

CommuteSmart News

January/February 2013

A SERVICE OF COMMUTESMART.INFO AND YOUR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

Mark Your Calendars



Get in on the many exciting rideshare events coming up for 2013. [Full story »](#)

2013 Is the Year of the Vanpool...

...or at the very least, the year of the vanpool deal. For your long-distance commuters, it's always been a bargain way to commute—and now local agencies have launched two more vanpool subsidy programs to bring costs even lower. [Full story »](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- So Cal ACT membership meeting
- Metro ExpressLanes on the I-10 to open
- Briefings/training



[More Events »](#)

TIPS AND IDEAS

8 easy things you can do to boost the success of your rideshare program this year [Full story »](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Hollywood celebs join forces in a star-studded video to give tips on clean air living.



NEWS FOR EMPLOYEES

Get news geared to commuters that you can forward to employees or incorporate into your own rideshare newsletter. [Full Story »](#)



In Brief



- VISTA buses now offer Wi-Fi
- U.S. motorists likely spent a record amount on *this* last year
- How to make sure your carpooling employees ride toll-free on ExpressLanes
- OCTA fares to go up



Mark Your Calendars

Get in on the many exciting rideshare events coming up for 2013. (Info on some events may not be available on listed websites until closer to actual date.)



JANUARY

Jan. 16—Metro Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR) briefing, which helps ETCs better navigate the surveying process; click here for [2013 Briefings schedule](#).

Jan. 24—Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Southern California general membership meeting, Anaheim, [act-southernca.org](#)

MARCH

March 3-9—Telecommuter Appreciation Week, sponsored by the American Telecommuting Association, 1.800.ATA4YOU, [yourata.com](#)

March 20—ACT bike event/workshop, [act-southernca.org](#)

March 27—OCTA marketing workshop to prepare employers for the upcoming Bike to Work Day and Dump the Pump Day, RSVP at [sharetheride@octa.net](#)

Also in March: Inland Empire Commuter Services (IECS) rideshare marketing certificate class, 1.866.IECS4HELP

APRIL

Earthquake Preparedness Month, get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; contact [oes.ca.gov](#) or your local Red Cross office

April 22—Earth Day, [earthday.org](#)

April 24—Administrative Professionals' Day, give a coworker a ride to work, [iaap-hq.org](#)

April 28—OCTA Bike Festival at Pier Plaza in Huntington Beach, [octa.net](#)

Also in April: Metro rideshare marketing certificate workshop; contact [garciama@metro.net](#)

MAY

Bike Month, [bikeleague.org](#)

Clean Air Month, sponsored by the American Lung Association, 1.800.LUNG.USA, [californialung.org](#)

National Employee Health and Fitness Month, a chance to extol the benefits of biking or walking to work or a nearby transit stop, [physicalfitness.org](#)

May 2-3—ACT Southern California Regional Conference, [act-southernca.org](#)

May 12-18—National Transportation Week, join the US Department of Transportation in celebrating careers in transportation, [dot.gov](#)

May 16—Bike to Work Day, sponsored by the California Bicycle Coalition and local agencies and part of Bike Commute Week May 13-17, 1.800.679.BIKE, [calbikecommute.org](#)

Also in May: Rideshare Diamond Awards, celebrating outstanding programs in Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties

JUNE

June 5—World Environment Day, started by the United Nations to raise awareness of environmental issues worldwide, [unep.org/wed](#)

June 20—ACT professional development workshop, [act-southernca.org](#)

June 21—Dump the Pump Day, sponsored by American Public Transportation Association, get free marketing materials at [apta.com](#)

June 21—ACT Southern California chapter professional development meeting, [act-southernca.org](#)

Also in June: IECS rideshare marketing certificate class, 1.866.IECS4HELP

JULY

July 19—Happy 40th birthday to the El Monte Busway

July 27-31—ACT International Conference in San Antonio, TX, "deep in the heart of TDM", [actweb.org](#)

AUGUST

Aug. 1-12—Visit Ventura County Transportation Commission at the Ventura County fair, [goventura.org](#)

Aug. 15—ACT Swap & Share, exchange ideas with fellow rideshare pros, [act-southernca.org](#)

Also in August: OCTA Rideshare Week kickoff and marketing certificate workshop, to RSVP contact [sharetheride@octa.net](#)



SEPTEMBER

Sept. 19—ETC Boot Camp, [act-southernca.org](#)

Sept. 20—PARK(ing) Day, transform land for autos into a place for people for a day, [http://parkingday.org](#)

Sept. 22—International Car-Free Day, [worldcarfree.net](#)

Also in September: IECS Rideshare Week kickoff, contact 1.866.IECS4HELP

OCTOBER

Oct. 7-11—California Rideshare Week, promoting alternatives to driving alone; contact your local rideshare agency or stay tuned to future issues of *CommuteSmart News*

Oct. 9—California Walk to School Day in Ventura County, [goventura.org](#)

Also in October: Metro rideshare marketing certificate workshop, contact [garciama@metro.net](#)

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

Nov. 21—ACT public policy meeting, [act-southernca.org](#)

Running November-December: Metrolink Toy Express, 1.800.371.LINK, [metrolinktrains.com](#)

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2013 Is the Year of the Vanpool...

