

## Mark Your Calendar!

Be sure to get in on the many exciting rideshare events coming up this year. From workshops to campaigns to national share-the-ride holidays, there are plenty of chances for you to help people find alternatives to driving alone. Here, we give you a heads-up on some of the hot happenings for 2009.

[Full story](#)



### CALENDAR of EVENTS

- **Jan. 13—Metro rideshare workshop**
- **Network Meetings**



[More Events](#)

### TIPS & IDEAS

5 tips for improving your rideshare program and boosting your career through networking



[Full story](#)

### SPOTLIGHT ON...

...ways to turn any holiday into a Rideshare holiday.



[Full story](#)

### CommuteSmart News for Employees

Get news geared to commuters that you can forward to employees or incorporate into your own rideshare newsletter.

## ETC Chat

What's it like being an employee transportation coordinator? To find out, we talked with three ETCs, each at different stages of their career.

[Full story](#)



## In Brief

- OCTA to change fares Jan. 4
- Who's more reckless at driving, men or women?
- Gas prices continue to drop
- Ridesharing can help people keep their New Year's resolutions
- Metro adds service to Cerritos Mall and more





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### JANUARY

**Jan. 11-15**—Transportation Research Board 86th Annual Meeting, Washington DC, reviewing trends in transportation, 202.334.2934, [nas.edu/trb](http://nas.edu/trb)

**Jan. 13**—Metro rideshare workshop on telework and crisis commuting, contact [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)

### FEBRUARY

• Orange County Transportation Authority marketing class, 714.560.5358

### MARCH

**March 1-7**—Telecommuter Appreciation Week, sponsored by the American Telecommuting Association, 800.ATA.4YOU, [yourata.com](http://yourata.com)

Also in March:

- Bike to Work Day workshop, sponsored by the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) and Metro, contact [ddeming@lawa.org](mailto:ddeming@lawa.org)
- Orange County Transportation Authority marketing workshop, 714.560.5358
- Inland Empire Commuter Services rideshare marketing workshop, 1.866.IECS4HELP

### APRIL

Earthquake Preparedness Month, a good time to get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; for details, check out the Governor's Office of Emergency Services at [oes.ca.gov](http://oes.ca.gov) or your local Red Cross office

**April 22**—Earth Day, [earthday.org](http://earthday.org)

**April 14**— Metro rideshare marketing workshop, contact [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)

### MAY

Clean Air Month, sponsored by the American Lung Association, 800.LUNG.USA, [californialung.org](http://californialung.org)

**May 10-16**—National Transportation Week, celebrating careers in transportation, 703.235.0519, [ntweek.org](http://ntweek.org)

**May 14**—Bike to Work Day (Los Angeles/Orange counties), sponsored by the California Bicycle Coalition and local agencies, 800.679.BIKE, [californiabikecommute.com](http://californiabikecommute.com)

**May 19**—Rideshare Diamond Awards, recognizing outstanding rideshare programs in Los Angeles and Ventura counties, [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)

**May 20**—Employee Health and Fitness Day, extolling the health benefits of walking or biking to work, 317.237.5630, [physicalfitness.org](http://physicalfitness.org)

**May 21**—Bike to Work Day (Ventura County), sponsored by Ventura County Bicycle Coalition, [vcbike.org](http://vcbike.org)

### JUNE

**June 5**—World Environment Day, presented by the United Nations' Environment Program, this year looks at impacts of global warming, [unep.org](http://unep.org)

**Also in June:**

- Orange County Transportation Authority marketing workshop, 714.560.5358

### JULY

**July 4**—Urge employees to declare their independence from traffic by ridesharing

### AUGUST

**August 18**— Metro rideshare workshop and Rideshare Week kickoff, contact [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)

**August 30-Sept. 2**—Association for Commuter Transportation International Conference, Washington, DC, [actweb.org](http://actweb.org)

### SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 22**—International Car Free Day, [22september.org](http://22september.org)

**Also in September:**

- Orange County Transportation Authority marketing workshop and Rideshare Week kickoff, 714.560.5358
- Inland Empire Commuter Services rideshare marketing workshop and Rideshare Week kickoff, 1.866.IECS4HELP

### OCTOBER

**Oct. 5-9**—California Rideshare Week, a statewide campaign that promotes alternatives to driving alone; contact your local rideshare agency

**Oct 27**—Metro rideshare marketing workshop, contact [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)

### NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

**Toy and canned food "drives"** roll into gear, including:

- Antelope Valley "Stuff a Bus," 661.945.9445, [avta.com](http://avta.com)
- Metrolink Toy Express, 800.371.LINK, [metrolinktrains.com](http://metrolinktrains.com)
- Omnitrans Spark of Love Toy Drive, [omnitrans.org](http://omnitrans.org)
- Santa Monica Big Blue Bus food drive, 310.451.5444, [bigbluebus.com](http://bigbluebus.com)
- Norwalk Transit "Stuff a Bus," 562.929.5533, [norwalk.ca.us](http://norwalk.ca.us)

