

Smart COMMUTER

Issue No. 27, Winter 2006

Commute Information for Business Executives & Elected Officials in Northern New Jersey

Employees Explore Carpooling as Gasoline Prices Rise

Recent volatility in gasoline prices has produced renewed interest in carpooling as employees explore their options to control commute costs. About 70 companies have contacted Meadowlink seeking information about commute alternatives.

As a result, a series of transportation fairs were held at a number of companies in Northern New Jersey. These include Continental Airlines, UPS, Marcal Paper, Merck, the FBI, FedEx, Verizon and Becton, Dickinson and Company.

Over the last three months, about 2,000 employees signed up to participate in Meadowink's rideshare program. These employees have received a matchlist of other commuters with whom they could carpool or vanpool.

A two person carpool could result in savings of \$2,700 a year for each commuter, assuming a 40 mile round trip, 20 miles to the gallon and \$2.00/gallon.

If you would like to help your employees explore their commute options, contact Meadowlink today to set up a Transportation Fair at your company; call or e-mail:

Kinga Skora, (973) 624-7615,
Kinga.Skora@meadowlink.org.



Left to Right: James Snyder, New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Deputy Commissioner, Christopher Allen, Michael Ruiz and Sheila Gist, Schering Plough, Inc. and Perry Frenzel, Chairman of Meadowlink at the "Best Workplace for Commuters" inaugural ceremony.



Area Companies Named 'Best Workplaces for Commuters'

Meadowlink helped 11 area companies receive recognition as a "Best Workplace for Commuters." An inaugural ceremony was held at NJ Transit headquarters on November 14th.

The "Best Workplace for Commuters" designation publicly recognizes employers whose commuter benefits reach the *National Standard of Excellence*. Employers must provide at least one direct commuter benefit and support a minimum of three additional benefits. These companies designate a central contact person responsible for promoting available commuter benefits, provide access to an Emergency Ride Home program and ensure a minimum level of participation.

The Eleven "Best Workplaces for Commuters" are listed below:

- ◆ ADP, Jersey City
- ◆ ADP Graphic Communications, Jersey City
- ◆ Federal Reserve Bank of NY, E. Rutherford
- ◆ LexisNexis, Newark
- ◆ Merck & Co, Rahway
- ◆ NJ Transit, Newark
- ◆ Photonic Product Group(INRAD),Northvale
- ◆ The Port Authority of NY & NJ
- ◆ United Parcel Service, Inc., Secaucus
- ◆ Verizon Communications, Newark
- ◆ Veterans Affairs Healthcare System, East Orange

For more information about the "Best Workplace for Commuters," contact:

Rosaria Ippolito, 201-939-4242,
info@meadowlink.org.

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Finance



Pilot Program Offers Cash Incentives for Employees Willing to Try Carpooling

About 80 commuters participating in the "Commuter Rewards Program" were offered cash incentives to switch from driving alone to using car/vanpools or taking the bus or train to work.

The program offers each participating commuter \$3 per work day for three months (about \$180) as an incentive to try a new commute - carpool, vanpool or public transit.

We are creatures of habit and rarely are willing to try even a new route to work, let alone a new mode of commute. However, prior experience suggests that 70 percent of those who participate in such programs will make a permanent change in their commute mode and will join other commuters who carpool, vanpool or use public transit.

The switch allows commuters to save on gas and tolls, as well as reduce wear and tear on their cars. In addition, they experience less stress when they give up driving alone to work.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), in cooperation with URS, a transportation consulting firm and Meadowlink, launched the pilot program to encourage commuters to explore their commute options.

Employees at Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Newark, IDT of Newark and Becton Dickinson and Company of Franklin Lakes were introduced to the program at a series of transportation fairs conducted by Meadowlink.

"Carpooling is a lot better than driving, and I spend less money on my commute," confirms Bozena Szkiladz, a Horizon employee. Luis Figueroa says, "Using transit is cheaper than driving, reduces wear and tear on my car, and I can take naps on my way home."

Meadowlink is seeking to partner with businesses to offer the benefits of Commuter Rewards to more employees. The program is available to all employees who make an effort to use an alternate commute mode as part of their routine travel.

Participation is limited to the first 100 qualified applicants, and concludes after 90 days from each participant's start date. For more information, visit Meadowlink's website at www.meadowlink.org, call or e-mail:

Frank Mongioi, 973-247-2435 or e-mail fmongioi@pcwdc.org.

Smart Commuter, a quarterly newsletter on commuting issues in our region, is issued to employers by Meadowlink. Call the Editorial Director, Frank T. Mongioi, Jr. at (973) 247-2435 with comments, suggestions or corrections.

