

CommuteSmart News

May/June 2013

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

What's One Word that Makes Employees Listen?

Hint: It isn't ridesharing.

Full story »



Gear Up for Bike to Work Week

Get free giveaway items, marketing materials and more to help your employees participate in Bike to Work Week, May 13-19...plus news on fun bike events!

Full story »

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ACT Conference
- National Train Day
- Rideshare vendor fair



- Bike to Work events

More Events »

TIPS AND IDEAS

Did you get "stuck" with the job of running the rideshare program? Don't despair! We can tell you ways not only to survive—but to thrive—as an ETC, even if it wasn't your original career choice.

Full story »



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Get your employees to "Dump the Pump" on June 21—go to apta.com or in Orange County octa.net



In Brief

- OCTA discontinues one bus pass, adds another
- Car sharing now at Union Station
- Let transit take you out to the ballgame
- Metro's Westside subway extension gets an official name
- Ventura County apps, maps and bike racks



NEWS FOR EMPLOYEES

Get news geared to an forward to employees or incorporate into your own rideshare newsletter.

Full Story »



What's One Word that Makes Employees Listen?



If you've ever been on a freeway, only to notice traffic slowing—followed by the appearance of the dreaded orange cones—you might feel that "construction" is, at least at the moment, the last word you want to hear.

As an employee transportation coordinator (ETC), however, it can be quite the opposite. In fact, there's a reason to love freeway construction, and it's this: Nothing makes motorists want to get out of their cars like knowing the drive will be slow-going. If you can offer a solution to being stuck in traffic tie-ups, your employees may actually listen to what you have to say.

Whether it's getting the word out about short-term projects (who could forget the Carmageddon weekends?), or longer ones, such as the widening of I-215 and the I-5 freeways, knowing where construction impacts your employees—and helping them find alternatives—can improve your rideshare rate.

"People tend to be more open to hearing how they can avoid construction than to a general rideshare message," says Kelly Lynn with San Bernardino

Associated Governments. "It's perceived as problem-solving rather than preaching—even if what you're suggesting involves sharing a ride."

With construction season now in full swing, we offer these tips for ETCs:

- **Find out where construction impacts your employees.** Make a list of freeways most likely to be traveled by your employees, then look online for any construction on those freeways (see inset, right). Also make note of local road construction near your work site that might block access to parking areas. If all else fails, ask employees in person or via an email survey.
- **Sign up for construction updates.** Many of these web sites will send you regular updates via email and/or Facebook, Twitter, etc. Not only will you stay abreast of current projects, but you'll also find out when they're complete—important information since they may include carpool lanes, transit hubs or other perks that will benefit your employees.
- **Educate your employees about alternatives.** Commuters often resign themselves to sitting in traffic rather than realizing there's something they can do about it. In some cases, local agencies may offer special services, such as the increased number of Metrolink trains that ran during Carmageddon.

Find construction info online:

- Los Angeles— <http://www.metro.net/projects/>
- Inland Empire— <http://www.ie511.org/construction-information.aspx>
- Orange— <http://www.octa.net/Measure-M/Schedules/>
- Ventura— <http://www.goventura.org/?q=traffic/roadway-information>



- **Offer options such as flex-time for those affected so they can travel outside construction hours.** Even if your management as a general policy does not allow flexible scheduling, they may in the short-term for particularly severe construction disruptions.
- **Work with vanpoolers and carpoolers to find alternative routes,** possibly meeting at a Park & Ride lot away from construction pathways.
- **Look into express buses that can use carpool lanes.** Employees that wouldn't usually consider taking the bus might do so if it's faster and easier than driving through a construction zone.
- **Provide carpool/vanpool matching.** Again, these can often access time-saving carpool lanes.
- **Refer your employees to Go511.com** (Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura) or IE511.org (Inland Empire) to get traffic conditions, roadwork updates, ridematching and more.

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Gear Up for Bike to Work Week

Bike to Work Day is May 16, and is part of Bike Week May 13-19. Many Southern California agencies will host events to promote this low-cost, zero-pollution way to get to work, offering prizes, giveaways and support.

Whether your employees bike to work—or as far as a nearby transit station—there are plenty of ways to get in on the fun.



