

THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Employer recognition awards **2008**

Moving in the right direction.



June 25, 2008



Phil Mendelson, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

As gas prices have reached unprecedented levels in 2008, workers in the National Capital region are becoming ever more aware of the true impact of commuting alone to work. The high cost of fuel exacerbates our frustration with other existing transportation-related challenges, namely traffic congestion.

Addressing these challenges is vital to keeping pace with our economy and growth as a region. One solution is efficient use of our existing commuter transportation resources. We can realize this by encouraging shared rides, use of transit, bicycling and teleworking. Tangible benefits of this would be cleaner air and less congestion on our roadway system.

The business community plays an integral role in shaping the commuting behaviors of their employees. Many employers offer transit subsidies or pre-tax transit benefits. Others encourage teleworking, or reward ridesharing by providing preferred and/or free parking to carpools and vanpools. Commuter Connections and its jurisdictional partners work with employers to provide the needed tools and support that help foster these activities.

The employers we honor today have implemented innovative and successful commuter benefit programs. We hope that through their example, other employers will voluntarily embrace these practices, creating more workplaces where increased commuter benefits yield more productive and less stressed employees.

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, I congratulate the winners of the 2008 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards and thank them for their continued commitment to reducing traffic congestion and improving the air we breathe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Mendelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phil Mendelson
District of Columbia Councilmember

Welcome to the eleventh annual Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards ceremony. We are here to honor a select group of employers whose innovative commuter programs are helping to improve the quality of life for their employees and the citizens of the Washington metropolitan area. Within the last year gas prices have risen to alarming rates, reaching \$4 per gallon. This has provided more focus on both work and non-work related vehicle trips and has opened the door for more individuals to consider and adopt shared and other transportation options.

A growing number of employers are increasingly supporting alternatives like ridesharing, bicycling, public transit and telecommuting to help foster the new transportation landscape. These efforts whether driven by the cost of gas, traffic congestion or our environment, create a healthier quality of life for individuals, companies and our community. The Commuter Connections Employer Services program offers a region-wide transportation network dedicated to helping employers set up and expand commuter benefits for their employees. These programs help employers attract and retain a quality workforce, improve their bottom line and promote "green" initiatives.

Please join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2008 Employer Recognition Awards who have worked hard in dedicating resources to meet the commuting challenges of their employees. They are shining examples to other organizations within the region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Hamilton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Hamilton
Commuter Services Chief
Arlington County Transportation

Christopher Hamilton, Chair
Commuter Connections Subcommittee



The 2008 Employer Recognition Awards

Commuter Connections encourages the general public and area businesses to support teleworking and the adoption of alternative commute methods to and from work everyday. These methods help to mitigate traffic congestion and provide for cleaner air through reduced auto emissions. The Commuter Connections Annual Employer Recognition Awards Ceremony recognizes employers who have voluntarily initiated programs that facilitate the use of such alternatives. Eligible employer programs include those that marketed alternative commuting options, initiated a successful telework program, or provided incentives that make using alternative transportation modes easier and more attractive than driving alone.

Applicants were evaluated and winners were chosen for their ability to offer measurable commuter benefits that reduce automobile fuel consumption and emissions through fewer vehicle trips and miles traveled. In addition, winners were selected for their altruistic policies that have improved the lives of their employees and the region.

Incentives

Commuter incentives reward and encourage employees for taking alternative means of commuting. They also help to attract and retain employees. Incentives and commuter benefits can come in many forms such as transit and vanpool subsidies, pre-tax transit and vanpool passes and preferred or discounted parking for carpools and vanpools. Other incentives might include offering flex-time schedules or the provision of facilities and equipment such as showers and lockers for those who bike or walk to work, on-site amenities, free shuttle service or laptops for teleworkers.

