



Clean Commute Chronicle

March 2009

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Commuters Stay Green While Gas Prices Waver



Recent surveys have found that despite fluctuating gas prices, many Americans are still concerned with staying green. A survey released last week by the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) reported that drivers are still looking for monetary and environmental saving options.

A year ago, gas prices reached record highs at over \$4.00/gallon. With prices skyrocketing, consumers were forced to make changes in their lifestyles, especially in terms of their driving habits. According to CFA spokesperson Jack Gillis, commuters were forced to change their actions because of the high gasoline prices, and now they continue to integrate those attitudes when they think about the future. Some motorists seemed to have made just small changes in their driving habits, but many still turned to carpooling or vanpooling, and ride-sharing seems to have stuck.

The national average is now down to under \$2.00/gallon, yet many are still using their new-found money-saving behaviors because of continuing concerns about oil prices. The survey was conducted by the CFA via telephone and included 1,000 American adults. According to survey results, 76% of respondents were still concerned about high gas prices, and another 76% remain concerned about our dependence on foreign oil.



With gas prices increasing yet again, many people agree that there is still reason for such anxiety. CNN has recently reported that nationwide gas prices have increased by 6 cents/gallon over the last two weeks, bringing the new national average to \$1.92/gallon.

Whether gas prices will continue to rise remains unknown. Regardless, experts will continue to push green initiatives and advocate money-saving solutions, especially clean commuting options, for consumers. CATA Clean Commute Options appreciates your dedication to taking simple steps to improve air quality, and for choosing a clean commute option, because *it all adds up to cleaner air!*

Source: *Chicago Sun-Times*; *Associated Press*; and CNN

ERH Policies

This is to remind everyone of the terms and conditions that are outlined in the brochure accompanying the ERH vouchers you receive.

- Your emergency ride home can be used from your place of employment to your home or locations of your vehicle (Ex: Park & Ride lots) only. Intermediate stops are allowed only if they relate to the emergency (child's school, day care, doctor, hospital).
- Your ERH vehicle is not to be used for personal errands, pre-planned appointments, business-related travel, working late without supervisor's request, pre-planned overtime, or non-emergency side trips.

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VPSI & MichiVan Introduce Referral Reward Program

For all of you currently participating in a MichiVan vanpool, you may be able to receive extra incentives for referring other interested commuters to the local MichiVan program, powered by VPSI.

How does the Referral Reward Program Work?

When it comes to promoting the benefits of vanpooling, nothing beats word-of-mouth advertising. As a vanpool participant, other commuters respect your opinion. Those casual conversations with friends, co-workers, and neighbors can have a tremendous impact on our environment and your finances.

That's what VPSI's Referral Rewards program is all about. VPSI is the company that powers the local MichiVan vanpools that many of you participate in. This program provides a way for you to refer vanpoolers to VPSI and receive credit for doing so. When your referral leads to a new vanpool group, you will receive \$100. And when the new vanpool group remains in service for three months, VPSI will send the new vanpool group \$100 to show appreciation for their clean commuting efforts!

What's in it for You?

You can help a friend make their commute to work easier and less costly by sharing your vanpooling experiences with them. When your referral leads to a new vanpool placement, you will personally receive \$100 when the new vanpool starts. Another \$100 will be provided to the new vanpool coordinator after the group has been in service for three months.

All you have to do is simply contact your local VPSI office (MichiVan) and give them some basic

information regarding the potential new group. They will then contact and work with the potential new vanpoolers, to ensure a quick start. When the new vanpool group is placed into service, you will receive your \$100.

What's in it for Friends, Co-Workers, and Neighbors?

This referral gives your friends and neighbors a way to feel confident in their decision to use VPSI vanpool services. Next time you are talking over the fence with a neighbor, over the cubicles or in the lunch room with coworkers, and they ask about different commute options...tell them about VPSI's MichiVan vanpool program. It's a reliable, safe, inexpensive, and environmentally-friendly alternative to driving alone. If they successfully form a new group then they will receive \$100!

