

CommuteSmart News

March/April 2014

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

Get In Gear for the Cycling Event of the Year

Bike Week/Month is coming up soon, and it's a great opportunity to help your employees discover a zero-emission, low-cost way to get to work...plus get fit and have fun while they're doing it.

Plenty of activities are in the works! Join local agencies for **rallies, tune-ups, pit stops, prizes and group rides**—and when you help host a Bike to Work event, you may also get **freebies, refreshments and prizes** for your employees.

[Full story»](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Coming up: free ETC marketing certificate workshops in Los Angeles/Orange counties and the Inland Empire...plus more rideshare and bike events!

[More Events »](#)

NEWS FOR EMPLOYEES

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

[Download Now ▶](#)



What's Happening in Bus & Rail



Our roundup of the latest news in transit, including the launch of express service...new bus routes ... alerts ... special fares and ...

[Full story»](#)

TIPS AND IDEAS

10 reasons your employees aren't biking to work...and if you're not aware of the reasons they don't bike, you might be missing out on ways to [get them to try it](#).



In Brief

- Caltrans breaks ground on I-5 carpool lane
- Help coming for motorists on Ventura County's busiest interchange
- Have you signed up yet for your Metro Rewards coupon booklets?
- Inland Empire ridesharers can earn \$1000's in discounts
- Looking for love on the train



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Miss a past issue of *CommuteSmart News*? Find it in our [archives!](#)



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Get In Gear for the **Cycling Event of the Year**

Bike Week is May 12-16, and if that's not enough biking for you, all of May is Bike Month.

Don't miss this great opportunity to help your employees discover a zero-emission, low-cost way to get to work—plus get fit and have fun.

Rideshare agencies will be supporting the campaign with marketing outreach, prize drawings, rallies, rides, giveaways and more.

Here's what's happening...

Bike to Work Day, Thursday, May 15

A highlight of Bike Week/Month is Bike to Work Day, Thursday, May 15, when thousands of people will give bicycle commuting a try.

To participate, your employees may bike to the worksite, or just as far as their local bus stop or rail station, where they can stow their bikes or bring them on board and ride the rest of the way.



Nearly 100 Bike "Pit Stop" Locations

Also on Bike to Work Day,

riders will be able to stop at any of nearly 100 pit stops* located throughout Southern California to rest, enjoy a snack, and get bike help, info and some well-deserved cheering on. Want bike event freebies for your employees? Host a pit stop!

- In Los Angeles County, Metro will provide boxes of giveaway goodies for participating employers—sign up at metro.net/bikes/bike-week.
- For information on hosting pit stops in Orange County, contact OCTA's Marlon Perry at 714.560.5566, mperry@octa.net.
- To host a pit stop in Ventura County, call Alan Holmes at Ventura County Transportation Commission, 805.642.1951, ext. 119 or email commuterservices@goventura.org.

*Look for pit stop location information in the next issue of CommuteSmart News for employers

Need Help Getting Ready for Bike Week/Month?

Attend a Bike Planning Workshop for the latest in bike resources and to get tips from bike experts for planning an event at your worksite.

- Association for Commuter Transportation Bike Week workshop and optional group ride is March 19 at Cal State Fullerton. For details, go to socialact.org.
- Los Angeles and Orange county employers can get updates on Bike Week/Month activities, as well as other rideshare news, at marketing certificate workshops on March 26 (Orange) and April 15 (Metro); see [Calendar](#).
- Gear up at [OCTA's Bike Festival](#) April 27, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Pier Plaza in Huntington Beach: booths, demonstrations, safety tips, contest, entertainment and organized rides.

& More Bike Events in May

In Los Angeles County...

- Get ready for Bike Week by tuning up your bicycle—Metro offers a list of tune-up resources and is also looking for organizations that would like to organize a [Fix Your Bike Workshop](#).
- [Bike Week Kick-Off](#) is May 12 at Union Station—bring your bike and join local and regional officials to celebrate the start of Bike Week LA.
- The annual [Blessing of the Bicycles](#) is May 13 at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles and will feature the presentation of the [Golden Pedal Award](#) honoring leadership in cycling.
- Throughout the week, bicyclists can get discounts at local businesses—find out how you can offer a discount and [drive more bike traffic to your business](#).
- For more information on Bike Week LA, visit metro.net/bikes/bike-week/.