Marketing

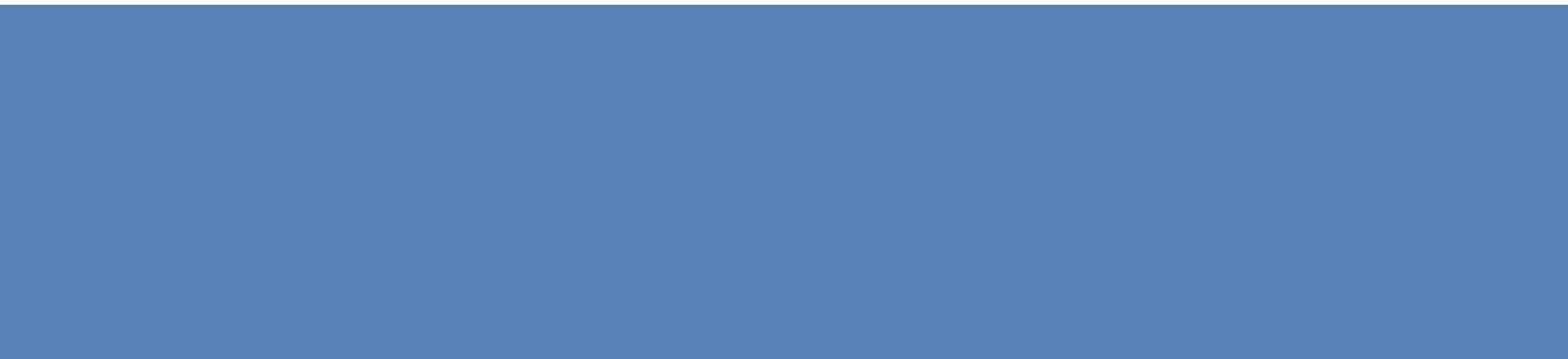
Promoting the merits of ridesharing, transit and teleworking within a company is an essential part of a successful commuter program. Companies who educate and advocate alternative commuting options enjoy high employee participation rates in such methods. With knowledge of the available choices, employees are empowered to make well-informed decisions about better and smarter ways to get to work. They arrive less stressed and more able to be productive on the job. Marketing of commuter information and available benefits clearly serves as an influential aspect behind helping to change commuter drive alone patterns to and from work.

Teleworking

Teleworking at home, or at a local telework center, allows employees to dramatically reduce or completely eliminate the time and money spent commuting to and from work, one or more days per week. For employers, savings may come in the form of reduced overhead such as office space costs and parking. In addition, teleworking provides for lower absenteeism, higher productivity and helps businesses attract and retain qualified employees.



Incentives
XM Satellite Radio



Headquartered in the District of Columbia, XM Satellite Radio is a leading provider of satellite radio service, offering an eclectic mix of music, news, weather and entertainment to listeners across the globe. XM's programming variety offered to its listeners is analogous to the way in which commuter options are available to the company's 800 employees.

The company provides free shuttles to and from the Metro and commuter trains, \$115 pre-tax transit benefits, showers and lockers for bicyclists, \$2 meal subsidies to encourage onsite eating at the XM café, flexible work schedules, company-issued Blackberries, cell phones and laptops for telecommuters, flex cars, and an after-hours courtesy van. The choices are abundant, making it easier for employees to avoid driving alone to work and easier to find a commute alternative that fits.

A company shuttle log and recent transportation survey with a 56 percent response rate revealed as many as 30 percent of company employees are using mass transit. The revelation has moved XM Satellite Radio to promote the commuter tax benefit more aggressively by holding more transportation fairs. The survey also revealed many employees were unaware of the onsite showers and lockers, therefore the company is communicating that message in its effort to encourage more employees to bicycle to work. Over 500 employees telecommute regularly and/or work flexible schedules.

In 2007 XM Satellite Radio's program continued to evolve with innovative solutions. To encourage more carpooling, the company instituted preferred parking for carpools and conducted an employee zip code analysis using data from its human resources department. This enabled XM to identify clusters of employees who lived within close proximity to one another, who would be prime candidates for ridesharing.

As a result of its efforts, XM Satellite Radio has made positive impacts on the environment, reducing annual vehicle miles traveled by over 2.1 million. Employees also benefit by saving \$300 annually in taxes. The company has also enjoyed a significant cost savings through reduced payroll taxes and it also cancelled plans to build a multi-million dollar parking facility project.

Inspiring people to care about the planet; that is the vision statement of the National Geographic Society (NGS). That message lies at the core of the Society's work in conservation, education and geographic information.