Resources

League of American Bicyclists—Bike Month info, campaign materials, support, bikeleague.org

California Bicycle Coalition: Bike Week info and support, tips for bicycle commuters, calbike.org

Los Angeles County

When your employees [pledge to bike to work](#) during Bike Week LA, they could win a new bicycle from REI and other prizes.

Metro is working with local businesses so bicyclists can participate each day of the week, May 13-19, including:

- Monday—"Fix Your Bike Day" and make sure it's safe and ready for riding.
- Tuesday—the 10th annual [Blessing of the Bicycles](#), 8-9:30 a.m. at Good Samaritan Hospital.
- Wednesday—"Guided Ride Day," take a tour of Los Angeles's bike lanes.
- Thursday—"Bike to Work Day", when thousands of commuters will give bicycling a try. Join in the fun and get refreshed at dozens of [pit stops](#) throughout Los Angeles.
- Friday-Sunday—"Bike Local Weekend." [Click here](#) to find local businesses offering deals to bicyclists.



Do you or someone you know have a great story to tell about your bicycle commute? It's time again for Metro's [Golden Pedal Awards](#), which honor inspiring cyclists. Nominations are due May 19.

For more information, go to metro.net/bike-week.

Orange County

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is urging commuters to "Swap Your Ride" for bicycling, and is celebrating all month long. When commuters [pledge to bike to work](#) they can win an iPad, movie tickets and riding shirts.

Bicycling is not only good for the environment, but it's a great way to workout on the way to work. Find out how many calories you'll burn on your commute with the [Calories Burned Calculator](#).

Another fun way to participate is by sharing the art and joy of cycling through OCTA's month-long [Instagram photo contest](#). Take and post photos of why you love to ride, your favorite trail, your biking buddies or whatever makes cycling special to you for a chance to win a Trek commuter bike, cycling bags and other gear.

For more information, go to octa.net/bike.



Ventura County

Ventura County commuters can make the [pledge online to bike to work](#) to win prizes including an iPad mini, Visa gift cards and more. Employers may also download and distribute pledge forms from Ventura County Transportation Commission's website.

Riders have another chance to win—as well as get refreshments and giveaways such as bike lights and repair kits—at [pit stops](#) throughout the week of May 13-17. Scheduled pit stops include: Santa Paula on Monday, Oxnard on Tuesday, Simi Valley on Wednesday, Ventura on Thursday and Thousand Oaks on Friday.

For more information and to download posters and flyers, go to goventura.org.

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In Brief



OCTA discontinues one bus pass, adds another

As of June 30, Orange County Transportation Authority will discontinue its OCLink Pass, a special \$7 weekend day pass. The bargain pass that OCTA now offers: the new **5 Rides Pass**, which is \$9 for five rides (so \$1.80 per ride). The pass has no expiration date and rides do not have to be taken on consecutive days. For details, go to octa.net.

Car sharing now at Union Station

Zip Car, the nation's largest car sharing service, is now available at Los Angeles Union Station, launching with four vehicles available. For a nominal fee, users have access to a vehicle, gas, insurance and up to 180 miles per day—by the hour or on a per-day basis.



Let transit take you out to the ballgame

Cheer on your favorite baseball team without having to fight traffic or pay for parking. The **Dodger Stadium Express** leaves Union Station to take riders to home games, and your Dodger ticket is good for the fare.

The **Angels Express** is special Metrolink train service that's only \$7 round-trip to all Angels weekday home games that start at 7:05 p.m. and every Friday night game (IEOC Line only).

To help fans from Orange County connect with the Dodger Stadium Express to see the Angels vs. Dodgers games May 27 and 28, Metrolink will offer **special train service** from Anaheim to Union Station.

Visit them online or call 511 for scheduling information.

Metro's Westside subway extension gets an official name

The Metro rail line leading from Wilshire and Western in Los Angeles to the VA Hospital in Westwood has an official name: the **Purple Line Extension**. For project updates, go to metro.net/purplelineext.



Ventura County apps, maps and bike racks

Visit GoVentura.org to download free apps to make your commute easier, including a Ventura County bike map app and the Smart Ride app, that lets you use your iPhone to get real-time bus arrival times and alerts.

More good news for Ventura County commuters: Gold Coast Transit recently installed new bike racks on its buses that each carry three bikes.