In Orange County...

Events include:

- Bike Rally and Blessing of the Bikes, May 7, 7:30-9 a.m., starting at the Santa Ana Metrolink station and riding to City Hall
- Bike Rally, May 8, starting at the Orange Metrolink station and riding to OCTA offices
- Ride of Silence, May 21, 6:30-9 p.m. at Irvine City Hall
- OCTA is also bringing back the Angel Game Day Ride, in which participants ride bikes to Angel Stadium before the 12:05 p.m. game on May 4 for a tailgate party with free food and a bike valet.
- For more information on these and other OCTA Bike Month events, visit octa.net/bikemonth

In Ventura County...

Biking is big in Ventura County, and Bike Week events and pit stops are currently in the works—check for updates at goventura.org.

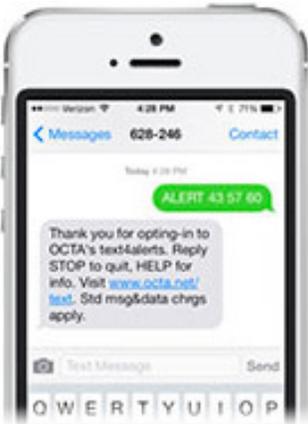


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What's Happening in **Bus & Rail**



Get OCTA alerts to your phone

If you ride Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) buses, you can now get alerts via text about any changes that affect your route, such as detours, schedule changes or significant delays. To sign up for OCTA's Text4Alert, visit octa.net/text4alerts.aspx.

Good news for VISTA riders...

VISTA recently added new service on the Highway 126 route with additional runs to Rancho Sespe and downtown Piru. Riders will be able to catch more frequent buses westbound in the morning and eastbound in the evening. Fares are \$1.25 per trip. Call 1.800.438.1112 or visit goventura.org.



\$7 special fare on Metrolink

Calling all baseball fans: Metrolink will offer \$7 round-trip service from Orange County to Union Station in Los Angeles for the Angels vs. Dodgers games March 27-28 and Aug. 4-5. From Union Station, game-goers can catch a free Metro shuttle to Dodger Stadium. Visit metrolinktrains.com for details.



Is your TAP card expiring?

TAP cards—reusable plastic fare cards required for riding Metro bus and rail and accepted on other city bus lines—do have an expiration date. When your TAP card expires, you'll need to buy a new one for \$1-\$2 and transfer any unused balance.

"The original TAP cards issued had a 3-year expiration date, so depending on your purchase date, you may need to replace your card," says Robin O'Hara with TAP program office. "The new cards being issued, however, are good for 10 years."

For peace of mind, you can find out your TAP card's expiration date at any bus fare box, TAP vending machine, rail station turnstile or TAP pass sales outlet.

For more information on TAP and to transfer unused balance on a TAP card, visit taptogo.net or call 866.TAPTOGO.

Omnitrans stresses safety as it gears up for sbX opening

It's nearly time to cut the ribbon to launch Omnitrans' sbX—the first-of-its-kind express bus service in the Inland Empire. Spanning 15.7 miles between the cities of San Bernardino and Loma Linda, sbX will breeze past traffic thanks to dedicated bus lanes and the ability for each bus to send a signal at intersections to extend a green light or cause it to turn green earlier.

Testing is underway to prepare for the late April launch, and Omnitrans wants to make sure people stay safe around the lanes. They're urging people to 1) pay attention since sbX will be on the roads daily, 2) stay out of the dedicated Bus Only lane, and 3) watch for new signs and obey at all times.

For more information, go to estreet-sbx.com.



& More Transit News...