In 2006, NGS introduced its Green Initiative and a year later launched its first ECOMmuting Awareness Day. With intensive and creative marketing, the event was a great success, drawing an impressive 450 attendees. Educating employees about economical and environmentally-friendly ways to get to work were the primary drivers of the event. This message was sent out early and often to NGS's 1,400 employees. With that in mind, committee members arranged to have a custom event logo created by an in-house designer. Posters made of recycled office paper bearing the event logo were placed on each floor of the Society's three buildings. An article describing the details of ECOMmuting Awareness Day and what employees could expect during the event was posted on NGS' Intranet Green Page. The web page lists information on alternative commuting options, the NGS's commuting benefits and links to other commuting resources.

When NGS employees arrived at work the day of the event, they heard a broadcast voicemail message reminding them of ECOMmuting Awareness Day and encouraging them to attend. During the event, employees had opportunities to learn more about NGS' incentives such as pre-tax transit, discount parking rates for carpoolers and hybrid vehicle drivers, telework, flextime, compressed work weeks and bicycle racks and showers.





Marketing
National Geographic Society





Telework
Orange Business Services



Orange Business Services (OBS), a Fairfax County based global communications company, brings together the best in web, voice and videoconferencing to make it easier for businesses to work efficiently through technology. Currently 600,000 individuals already use the company's products and services, making it possible to access the work environment remotely. OBS employs 345 people, half of which telework and utilize OBS's own cutting edge software. Participation in the telework program jumped sharply over the previous year, by 40 percent. Full time teleworkers comprise of 46 employees, 71 telework 2-4 days per week, and more than 50 telework sporadically.

Orange Business Services outfits qualifying employees with laptop computers installed with the company's Internet Protocol Telephony software, enabling them to use their office phone number anywhere in the world. The company participated in a TeleworkVA! pilot program and received reimbursement for high-speed internet service at employees homes for an average annual savings of \$277 per employee. When telecommuters do travel to the office, they use the company's FlexPlace program, an initiative that allows them to reserve desk/office space through a web-based software application. The program has enabled OBS to cut back sharply on office space and reduce clutter.

With more than half its staff living an average of 30 miles each way from the office, flexible programs such as these are a sure way of retaining staff and helping to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. OBS employees maintain a high degree of morale and productivity, as they demonstrate the bottom line and environmental benefits of teleworking. Last year over one hundred OBS employees responded to a Commuter Connections Survey with overwhelming approval and satisfaction of their telework program.

As a result of its efforts, Orange Business Services has reduced annual vehicle miles traveled by over 644,000.

This award is given to the Commuter Connections Employer Services sales team that has most successfully met its goal of partnering with employers to develop and expand commute benefit offerings. There are a total of ten Employer Services sales teams with sixteen representatives in the Washington metropolitan region that cultivate and support employer based transportation programs. Employers who offer commuter friendly programs encourage employees to try and adopt alternative means of getting to and from work. These practices lessen the heavy rush hour demand on our roadways and its resulting levels of pollution. Employees maintain better morale, lower stress, and enjoy less costly commutes. Employers benefit from higher employee retention and savings may come in the form of reduced overhead through lower parking and office space requirements. The TPB's Commuter Connections program is pleased to honor Arlington County Commuter Services with the Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award. The employer outreach program is represented by Arlington Transportation Partners.

During the past year, the combined sales staff of 1.5 representatives made over 1,300 contacts with employers and participated in 93 face to face meetings. Due to their efforts, over 90 companies within Arlington County have committed to and implemented traffic reducing programs at significant levels. This selection was based on information provided by all Employer Services sales teams in their required monthly reports to COG and through on-going database verifications.





2008 Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award
Arlington County Commuter Services





2008 Employer Services Organization Achievement Award
The Maryland Transit Administration - Commuter Choice Tax Credit Program



The Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, part of the Commuter Choice Program, was developed to make it possible for Maryland employers to pay for part or all of the eligible monthly commuting expenses for their employees. Eligible expenses include those associated with transit passes or vouchers, vanpools, Guaranteed Ride Home and parking cash out program expenses. The tax credit equals 50% of the cost of these expenses, with a cap of \$50 per employee, per month. The Commuter Choice Maryland program was designed for maximum flexibility and convenience for employers and their employees by offering two ways to apply for the commuter benefits - the Monthly Pass Program and the Voucher Program.