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MEADOWLINK (Meadowlands Transportation Brokerage Corporation), prepared this newsletter through a grant financed in part by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration. This newsletter is disseminated under the sponsorship of the NJDOT in the interest of information exchange. The State of New Jersey assumes no liability for its content or use thereof.

Employers In the Spotlight



13 Schering Plough Vanpools Participate in Meadowlink's Advantage Vanpool Program

Meadowlink recently partnered with Schering Plough to outsource its in-house vanpool program. The company has 13 vanpools and 93 participants.

Outsourcing the vanpools helps the program to expand and comply with IRS subsidy guidelines. Employees receive new vehicles and further lower their commute costs through various financial incentives.

The financial incentives include a \$105 monthly subsidy per employee paid by Schering Plough, NJ Transit's Vanpool Sponsorship of \$150 per month per vanpool, and Meadowlink's empty seat subsidy program that pays the cost of empty seats during the first three months.

As the primary point of contact for Schering Plough employees, Meadowlink provides all employees with access to a state-wide database of commuters looking to join a vanpool which can further reduce the commuting costs.

Additionally, all Schering Plough employees can also take advantage of other commuter programs such as TransitChek and the Emergency Ride Home program which offers a free ride home in the event of an emergency.

If you would like to start a Vanpool Program at your company, please contact:

Rosaria Ippolito, 201-939-4242,
info@meadowlink.org.



Meadowlink & Montclair's Rand Elementary School Partner to Launch Safer Routes to School Program

Safer Routes to School (SR2S) is a national program designed to encourage children to walk or bike to school safely.

Congress has pledged \$612 million for the program in the latest transportation bill and New Jersey is expected to receive approximately \$15 million of this funding.

Meadowlink has partnered with Montclair's Rand Elementary School to implement one of three SR2S pilot programs in New Jersey.

A preliminary workshop was held on October 27th at Rand to bring together parents, teachers, as well as municipal and state officials to discuss the critical issues associated with walking and biking.

Lessons learned from the pilot programs will form the basis for future initiatives in New Jersey. For more information about the Safer Routes to School Program, call or e-mail:

Tamara Jolley, 201-939 4242,
Tamara.jolley@meadowlink.org.

Help Your Employees Explore Their Commute Options

More than 70 percent of New Jersey's eight million employees drive to work alone.

The stress of battling traffic, wear and tear on their cars, and money spent on gas and tolls are major expenses. In fact, we spend more on transportation than on food.

Meadowlink can help.

Meadowlink can organize a commute fair at your company to meet with your employees to review their commute options, by offering car and vanpool programs and incentives, transit schedules and information.

For more information or to set up a commute fair, call or e-mail:

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Kinga.Skora@meadowlink.org.

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Service Updates



Hartz Launches Harmon Meadow Shuttle to Secaucus Junction

Meadowlink has partnered with Hartz Mountain Industries to start a shuttle service connecting the Harmon Meadow/ Mill Creek Mall area with Secaucus Junction. The service is free and open to the general public.

This shuttle uses two mini-buses that operate at 15-minute intervals from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m mornings and from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m in the evenings. The shuttle departs from Secaucus Junction and makes stops at the Harmon Meadow Plaza building, Plaza Drive (AmeriSuites and other restaurants), Meadowlands Convention Center, Courtyard by Marriott, Sam's Club and the Mill Creek Mall.

The shuttle provides easy access to Secaucus Junction. The Secaucus Junction connects 10 of the State's 11 commuter rail lines, allowing commuters to transfer between the Main, Bergen County and Port Jervis lines and the Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast line, plus Midtown Direct service on the Morris/Essex Lines.

"We believe that the Harmon Meadow Shuttle will be a true asset to all of our tenants, those who visit Harmon Meadow to stay at one of our many hotels and those who shop here as well. It is our hope that the cooperative effort between Hartz and Meadowlink to promote mass transportation in this manner is an example for others in the Meadowlands Region to follow." says Hartz Vice-President Perry Frenzel.

The Harmon Meadow shuttle began service on December 1st with average daily ridership of 45 people. Ridership continues to grow as more people become aware of the service.

For more information about the Harmon Meadow shuttle or to start a new shuttle service, call or e-mail:

Wendy Arias 201-939-4242,
Wendy.Arias@meadowlink.org.

Freebees galore.....

Transit Displays Available

Do you need the latest Transit Schedules?

Meadowlink can customize a commute information display for your worksite.

Each display is tailored to your location and holds customized commute information such as car and vanpooling brochures, and relevant bus and train schedules.

Additionally, Meadowlink will maintain the display to ensure you have the most current information.

To obtain a FREE Display, contact:

Michael Jensen (201) 939-4242,
Michael.Jensen@meadowlink.org.



New ideas? Articles?
Feel free to forward
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improving the
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