Tips & Ideas—“Help! I have to run a rideshare program and I don't know anything about it!”

If that sounds like something you might have said, you're not alone. Most people in charge of their company's rideshare programs didn't choose it as their career—they inherited it. In the vast majority of cases, being an employee transportation coordinator (ETC) is just a "tack on" to another job, whether in human resources, support staff or management. Most ETCs spend 10% or less of their time on rideshare duties.

So how do you deal with a job you never set out to do? Here, we offer five ways to not only survive—but to *thrive*.



1. Get training. People who set out to be ETCs might study transportation management in college, but that's not the only way to learn job skills. Join an [ETC network](#), attend [workshops and briefings](#), or check out the [Association for Commuter Transportation \(ACT\)](#), which offers ongoing networking and education.

2. Play to your strengths. So maybe ridesharing wasn't originally your passion—that doesn't mean you can't bring your passion to ridesharing. Are you creative? Put your energy into creating great promotional materials. A techie? Design a rideshare website and system for participating in the program. When you combine what you love with ridesharing, soon you'll love what you do.

3. Ask for help. If the rideshare program landed in your lap, why not recruit other staffers to help ease the workload? Enlist the help of such departments as IT for creating a rideshare database and marketing for helping get the word out.

Carrie Audet with Redlands Community Hospital went to AQMD training when she took on the role of ETC as part of her duties in Human Resources, but she found some of her best "training" was from the person who'd held the job before her. "Ridesharing is part of our culture here at the hospital, so I stepped into an already strong program," she says (the hospital offers rewards "bucks" for ridesharing, among other incentives). "I was lucky I had someone I could turn to."

4. Incorporate ridesharing into your other duties to avoid being overwhelmed.

Jane Shafer with Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) took on the rideshare program, and she finds she can often blend these new duties in with her job as a safety specialist. "Every day I find several different opportunities to talk about ridesharing," she says. In addition to promoting ridesharing as she makes presentations on the IRWD safety program, it's now part of the new-hire safety orientation—which has been effective for signing up ridesharers on the spot.

5. Focus on the good you're doing. How many people get to wake up and go to a job where they help people breathe cleaner air, have less stress, and save money and time? As IRWD's Schafer put it, "Adjusting to being an ETC came easily because it was helping people in a very basic way...helping them get to work in a cost effective and safe manner."



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Calendar of Events

EVENTS

May is Bike Month, which includes **Bike to Work Day**, May 16, part of Bike Commute Week May 13-19.

May is also Clean Air Month, sponsored by the American Lung Association, 1.800.LUNG.USA, californialung.org.

Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Southern California Conference is May 2-3 at the Pasadena Sheraton—join fellow rideshare pros and get new ideas and the latest transportation news, socialact.org.

National Train Day celebration at Union Station is 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. and includes activities, exhibits, model train displays, tours and giveaways, nationaltrainday.com.



Blessing of the Bicycles is May 14, 8-9:30 a.m. at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, blessingofthebicycles.com.

OCTA Bike Rally is May 16, 7:30 – 9 a.m. in Orange, octa.net/bike.

Diamond Awards, which honor outstanding rideshare programs in Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties, are May 22. Winners will be notified; contact Martin Buford at bufordm@metro.net with questions.

Inland Empire Commuter Services (IECS) will host a **Rideshare Vendor Fair** June 20, 10 a.m. to Noon at the Riverside Marriott. Find out about products and services and get materials from agencies representing rideshare, transportation, air quality and promotional marketing, 1.866.IECS4HELP.

Dump the Pump Day, sponsored by American Public Transportation Association and supported by local agencies, is June 21; apta.com, octa.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

NETWORK MEETINGS (cont'd.)

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.

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

ACT professional development workshop is June 20, socialact.org.

Metro Commute Services' upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—are May 8, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. and June 19, 1 – 3 p.m. For more information or to reserve a space, email garciama@metro.net. See the full 2013 Briefings Schedule [here](#).

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers one-day ETC training for \$160.75. Upcoming sessions are May 9 in Riverside, May 23 and June 6 at AQMD offices in Diamond Bar and June 20 in El Segundo. Contact the AQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit the AQMD at aqmd.gov

ACT International Conference is July 27-31 in San Antonio, TX, actweb.org.

COMMUTESMART NEWS

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