- Foothill now offers [one-stop service to Los Angeles on its Line 495](#), which picks up exclusively at the Industry Park & Ride and then drops off at key downtown LA locations.
- Metro last month debuted the first of [550 New Flyer buses](#). Metro will soon not only have a fleet that's younger, but also one that is 100% low-floor to make buses ADA-compliant and as safe as possible.
- Speaking of safety, [Metrolink announced it has started using Positive Train Control \(PTC\)](#) on some of its trains. PTC is GPS-based technology that prevents train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments and may even bring trains to a safe stop in the event of a natural disaster. Rollouts of PTC are expected to be service-wide by end of 2015.

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In Brief

Caltrans breaks ground on I-5 carpool lane

Carpool lanes are on the way for I-5 commuters traveling between San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente. Caltrans last month broke ground on a project that will extend existing carpool lanes another 5.7 miles south into Orange County. The new carpool lanes are expected to open by 2017.

For more information, go to octa.net or [click here](#) to see a video. For construction alerts and updates on facebook, go to [facebook.com/OC15southcounty](https://www.facebook.com/OC15southcounty).



Help coming for motorists on Ventura County's busiest interchange

Construction is now underway on the SR-23/US 101 interchange, with plans to widen the freeway as well as some of the existing connectors and ramps. Expected to be completed in early 2016, the project will "bring relief to one of the county's busiest interchanges," says Alan Holmes with Ventura County Transportation Commission.

Projected closures will take place intermittently throughout the duration of the project, whenever possible during off-peak hours. "Employers are urged to help [commuters find rideshare arrangements](#) to ease traffic during the construction phase," adds Holmes.

For more information, visit Caltrans at dot.ca.gov/dist07.

Have you signed up yet for your Metro Rewards coupon booklets?

Metro in Los Angeles County recently brought back its popular Metro Rewards booklet, which gives new ridesharers more than \$1,000 in premium Entertainment discounts at local restaurants, entertainment venues and more. Now, in addition to booklet format, members can get discounts online—plus a mobile app gives access to more than 100,000 additional mobile redeemed offers.

To earn discounts, employees must be new to ridesharing and share the ride for three months.

For more information, call 213.922.2811.



Inland Empire ridesharers can save \$1000's in discounts

If your employees live in Riverside or San Bernardino counties, they may qualify for Rideshare Plus Rewards, a booklet that gives ridesharers great discounts after they've been ridesharing at least three months. The program offers extra discounts via the Online Savers Guide and mobile app.

Visit rideshareplus.info to sign up and start saving at more than 135,000 participating merchants in the Inland Empire and nationwide.



Looking for love on the train

Metro rang in Valentine's Day with its first-ever Speed Dating event—a special train on the Red Line ("the color of love") where participants were encouraged to have fun and get to know each other. "If they don't fall in love with somebody on the train, hopefully they'll fall in love with Metro," said a Metro spokesman.

If you missed it, check out these pics and video at metro.net.

Tips & Ideas—10 reasons your employees aren't biking to work... and if you're not aware of the reasons they don't bike, you might be missing out on ways to get them to try it.

