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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro Urges Angelenos to 'Share The Ride' During California Rideshare Week Oct. 2-6

Metro urges Los Angeles commuters to share the ride the week of Oct. 2-6 and beyond as part of the annual California 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 employer pass and incentive programs.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 73 percent of Los Angeles County workers drove to work alone in 2003, 13 percent carpooled, 6 percent took public transportation, and 4 percent used other means. The remaining 4 percent worked at home. Among those who commuted to work, the average travel time was 29 minutes.

In a time of high gasoline prices, daily L.A. County commuters who switch from solo driving to public transportation, carpools or vanpools can also save at least \$4,000 per year in commuting costs.

"Ridesharing once or twice a week can make a big impact on reducing traffic congestion," said David Sutton, Director of Commute Services for Metro. "If everyone who currently drives alone took transit or shared the ride once a week, it could reduce traffic by 5-10 percent during the rush hour. This could increase freeway speeds up to 30 percent, with speeds jumping from 30 to 40 miles per hour."

Metro is working with thousands of employers throughout Southern California on ridesharing programs that include carpooling, vanpooling, transit, bicycling, walking and telecommuting. More than 200 employers will be conducting rideshare events within their companies to promote Rideshare Week.

Participation in Metro's Commute programs grows every year. About 1,200 worksites now participate in Metro Commute Services programs, representing a 65 percent increase within the last four years.

Over 50 worksites have signed up for Metro's annual pass program. More than 225 companies order Metro passes each month.

One of the program's newest rideshare incentives for employees 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.

Metro's Commute 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 to 800 calls per month from callers in L.A. County.

On the web, WWW.COMMUTESMART.INFO has been successful in helping interested ridesharers find partners in their communities. The web site contains more than 100,000 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.