Summary of the Official Rules:

The \$100 payments will be made to those making referrals that lead to the formation and continuation of a new vanpool group for a minimum of three months. Only one referral per new vanpool group will be accepted. Not everyone is eligible (Ex: Transportation Mgmt. Associations, rideshare organizations, VPSI employees, etc.). Please contact your local MichiVan office for details.

Simply fill out and return a Referral Reward Request Form to your local MichiVan Office to claim your reward. For complete rules, or to download the request form, click on the *VPSI Referral Reward Program* button on the home page of www.VANRIDE.com.



ERH Policies *(continued from pg. 1)*

- Must have commuted by carpool or vanpool on the day the ERH voucher is used.
- Fully completed vouchers may be used as direct payment up to the value printed on the voucher for transportation with listed vendors. **Please** make a copy of the voucher before giving it to Enterprise personnel in case CATA does not receive the voucher with the invoice. We need a copy for our records.
- Vouchers expire and can not be used at the end of the 6 months.
- Vouchers are not transferable.



Contact Us

Clean Commute Options

4615 Tranter St.
Lansing, MI 48910

Phone: (517) 393-7433

Fax: (517) 394-3733

Email: cleancommute@cata.org

Web: www.cata.org

Other Alternative Transportation Providers

CATA: 517-394-1000

MichiVan: 800-VAN-RIDE

EATRAN: 517-543-3040

Clinton Transit: 800-800-5938

TCBA: www.biketcba.org



Featured Commuter of the Month

Commuting three days a week from her home in Dimondale to the East Lansing/Okemos area, this month's featured commuter is able to reduce her vehicle miles traveled by roughly 60 miles round-trip! Although she is sometimes unable to share the ride every day during the work-week, Susan experiences some significant savings during these tough economic times. Not only is she able to save on fuel costs, but she can save on vehicle maintenance and the wear and tear on her vehicle.

Susan has been carpooling for over a year now, and registered with CATA's Clean Commute Options program last winter.

"Registering with the program was a big help with finding more riders who were willing to carpool. I thought it would be hard to find anyone who matched [my commute] but it turned out to be much easier than I thought!" states Susan.

After finding a carpool match, Susan was also excited to learn that Clean Commute Options offered an Emergency Ride Home (ERH) service to anyone who carpooled at least three days per week. Commuting regularly to the East Lansing Area was making her nervous with having children enrolled in school. CATA's ERH service gave her the peace of mind she needed to leave her car at home and know she could still get home or to the school quickly if there was an emergency.

"If you know of someone who may be interested in carpooling or vanpooling, or if you know of someone who already shares the ride, but is not enrolled in the program, encourage them to sign up so more commuters will have a better chance to find a possible match" encourages Susan.

Carpools Looking for More Riders



- Ann Arbor-Lansing
- Ann Arbor-East Lansing/MSU
- Brighton-MSU
- Charlotte-Lansing
- Corunna/Bancroft-Lansing
- Durand/Corunna-Lansing
- Durand/Perry-MSU
- Jackson-Lansing
- Eaton Rapids-Lansing
- Eaton Rapids-East Lansing/MSU
- Jackson-East Lansing
- Lowell/Ada-Lansing
- Novi-Lansing
- Owosso-East Lansing/MSU
- Owosso-Lansing
- Portland/Eagle-West Lansing
- Portland/Ionia/Eagle-MSU
- Saginaw/Flint-East Lansing/MSU
- Spring Arbor/Jackson-Lansing

Vanpools Looking for More Riders

- Ann Arbor-Lansing
- Brighton-Lansing
- Highland/Novi/Brighton-Lansing
- Howell-Lansing
- Ionia/Saranac-Lansing
- Jackson-Lansing
- Lennon/Flint-Lansing
- Milford/Southfield-Lansing
- Southfield-Lansing

Contact Clean Commute Options by calling (517) 393-7433 or email cleancommute@cata.org for more information on how to join these carpools.