**Also in December:**

- Orange County Transportation Authority marketing workshop, 714.560.5358

## ETC Chat

What's it like being an employee transportation coordinator? To find out, we talked with three ETCs, each at different stages of their career. Here's what they had to say:

### Norma Iniesta, City of Santa Ana



**Years as an ETC:** 1

#### Why did you become an ETC?

It appealed to me what the job entailed and the benefits that we all get—not just cleaner air but also less congestion on the streets.

#### How did you train/prepare?

The person who had this position before me trained me, and I go to workshops hosted by (my county rideshare agency). The workshops are extremely helpful in making me feel comfortable.

#### Any surprise about the job?

Yes, and it's a good surprise. We give away a lot of promotional items and I find that I get to be very creative in deciding what we're doing. We just had Rideshare Week, and to go with the theme we handed out Arbor Day trees. Everybody thought it was adorable that we were giving out trees.

#### What's the best part about the job?

I love how at events I get to talk to employees I've never met and get to know them, put a face to the name.

### Maribel Avalos, Windsor Foods

**Years as an ETC:** 4

#### Are you an ETC full time?

I'm in HR—about 25% of my job is rideshare.

#### What's your biggest challenge?

I really don't have a challenge—the key is to promote all the benefits.

#### Why is carpooling so popular at your company?

Most of our employees live close to work, so it's easy for them to pick up somebody along the way. Plus they have preferential parking if they carpool.

#### How do you get people interested in ridesharing?

I do my rideshare raffles in the main lunch room where I know there is an audience, and I have my current rideshare participants play a game like spin the wheel to win a prize. This gets the attention of the employees, and next thing you know, I have a new employee wanting to sign up for the rideshare program.

#### Anything you would change about your program?

I can't think of anything at this time since everything seems to be working out just fine!



### John Miranda, JPL



**Years as an ETC:** 14

#### What's a change you've seen in the industry since you started?

Light rail—I actually went to the inaugurals for the Blue, Gold, Green and Red lines.

#### What do you like about your job?

I'm really a people person, and to be an ETC you have to be a people person. You have to be able to listen to what the employee is trying to get across to you so you can better serve their needs.

#### Do you do anything differently now than you used to?

I used to order up 16 boxes of surveys, cover sheets, directors letters— then get them stapled, distributed and collected so I could put them all together to get my survey done. Now I survey electronically. In the past five years we've saved countless trees—and a lot of time.

#### What advice would you give to someone just starting out?

Network. Get with ETCs that have been there and done that. It just opens doors for you.

## In Brief

### • OCTA to change fares Jan. 4

Orange County Transportation Authority will raise bus fares beginning Jan. 4—only the second time in 18 years that the agency will do so. "While no one would like to raise fares, it's necessary at this time to maintain the service and keep up with rising expenses," said OCTA Chairman Chris Norby. According to OCTA, despite recent drops in gas prices, OCTA has experienced a 185% increase in fuel costs since 2005. The one-way cash fare will go from \$1.25 to \$1.50, the day pass from \$3 to \$4, and the 30-day pass from \$45 to \$55. For more information on fare changes, go to [octa.net](http://octa.net)



### • Who's more reckless at driving, men or women?

As it turns out, male drivers are cited for reckless driving 3.41 times more often than women, according to a recent study from Quality Planning. It compared moving violation statistics for 12 months' of policyholder information on US drivers. Another finding: when involved in an accident, women drivers are about 27% less likely than men to be found at fault. For more information, go to [qualityplanning.com](http://qualityplanning.com)



### • Gas prices continue to drop

Gas prices in Southern California have dropped below \$2 and appear to be heading further downward, according to the Automobile Club of Southern California. The average price of self-serve regular gasoline in the Los Angeles-Long Beach area was \$1.91 per gallon in the first week of December, which was 20 cents less than the week before and \$1.44 less than last year during the same time period. For the latest gas price information, check out the Weekend Gas Watch at [aaa-calif.com](http://aaa-calif.com)



### • Ridesharing can help people keep their New Year's resolutions

The most popular New Year's resolutions are to lose weight, manage debt and save money, according to USA.gov, and the good news is that you can help your employees keep their resolutions when you promote ridesharing. "The cost savings with ridesharing lets people better manage their debt and save money," says Alan Holmes with Ventura County Transportation Commission. "And think of all the calories you can burn walking or biking to work or your local transit stop. Ridesharing is one way that people can keep on track with their goals." For tips, as well as information on other relevant resolutions that made the list (such as "reduce stress at work") go to [USA.gov](http://USA.gov)



