



Human Resources

Rideshare



OC Commuter

Spring 2012

National Bike Month

May is National Bike Month, and this year there are special events and promotions, including Bike to Work Week, May 14-18. So dust off your bicycle and give your car a break from your daily commute – you won't believe how much money you can save and help save the environment.

Everyone who pledges at www.surveymonkey.com/s/WBDDPJV to ride a bike to work during May will receive a \$25 coupon good at a local bike shop, and will be entered in OCTA's raffle for the chance to win some great prizes! The more you bike, the better you'll feel, and there is no better time to start than now!

Plus you can participate and celebrate Bike Month at these two local events:

Game Day Bike Ride, Sunday, May 6 - 10AM - 4PM

Ride your bicycle to the Angel Stadium in Anaheim and join OCTA for a pre-game tailgate party -- sponsored by JAX Bicycle Center. You'll also get a discounted ticket to the Angels' game, a sponsored lunch, and get to use the stadium's bicycle valet service. Commuters must register on-line at www.octa.net/Commuters/Bike/bikemonth.aspx. Space is limited!

Bike to Work Week, May 14 – 18

Why not ride your bicycle to work one or more days this week for a healthy commute and smile as you ride past the gas stations. You'll add exercise instead of stress to your workday, and maybe even lose a couple pounds. Bike to Work Week is a great time to get started. Remember to pledge to ride your bicycle, and you'll receive a \$25 discount coupon and be eligible to win other prizes! Just go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/WBDDPJV.

EXTEND YOUR BIKE TRIP BY BUS OR TRAIN

If your walk to the bus stop is a long one, you can ride your bicycle there and take your bike with you. All OCTA buses are equipped with bicycle racks, located at the front of the vehicle that can carry two bicycles at a time. Just load up your bike and climb aboard.

Metrolink also welcomes riders with their bicycles on trains. Regular bicycles should be secured using wheel straps (available on certain passenger cars). Folding bikes should be folded, carried onto the train and stored like any other carry-on item. Metrolink has recently added twelve "bicycle cars" – passenger railcars specially designed with space for 18 bicycles, rather than the two slots on the other Metrolink railcars. Whether by bus or by train, by combining travel modes, you can make more use of your bike for your daily commute.

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Rideshare Story Winner: Deborah Reynolds

The Commuter Assistance Program launched a new program, "What's Your Rideshare Story?" This month, bus riders were asked to submit a story



and photo of their rideshare activities and if they were selected, they would be highlighted in the Commuter Newsletter. Our first winner is Deborah Reynolds with Public Works at the Glassell Yard.

Deborah sold her car 5 years ago, and decided she would not need another one if she started riding the bus. She is very pleased with the cost savings she continues to realize monthly. She has met several new friends who she calls her bus buddies, fellow riders who also commute to and from work by bus. They have become friends simply by riding the bus and seeing each other every day. She has met buddies from all over the country – a librarian from Chicago and even a former bus rider from New York!

Deborah also loves the E-Pass program that allows her to pay for her annual bus pass through a monthly payroll deduction using pre-tax dollars – she can even use the E-Pass on the week-ends. But the best part about riding the bus, said Deborah, is the \$500 per month she is saving by not having to pay for an auto lease, insurance and the high gasoline prices!

Her advice to employees that are on the fence about taking the bus is to give it a try for an event. "Try taking the <u>OC Fair Express</u> to the Fair in July," said Deborah. "There are buses from various areas in Orange County that will take you right to the front gate – plus you get a coupon to the fair for only \$2 and the bus ride only costs \$1.50 each way. It's a great way to try the bus and not feel intimidated!" Great advice Deborah – and thank you for sharing your story. Enjoy your \$25 gift card!

If you want to "Try the Bus on Us", you can receive a complimentary one-day pass. If you like riding the bus, you can order the OCTA Annual E-Pass and pay for the rides through payroll deductions — and you will receive your first month free! To sign up for the Commuter Choice program complete and return a Voluntary Payroll Deduction Authorization Form.

Rideshare Round Up at the OC Green Fair, May 17



The OC Rideshare Team will be "rounding up" employees at the 3rd Annual OC Green Fair in the Civic Center Plaza on Thursday, May 17, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Since ridesharing is the easiest way to "go green," and the environmentally friendly way to commute, the OC Green Fair is the perfect venue for showcasing our efforts to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion. Look for our western themed booth with prizes for all you cowboys and cowgirls. Be sure to pony up and learn all about the OC Rideshare Program services and incentives. This year you will also be able to visit booths hosted by a vanpool company by OCTA.

