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CONTACTS: Matt Kroneberger: (202) 962-3209 / mkroneberger@mwkog.org /
[@RegionForward](#)

Ginger Mold: (845) 855-7077 / gmold@asc-pr.com

Photos available upon request.

Employers with Top Commuter Benefits Programs Recognized for Their Green Efforts

17th Annual Employer Recognition Awards held today at the National Press Club

Washington, D.C. – Today, local business leaders and elected officials recognized three regional employers for their efforts in reducing their carbon footprints and regional traffic congestion by offering innovative transportation-benefits packages to employees. The 17th Annual Employer Recognition Awards was hosted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Commuter Connections program at the National Press Club in Washington, DC and recognized this year's winners selected from a competitive field of nominees, including The Cadmus Group in Bethesda, MD; the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in White Oak, MD; and the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service in the District of Columbia.

"This year's Employer Recognition Award winners have demonstrated their commitment to improving the quality of life in this region by providing programs and innovative transportation benefits that can reduce the cost of commuting for employees, traffic congestion, and help improve air quality," said Nicholas Ramfos, Director of Commuter Connections. "We offer our thanks and congratulations to all the winners. It is estimated that, combined, they saved their employees more than 570,000 gallons of gasoline and reduced more than 11 million vehicle miles traveled annually."

Applications are accepted each year for the Employer Recognition Awards from companies that offer, promote, or support transit benefits, ridesharing, bicycling, walking, and telework. This year's winners demonstrated exceptional dedication to promoting and facilitating the use of these alternative commute methods to help mitigate traffic congestion and contribute to cleaner air through reduced auto emissions. Winners were named in the Incentives, Marketing, and Telework award categories:

Incentives— The Cadmus Group (Bethesda, MD) — In 2006, The Cadmus Group adopted its commuter benefits program offering its employees a wide range of alternative commuting incentives designed to accommodate an employee's individual needs while minimizing reliance on automobiles. To encourage employees to use public transit, Cadmus offers a transit subsidy in addition to a shuttle service from the Bethesda Metro station to their Bethesda office.

Cadmus offers a yearly bicycle subsidy, as well as on-site lockers, shower facilities and bike racks installed in safe locations for long-term storage. All employees can have the opportunity to telework and/or participate in a compressed work schedule. Of its 83 employees at two DC-area work sites, 80 percent have found alternatives to drive-alone commuting.

Marketing— Food and Drug Administration (White Oak, MD) — Beginning in 2005, the FDA began promoting its commuter benefits program and alternative commute options to employees, and now leverages both old and new methods to promote transportation alternatives. In addition to the bulletin boards displaying the latest transportation activity and commuter information stationed in the cafeteria, the FDA communicates regularly through email blasts to employees announcing new alternative commute options, bus schedules, new vanpools in formation, and current vanpools with vacancies. Every two weeks, the FDA conducts new employee orientations with a presentation highlighting information on Commuter Connections' alternative commuting programs. To encourage bus use as a commuting option, the FDA provides all new employees complimentary trial bus passes. Of the FDA's 5,800 employees, over 500 use vanpools or carpools, more than 250 use public transit, and more than 2,500 telework an average of five-plus days per month.

Telework— USDA Forest Service (Washington, DC) — In 2011, the USDA Forest Service merged two regional offices in an effort to reduce its carbon footprint. To ensure all employees fit comfortably within the reduced office space, the agency expects at least 30 percent of its employees to telework on a regular basis. Mandatory telework training sessions identify employees who are eligible to telework. Teleworkers are provided with equipment to perform their jobs from home offices. New technologies, both in the offices and available for mobile commuting, have resulted in more employees considering a variety of eco-friendly options for meetings, collaboration sessions, and daily operations. Of its 666 employees in the Washington metropolitan region, 310 participate in the telework program on an average of six days per month; an additional 190 employees are equipped and prepared to telework in special situations, such as inclement weather.

“As Commuter Connections celebrates its 40th year of providing the region with alternatives to drive-alone commuting, we encourage businesses of all types and sizes to enjoy the benefits of implementing alternative commuting programs, and Commuter Connections can help,” said Ramfos. “We provide a no-fee service to assist employers as they establish or expand commuter benefits programs that can help attract and retain skilled employees.”

Commuter Connections would like to acknowledge the following nominees with honorable mention: Bethesda Urban Partnership - Bethesda, MD; Chevy Chase Land Company - Chevy Chase, MD; CohnReznick - Bethesda, MD; Europ Assistance USA - Bethesda, MD; HOK - Washington, DC; MedImmune - Gaithersburg, MD; MITRE Corporation - McLean, VA; and Wellness Corporate Solutions - Bethesda, MD.

Commuter Connections works closely with Washington-area businesses to educate and promote alternatives to drive-alone commuting practices of employees. Such alternatives help

reduce gasoline consumption, ease traffic congestion and the stress that long commutes place on employees, and contribute to cleaner air through reduced auto emissions. With free assistance from Commuter Connections, employers can offer a wide array of commuting options from transit subsidies or pre-tax benefits to telework and ridesharing programs. These benefits provide each participant with a better work-life balance and flexibility, which helps reduce absenteeism and improves morale and productivity.

For more details on the Employer Recognition Awards Program and this year's list of winners, log on to: <http://www.commuterconnections.org/employers/employer-awards/>

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Commuter Connections is a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia Departments of Transportation as well as the U.S. Department of Transportation. Commuter Connections has been providing free trusted ridematching services since 1974 and offers the free Guaranteed Ride Home program.

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