### • Metro adds service to Cerritos Mall and more

Metro's 577x express line from the El Monte Transit Center to Long Beach now stops at the Cerritos Mall, as well as the current stops at Norwalk Green Line station and CSULB/Vets Hospital. Metro is also adding stops or service on its 226/51/52/35, 45, 62, 450x, 460, 550, 577 and 745 lines; additional Saturday service on 66 and 460 lines and an extended route on line 715. For details, go to [metro.net](http://metro.net)



## Tips & Ideas—5 tips for improving your rideshare program and boosting your career through networking



Running rideshare programs can be rewarding, but it's often hard to stay up-to-date on the latest. The solution: networking. Connecting with other ETCs is a highly effective way to get and keep your career on track.

"One of the greatest mistakes you can make in your career is being afraid to ask for help," says Harvey MacKay, bestselling author of *Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty: The Only Networking Book You'll Ever Need*. "If I had to name the single characteristic shared by all truly successful people I've met in my life, I'd say it's the ability to create and nurture a network of contacts."

If you'd like to expand your network but don't consider yourself a big "networker," we offer some tips to make it easier:

- 1. Be interested in other people.** Ask questions—how did they get started as an ETC? What events do they run at their work site? As Dale Carnegie wrote in his groundbreaking book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming really interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you." At any networking opportunity—such as a workshop or conference—make it a point to meet and learn something new about at least one person.
- 2. Keep track.** If you've met someone new, don't trust facts about them to your memory, say experts. Write it down so the next time you bump into him or her, you'll be able to follow up on your conversation. MacKay notes that, "if you want to impress people with how much you care, show them how much you remember."
- 3. Don't be afraid to talk to the "bigwigs."** It can be intimidating if you're just starting out, but even the most successful people had to begin somewhere. It's often said that it's lonely at the top, so people at the peak of their careers are more receptive to being approached than you might assume.
- 4. Reciprocate.** Remember that you have expertise to offer others as well—whether it's know-how about your local transit options, experience pulling together a vanpool —or even tips on how *not* to run a rideshare fair because your first one flopped. Good networking operates on the notion that if everyone gives, everyone ultimately gets.
- 5. Diversify.** It's great to know other ETCs, but networking with people in any aspect of business can help you – i.e., having a friendly face in the IT department will sure come in handy if you're surveying electronically. As MacKay puts it, "You don't have to know everything, as long as you know people who know the things you don't."

### ETC Networking Opportunities

- Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT), 202.712.9021, [actweb.org](http://actweb.org)
- ACT Southern California chapter, [act-southernca.org](http://act-southernca.org)
- Women's Transportation Seminar, a membership organization that aims to advance the careers of women in transportation, 202.955.5085, [wtsinternational.org](http://wtsinternational.org)
- Southern California rideshare free ETC marketing workshops, [commutesmart.info/employerservices/training](http://commutesmart.info/employerservices/training)
- ETC network and transportation management association meetings, listed in Calendar



## Spotlight On... ways to turn any holiday into a rideshare holiday

Rideshare Week in October may be the big "rideshare holiday" of the year, but it doesn't have to be the only one. Here, the marketing experts at CommuteSmart.info offer some ideas for adding a rideshare twist to any holiday:



**Inauguration Day, Jan. 20**—The theme for this presidential inauguration is "change," so decorate in red, white & blue and let people know all the benefits of making the change from driving alone to ridesharing.

**Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 1**—Get into the spirit of things before game weekend by running a Super Bowl pool with prizes for ridesharers only, [superbowl.com](http://superbowl.com)

**Chinese New Year, Feb. 12**—Organize a lunch field trip on transit to a Chinese restaurant (a great way to introduce employees to local bus/rail). Or hand out custom fortune cookies (available for order online) with a rideshare message, such as "You'll soon save money on your commute," along with your contact information.

**April Fool's Day, April 1**—If your company is casual enough to enjoy a practical joke, send out an all-staff email announcing that all rideshare benefits are canceled... and then correct it later with an "April Fools!" It's sure to cause a stir (and remind people how much they really value their rideshare perks).