With the launch this month of a vanpool subsidy program in Ventura County, plus San Bernardino's last November, now every county in the Southern California area offers a subsidy for employees that vanpool —both to encourage the start-up of new vanpools and help keep existing ones on the road.

Depending on where your commuters live and work, they may qualify for monthly subsidies ranging from \$75 for individuals to \$400 for vanpools to defray the cost of expenses.

Vanpooling—in which typically seven to 15 commuters ride regularly together in a van, sharing expenses such as lease, gas and upkeep costs—is ideal for longer commutes (20 or more miles) and for employees that work regular hours.

Here's how you can get your employees involved:

	Los Angeles	Orange	San Bernardino	Ventura
Program	Metro Vanpool Program	OCTA Vanpool Program	1) San Bernardino Regional Vanpool Program and 2) IECS Vanpool Incentive Program	CalVans Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Vouchers
What it offers	Up to \$400 a month ongoing per vanpool	Up to \$400 a month ongoing per vanpool	1) Up to \$400 a month ongoing per vanpool, 2) up to \$1,800 over nine months	50% of fare costs up to \$75 per month for riders
Who qualifies	Vanpools with an LA County worksite destination	1) Vanpools going to Orange County worksites, 2) vanpools that start in OC and go to a worksite where no vanpool subsidy exists, and 3) vanpools traveling through OC to San Diego County that don't qualify for the SANDAG vanpool program	1) Vanpools traveling to or from the greater Victor Valley Area, 2) new vanpools only that originate in Riverside or San Bernardino counties	New vanpool riders traveling to or from Ventura County
Participating vanpool companies	Enterprise, vRide	Enterprise, vRide	Enterprise, vRide	CalVans
Requirements	7-15 passengers (start-up with at least 5), 70% occupancy	80% start-up occupancy, maintain at least 60%	1) Start with at least five riders, advertise vacancies 2) participants may not have commuted by vanpool in previous 180 days	New riders only; limited time offer, and will run until the program's \$50,000 budget is exhausted
Support	Use Metro's Vanpool Seat Finder at Gometrovanpool.net/seatfinder	Use OCTA's Vanpool Seat Finder at octa.net	Find vanpool matches at IE511.org	Contact CommuterServices@GoVentura.org
Sign up	Employers sign up at metro.net/vanpool	Employers or vanpools may download applications at octa.net/vanpool	1) Employers or vanpools may sign up at vvta.org/vanpool , 2) Call IECS at 1.866.RIDESHARE	May sign up as employer or individual at CalVans.org

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In Brief



VISTA buses now offer Wi-Fi

Ventura County's VISTA buses now offer free wireless Internet onboard, a "much-requested popular service, which can make your commute not just enjoyable, but highly productive as well," says Ventura County Transportation Commission Director Darren Kettle. Find VISTA bus schedules at goventura.org or call 1.800.438.1112.

U.S. motorists likely spent a record amount on this last year

Fuel prices were so consistently high in 2012 that American motorists are likely to have spent more on gasoline last year —\$483 billion, or \$1.32 billion a day—than ever before, according to the Oil Price Information Service (OPIS). This is despite the fact that the average price of a gallon of gas never hit the same national record highs that it did in 2008 (although that was not true in California, where the price of gas did bust previous records, in October reaching \$4.67 a gallon).

Contributing factors, according to OPIS, were booming oil prices and regional spikes, such as were seen as a result of Hurricane Sandy.



How to make sure your carpooling employees ride toll-free on ExpressLanes

If your employees that carpool want to use Metro ExpressLanes on the I-110 Freeway (and the soon-to-open lanes on the I-10 Freeway), which are toll-free for carpoolers, a few reminders:

- They must have a "switchable" FasTrak® transponder in the vehicle, set to the proper number of passengers: 1, 2, or 3+.
- Occupancy requirements vary on the 10 Freeway, so riding toll-free could in some cases mean having at least three people in the car.
- Employees may wonder how it can be free if it costs \$40, if paying by credit card, to open an account and get a transponder (the \$25 transponder deposit is waived)— let them know that, 1) they can obtain FasTrak at a discount at Costco, Albertsons or AAA, 2) the \$40 is put into their account to use to pay any tolls if they are driving solo or using any other FasTrak facility in

California, and 3) any remaining pre-paid tolls in their account are refundable at the time they decide to close their account and return the transponder in good working condition.

- Starting with the opening of the I-10 ExpressLanes, Metro will assess a \$3 monthly account fee on FasTrak. This fee is waived for those using the lanes at least four times (one-way) in a month as a carpooler, solo driver or taking transit on the Metro ExpressLanes.
- Carpool trips are automatically enrolled in the Carpool Loyalty Program to earn gift cards. 10 2-person carpool winners received \$20 gift cards, and 10 3+-person carpool winners received \$30 gift cards for their use of the 110 ExpressLanes during the month of November. Winners are selected each month!

