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Metro Urges Angelenos to 'Share The Ride' During California Rideshare Week Oct. 6-10

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority encourages solo Los Angeles commuters to share the ride the week of Oct. 6-10.

California Rideshare Week is a statewide campaign to reduce solo driving that is causing congestion on the region's roadways.

Metro offers an array of ridesharing solutions for 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.

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 300 employers will be conducting rideshare events within their companies to promote Rideshare Week.

Metro has teamed up with The Walt Disney Company, VPSI, Paramount Pictures, Los Angeles World Airports, 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 GPS, I-Pods, gas cards, Auto Club memberships, Disneyland gift packages, and Metro passes.

Participation in Metro's Rideshare programs grows every year. More than 1,300 worksites with 250 or more employees now participate in Metro Commute Services programs. An additional 2,000 businesses with less than 250 employees also participate in these programs.

One of the Metro's newest rideshare incentives provides up to \$400 per month for each participating vanpool. In addition Metro offers annual Metro bus and rail passes at group rates for businesses and offers other incentives such as Guaranteed Ride Home which provides free emergency rides for qualified rideshare participants whose businesses have enrolled in 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 700-900 calls per month from callers in L.A. County.

On the web, www.commutessmart.info has been successful in helping interested ridesharers find partners in their communities. The web site contains more than 201,514 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.

Editors Note: "Metro" should be used when referring to this agency.

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