1. **They live too far from the office.** Your employees who live farther than five miles from work may think that biking isn't an option for them—and unless they're athletic, it probably isn't feasible to ride the whole way. What *is* an option, however: combining cycling with transit. Nearly all Southland buses are equipped with bike racks so riders can stow their bikes, and [Metro Rail](#) and [Metrolink](#) allow bikes on board (Metrolink even has a special car devoted to cyclists).
2. **The route to work isn't safe for cycling.** Fear of mixing with traffic can keep people from cycling, but what many don't realize is that for experienced cyclists, the route they ride is rarely the same one they'd drive. New bike-friendly routing sites, apps and maps are designed with a priority toward bike lanes, wide streets and flat roads. Some resources: maps.google.com (select "bicycling" from the pull-down menu), mapmyride.com and bikemetro.com. Bike maps: metro.net/bikes, octa.net/share-the-ride, IE511.org and goventura.org.
3. **It's been too long since they've ridden.** It's not enough to tell employees "you never forget how to ride a bike." If a bike's been sitting in storage, it probably needs a safety check and tune-up. Suggest local bike vendors, and during Bike Week/Month, they may be able to get a [free bike check](#).
4. **They don't own a bike.** Especially if they're not sure they'll stick with bike commuting, investing in a bike can be expensive. Bike sharing—a program in which cyclists borrow bikes for rates ranging from hourly to monthly—may give them an affordable option. BikeShare recently launched with [10 stations in Fullerton](#).
5. **No place to change/wash up/store bike once they get to work.** Often employees are willing to make the effort to bike to the office, but they need support once they get there. Is there a washroom at your worksite you could allow bicyclists to access? What about working a deal with a nearby fitness center to use locker facilities? Can employees bring their bikes into offices/cubicles or is there a safe place to lock them?
6. **Not enough incentive.** For some people, burning calories, saving on gas and helping the environment are motivation enough—others may need a bit more. If your company offers incentives for ridesharing, make sure bicycling also earns employees perks. They may also qualify for incentive programs such as [Metro Rewards](#) in Los Angeles and [Rideshare Rewards/Rideshare Plus](#) in San Bernardino.
7. **They're worried they won't be able to get home in case of emergency.** Sign bicyclists up for [Guaranteed Ride Home](#), which offers free taxi and/or rental car rides home in case of emergency.
8. **Fear of riding alone.** Just as you match up carpoolers, consider matching up "bike buddies"—people who live near each other who can bike together to work. Bicyclists are an enthusiastic group and seasoned riders are often glad to show newer riders the ropes.
9. **They're out of shape.** If this why they won't bike to work, it may also be the best reason they should. Promote the health benefits of cycling, but also remind employees they can take it slow by biking only as far as a nearby bus stop.
10. **They just haven't gotten around to it.** [Bike to Work Day is Thursday, May 15](#). Part of Bike Week and Bike Month, and with events and support throughout Southern California, it's a great time to get started.



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Calendar of Events

EVENTS

Telecommuter Appreciation Week is March 2-8, sponsored by the American Telecommuting Association, 1.800.ATA4YOU, yourata.com



Association for Commuter Transportation bike workshop—where you can get tips from experts to boost bicycling at your worksite—is March 19 at Cal State Fullerton, socialact.org

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) marketing certificate workshop is March 26 at OCTA headquarters in Orange, contact Marlon Perry at mperry@octa.net or call 714.560.5566

Inland Empire Commuter Services marketing certificate workshop is March 25th, 8:30 a.m. at the Riverside Marriott Hotel; for more information or to RSVP, call 1.866.IECS4HELP

Los Angeles Metro marketing certificate workshop is April 15, 8:30 a.m.-noon at Metro offices in downtown Los Angeles, call 213.922.2811

Earth Day is April 22, earthday.org



OCTA Bike Festival is Sunday, April 27, 9 a.m.-noon at Huntington Beach Pier Plaza—bring the family for free tune-ups, bike maps, safety demonstrations, prizes and more, octa.net

Metro is celebrating the **75th anniversary of Union Station** on May 3. Among the festivities will be a bike ride that begins at Union Station and is free and open to the public. More details will be posted to metro.net/bikes soon.

Bike Week in Southern California is May 12-16, with Bike to Work Day on Thursday, May 15; look for more information in the next issue of *CommuteSmart News*

NETWORK MEETINGS

Glendale TMA meets regularly; call 818.543.7641.

Inland Empire Commuter Services offers bi-annual meetings for ETCs in Coachella Valley and Riverside and San Bernardino counties; call 1.866.IECS4HELP.

Orange County Network meets regularly; email sharetheride@octa.net

Pasadena TMA meets every other month; call John Miranda at 818.354.7433.

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

Torrance Transportation Network meets regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902.

Warner Center TMO meets monthly; call 818.716.5520.

TRAINING



Metro Rideshare upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—are March 19, 9:30–11:30 a.m. and April 16, 1-3 p.m. at Metro offices in downtown Los Angeles. To reserve your space, email garciana@metro.net. For the full 2014 briefing schedule, [click here](#).

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers one-day ETC training for \$163.97. Upcoming sessions are March 5 at UC Irvine; March 26, April 23 and May 21 at AQMD offices in Diamond Bar; April 10 in Culver City and an Inland Empire location in May (tba). Contact the AQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit 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.

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