OCTA fares to go up

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) riders will see a slight bump in fares starting in February. The regular \$1.50 fare will go up to \$2, the \$4 day pass will be \$5 and a 30-day pass will go from \$55 to \$69.

OCTA has not increased bus fares since January 2009. According to OCTA, it is necessary due to rising operating costs—including higher gas prices—and the fact that the agency is at risk of falling below the "farebox recovery" minimum, in which California law requires that OCTA collect from passengers at least 20 cents for every dollar spent on bus service in order to receive state funding.

For more information, go to octa.net.



Tips & Ideas—8 easy things you can do to boost the success of your rideshare program this year

1) Take a good look at your rideshare program, and **toss out what hasn't been working** so you can make room (and free up budget) for something that will. In the words of motivational speaker Tony Robbins, "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten." If you want your employees to change their commute habits, you may need to change your rideshare program.

2) Make sure your office looks like a **rideshare office**—even if ridesharing is only a portion of your job duties. At the very least, hang a sign that indicates this is where employees get help with their commute. If you can also hang motivational posters, put out brochures, and post a list of the services you offer, that's even better. You'd be surprised how many people don't realize there's a place to go for commute help, no matter how many brochures, newsletters and flyers you've distributed.

3) Consider establishing "Email Monday" (or Tuesday, or whatever...) in which you each week send a one-or-two line news update to staff. **Brief communication sent regularly** tends to be more effective than in-depth outreach that's only sporadic.

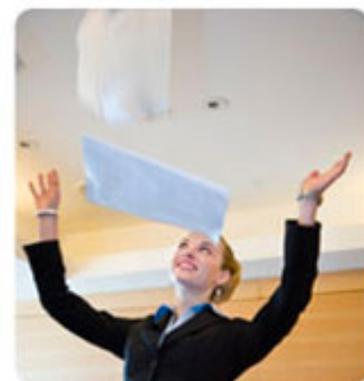
4) Steal ideas—or at least borrow from those willing to share. Attend a [workshop](#), [network meeting](#), or [Association for Commuter Transportation \(ACT\) event](#) to **get advice for new ways to promote ridesharing**. Truth is, you don't have to come up with everything yourself—taking the few hours to attend these events can save you countless hours coming up with program ideas from scratch.

5) **Sign up for Facebook and/or email alerts** from the transit companies that serve your work site to stay up to date on news in your area. You can also get alerts from [Go511.com](#) and [IE511.org](#).

6) **Pick one new service and promote it**—it doesn't have to be anything your company offers as long as your employees can use it. Instead of feeling you have to provide everything, sometimes your job can be simply hooking up commuters with the right tools. For example, let them know how with a cellphone and [NextBus](#) and [Text4Next](#), they can quickly find out when their bus will arrive. Help your long-distance commuters find seats on area vanpools. Promote programs such as [Metrolink Weekends](#) where people can ride all weekend for only \$10, [FlyAway buses](#) to LAX, or [Metro ExpressLanes](#).

7) Update your bulletin board and/or information table. Nothing says ridesharing is a low priority like last year's calendar tacked up and yellowing on a board in the break room. **Keep it fresh** and people will pay attention.

8) Don't have time to take on all the rideshare projects you'd like to? Promise to **give it 10 minutes a day**, advises Lorne Holden, author of *10 Minutes a Day, the Simple Revolutionary Method for Getting Things Done*. Over time, these small bursts of time can add up to real progress. Of course, if you get on a roll and keep going, all the better—but at least that 10 minutes will keep momentum going, so that when you do have a larger chunk of time, you're not starting from nothing.



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Calendar of Events

EVENTS



Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Southern California general membership meeting is Jan. 24 in Anaheim, act-southernca.org.



Metro ExpressLanes on the I-10 Freeway are slated to open late January/early February, allowing solo drivers to ride for a toll or carpoolers to ride free with a FasTrak transponder, metroexpresslanes.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 sharetheride@octa.net

Pasadena TMA meets every other month; call John Miranda at 818.354.7433 or Judi Masuda at 626.744.4111.

Riverside County ETC Network meets bi-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.

NETWORK MEETINGS (cont'd.)

South Bay/Westside TMA meets monthly; contact Christina Corrales at 310.642.0066, email 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 upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—Jan. 16, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. and Feb. 20, 1 – 3 p.m. For more information or to reserve a space, email garciama@metro.net.



South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers one-day ETC training for \$160.75. Upcoming sessions are Jan. 17 and Feb. 14 at AQMD offices in Diamond Bar, Feb. 7 in Culver City and Feb. 27 in Woodland Hills. Contact the AQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit the AQMD at aqmd.gov.

COMMUTESMART NEWS

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