**April is National Poetry Month**—Hold a poetry contest, challenging employees to write a poem about their commute and awarding prizes in categories such as humorous, inspirational, haiku, limerick, etc. Also, check for poetry readings at Metro Rail stations closer to the date at [metro.net](http://metro.net)

**Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, April 23**—Urge employees who'll be bringing their children to work to try the carpool lane (yes, kids count as a carpool). Once they see how much time they save, they may want to find a coworker and continue carpooling, [daughtersandsonstowork.org](http://daughtersandsonstowork.org)

**Administrative Professionals Day, April 27**—Encourage employees to give an administrative professional a ride to the office to show how much they appreciate all they do, [iaap-hq.org](http://iaap-hq.org)

**Cinco de Mayo, May 5**—Break out the sombreros, Mexican food and a transit-themed piñata and have a "Rideshare Fiesta."

**Talk Like a Pirate Day, Sept. 19**—Yes, this is actually a holiday... so just for fun, hold a pirate party where you help employees find a "Mate" so they can save doubloons and be "carpool lane ahoy!" in no time, [talklikeapirate.com](http://talklikeapirate.com)

**October is National Book Month and National Reading Group Month**—People who carpool, vanpool or ride transit often have the luxury of reading on their commute, and one way to drive this point home is to organize a rideshare book club that meets monthly at lunch. Find book club information and book ideas at [bookmovement.com](http://bookmovement.com)

**Halloween, Oct. 31**—Hold a "traffic is scary" costume party.

**Thanksgiving, Nov. 26**—Whether it's with a note, a prize drawing or a party, let your ridesharers know that you're thankful for their efforts.

**Rosa Parks Day, Dec. 1**—Rosa Parks once made a stand for civil rights by sitting down—honor the day with a lunchtime trip on Metro Rail that includes a transfer at the Rosa Parks station (where the Green and Blue Lines meet).

## Calendar of Events

### EVENTS



**Metro Workshop** is Jan. 13, 8:30 a.m. - noon at Metro offices in downtown Los Angeles. Topics include telework, emergency preparedness as well as new programs and events. Metro will email more information to Los Angeles County employers, or email [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)

### NETWORK MEETINGS

#### Coachella Valley ETC Network

meets bi-annually; call 1.866.IECS4HELP.

#### Glendale TMA

meets regularly;  
call 818.543.7641.

#### Orange County Network

meets regularly;  
call 714.560.5358 or email  
[commuterconnection@octa.net](mailto:commuterconnection@octa.net)

#### Pasadena TMA

meets every other month; call  
John Miranda at 818.354.7433.

#### Riverside County ETC Network

meets  
tri-annually; call 1.866.IECS4HELP.

#### San Bernardino County ETC Network

meets  
tri-annually; call 1.866.IECS4HELP.

#### Santa Monica ETC Network

meets regularly; call  
310.458.8956.

#### South Bay/Westside TMA

meets monthly;  
contact Christina Corrales at 310.642.0066,  
email [christina\\_corrales@equityoffice.com](mailto:christina_corrales@equityoffice.com)

#### Torrance Transportation Network

meets  
regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902.

#### Warner Center TMO

meets monthly;  
call 818.716.5520.

### TRAINING



• **Metro Commute Services** requires employers to attend a briefing 60 days prior to their AQMD submittal date. Upcoming briefings are Jan. 14 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and Feb. 11 from 1-3 p.m. For more information or to reserve a space, email [blanchardd@metro.net](mailto:blanchardd@metro.net)



• **South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD)** offers one-day ETC training for \$64.23. Upcoming sessions are Jan. 15 in Pasadena, Jan. 29 and Feb. 12 at AQMD offices in Diamond Bar and Feb. 25 at Howard Hughes Center in Los Angeles. Contact Lisa Van Sornsen, [vansornsen@aqmd.gov](mailto:vansornsen@aqmd.gov) or the AQMD's training program at [etctraining@aqmd.gov](mailto:etctraining@aqmd.gov) or visit AQMD [aqmd.gov](http://aqmd.gov)



### COMMUTESMART NEWS

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For subscription information or to change your COMMUTESMART NEWS e-mail address, contact your representative at the rideshare office nearest you.

#### Metro Commute Services

One Gateway Plaza  
MS 99-19-05  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952  
Business: 213.922.2811

#### OCTA's Commuter Solutions

550 S. Main St.,  
Orange, CA 92868  
Mailing address:  
PO Box 14184  
Orange, CA 92863  
Business: 714.560.5358

#### Ventura County Transportation Commission

950 County Square Dr.,  
Ste. 207,  
Ventura, CA 93003  
Business: 805.642.1591,  
ext. 119

#### Inland Empire Commuter Services

Office location:  
7355 Magnolia Ave.  
Riverside, CA 92504  
Mailing address:  
PO Box 51540  
Riverside, CA 92517-2540  
Business: 1.866.IECS4HELP  
(1.866.432.7443)

#### Commuter Information

1.800.COMMUTE (266.6883)  
[commutesmart.info](http://commutesmart.info)

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