students to and from school.

The 1-800-COMMUTE, (Option 3) phone line, which provides transportation information for Southern California's five county region, is also a valuable tool for obtaining rideshare information. Metro fields 500-700 calls per month from callers in L.A. County.

On the web, WWW.RIDEMATCH.INFO has been successful in helping interested ridesharers find partners in their communities. The web site contains more than 177,000 commuters seeking carpool or vanpool partners.

Commuters seeking to use public transportation to share the ride can plan their trips using an online trip planner available at WWW.METRO.NET.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Southern California's Rideshare Program. In 1974, Commuter Computer, also known as Commuter Transportation Services, began providing residents with alternatives to driving alone. The program was later transitioned to Southern California Rideshare, a division of Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Administration of the program is now shared by all five county transportation agencies, with Metro supporting ridesharing programs for L.A. County.

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