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Vanpool Riders Wanted



The Commuter Assistance Program hosted a Vanpool Information Meeting in March. All employees on the Carpool/Vanpool Classifieds were invited to attend ---

and 15 employees did come out to learn about organizing or joining a vanpool. At that event, the group identified two potential starting locations for new vanpool groups.

Leave: Long Beach Area Arrive: Santa Ana Civic Center Work Start Times: 7:30 - 8:00 AM Work End Times: 5:00 - 5:30 PM

Leave: South Orange County (San Clemente/

Laguna Niguel/Lake Forest area)
Arrive: Santa Ana Civic Center
Work Start Times: 7:00 AM
Work End Times: 4:30 PM

If you are interested in more information about these vanpool groups, please send an email to <u>ride</u>-share@orgov.com.

Not the route for you? Use the <u>All-in-One</u> application to be added to the vanpool classifieds listing and receive information about other vanpools forming in your area.

Did you know that if you start vanpooling...

- You can pay for your monthly vanpool fare through a payroll deduction and reduce your taxable income by up to \$125 per month. Simply enroll in the Commuter Choice program and start paying less income tax! You may also be eligible to ride for free your first month!
- If you lease the vanpool vehicle and form a new vanpool with at least three other County employees, you will receive a \$300 gift card after the first three months of vanpooling and another \$300 gift card after six months.
- OCTA coordinates a Vanpool Subsidy Program that reduces the monthly lease amount for qualified vanpools by up to \$400 per month. You must have at least five in the group, maintain a certain level of occupancy and complete monthly reports.

Thanks to Our Rideshare Coordinators...

Did you know that the Commuter Assistance Program has an "army" of employees that help maintain the Commuter Information Display Racks at nearly 30 County facilities? The racks are filled with OCTA bus schedules, Metrolink timetables, enrollment forms, incentive applications, and more.

Rideshare Coordinators help us promote the rideshare program and guide employees to the information racks and the OC Rideshare website for up-to-date information. They receive training each year. Our thanks for all that they do!

This month, we would like to acknowledge Diane Garcia with HCA who has been a Rideshare Coordinator for more than ten years.

She says she enjoys helping to promote the program – thanks again to Diane!



Diane Garcia

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Commuter Club Quarterly Winners!

The Commuter Club is a reward program for County of Orange employees who commit to rideshare at least once a week. Commuter Club members receive discounts from local merchants, a one-time sign up bonus, an annual thank you gift, and are eligible to participate in quarterly drawings for gift certificates. To join the Commuter Club program complete and return an All-In-One application and we'll send you a welcome packet.

Every quarter eight lucky Commuter Club members' names are randomly drawn and each receive a \$25 gift certificate. This quarter's winners are:

- Eleanor Forrest, Health Care Agency
- Taneeka Hines-Brownlee, Social Services Agency
- Ruben Penamora, OC Public Works
- Theodore Von Bitner, OC Public Works
- Brian Anderson, OC Public Works
- Dennis Bauer, District Attorney
- Rita Castillo, Auditor Controller
- Sal Gutierrez, OC Public Works



Did You Know...

- Orange County's favorable climate makes it an ideal environment for bicycling. There are currently
 about 1,000 miles of <u>bikeways</u> in Orange County with approximately another 700 miles in the planning stages.
- Metrolink has expanded weekday service hours. Take advantage of OCLINK Pass to get all-day access on Metrolink and local OCTA buses throughout Orange County. So now you can dine in San Juan Capistrano, go antiquing in Old Towne Orange and then take in an Angels game before heading home on the bus.
- The <u>Angels Express</u> service is back! These trains are available for all Angels weekday home games starting at 7:05 PM. New this year is the Angels Express service on the Inland Empire/Orange County Line for every Friday night game. Ride from the Angels Express to Angel Stadium for only \$7 round-trip, \$6 for senior/disabled, \$4 for youth (ages 6 18), and free for children 5 and under with a paying adult (up to 3 children).

Depending upon your department's internal policy, the social media links (Facebook and Twitter) may or may not be accessed or viewed

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The OC Commuter Newsletter is published by the Commuter Assistance Program Office managed by the Human Resources Department. Our mission is to distribute commuter information to all County of Orange employees so that they can make informed decisions about how they travel to work. For more information about the Commuter Assistance Program, please go to the web site.