Monthly passes obtained through the tax-credit program are shipped to employers on a consignment basis by the fourth week of each month. Passes are valid for unlimited monthly travel on MTA Local Buses, Light Rail, and the Baltimore Metro Subway. Vouchers are similar to monthly passes, but offer more flexibility. Commuter Choice Maryland vouchers are available in \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$64 (current monthly pass cost) denominations and can be redeemed at pass sales outlets for MTA weekly and monthly passes. Vouchers are also valid toward the purchase of MARC Train tickets and MTA Commuter Bus passes and are used to offset monthly vanpool expenses. Over 350 public and private sector employers provide Commuter Choice Maryland benefits to more than 15,000 participating employees. There are approximately 40 employers who register each year from the Washington region with 1,500 employees who are receiving the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit benefits.



Honorable Mention

Commuter Connections would like to acknowledge the following nominees with honorable mention:

American Occupational Therapy Association – Bethesda, MD	Project HOPE – Bethesda, MD
American Trucking Associations – Arlington, VA	QRC Division of Macro International, Inc. – Bethesda, MD
American University – Washington, DC	Ritz-Carlton – Chevy Chase, MD
Bethesda Urban Partnership – Bethesda, MD	Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport – Washington, DC
Calvert Group, LTD – Bethesda, MD	Sibley Memorial Hospital – Washington, DC
City of Rockville – Rockville, MD	Social & Scientific Systems – Silver Spring, MD
Discovery Communications – Silver Spring, MD	State Farm Insurance Company – Frederick, MD
EagleBank – Bethesda, MD	The Children in the Shoe – Bethesda, MD
George Mason University – Fairfax, VA	United States Food & Drug Administration – Silver Spring, MD
GMAC Residential Funding – Bethesda, MD	United States Patent and Trademark Office – Alexandria, VA
High Performance Technologies – Reston, VA	Vecna Technologies, Inc. – College Park, MD
Lerch, Early, and Brewer – Bethesda, MD	Wesley Housing Development Corp – Alexandria, VA
Marriott International – Bethesda, MD	
Merchant Link, LLC – Silver Spring, MD	
Navy Federal Credit Union – Vienna, VA	

2008 Awards Selection Committee

Tracye Funn – Manager of Public Affairs, Washington Gas – Chair, Clean Air Partners
Kristin Haldeman – Business Analyst, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority – Chair, TPB Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee
Ann King – Manager of Marketing & Customer Service, Virginia Railway Express
Christine Linford – VP, Director of Human Resources, Fidelity & Trust
Diane O'Grady – Senior Management Analyst, Loudoun County – President, Mid-Atlantic Telework Advisory Council
Katalin Vaughan – Business Development Manager, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority
Michael Weil – Transportation Planner, National Capital Planning Commission

About the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region and plays an important role as the regional forum for transportation planning. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal transportation funds to flow to the Washington metropolitan region. The TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) in 1966. COG was established in 1957 by local jurisdictions to address regional concerns including growth, housing, environment, public health and safety, and transportation. Although the TPB is an independent body, its staff is provided by COG's Department of Transportation Planning.

Commuter Connections is a network of Washington metropolitan commuter transportation organizations and a program of the TPB, that works toward easing daily commutes and reducing vehicle emissions. This is accomplished by promoting and facilitating ridesharing, bicycling, walking, teleworking, and transit, and by providing the regional Guaranteed Ride Home program.

How to Get Involved

Does your company have a telework, SmartBenefits, or Air Quality Action Days program? If your employer provides these opportunities (or others such as rewarding employees who walk, bicycle or carpool to work) then we encourage you to apply for the 2009 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards.

For more information about services and assistance available through Commuter Connections:
Call us at (800) 745-RIDE (7433), (TDD) (202) 962-3213 or visit our web site at www.commuterconnections.org.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
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Special thanks to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee - 2008 Employer Recognition Awards Workgroup

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Mark Sofman, Montgomery County Commuter Services

Anna McLaughlin, District Department of Transportation

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