

# SmartCommute CHALLENGE



April 15 - May 30, 2009

[www.smartcommutechallenge.org](http://www.smartcommutechallenge.org)

Driving alone has high costs, both obvious and hidden. For the driver, there are the obvious costs of gas, auto maintenance and insurance, but also the hidden costs of stress and less exercise. For the community, there are the monetary costs of our roadway infrastructure, but also the costs of increased local air pollution, high CO2 emissions, and dependence on foreign oil. For each one of us, driving alone every day can undermine our own quality of daily life. Taken together, our driving habits threaten to decrease the Triangle's quality of life. But there is a solution: **Go Green!**

This year's SmartCommute Challenge, coordinated by GoTriangle & SmartCommute@rtp, encouraged people to try a commute alternative—teleworking, carpooling, vanpooling, taking the bus, biking or walking—at least once between April 15 and May 30, 2009. The Challenge was open to employees and college students who live, work or attend school in Durham, Orange, and Wake counties. Participants were eligible to win prizes, including \$2,500 in cash!

Once again, we made a big difference! When we followed up with participants after the Challenge ended, 97% reported following through on their pledges, and half of those who previously drove alone were willing to continue SmartCommuting at least once a week! **THANK YOU** to all of our sponsors and participating employers who made the 2009 Challenge possible, and **THANK YOU** to our **11,074 participants!**

## Presenting Partners:



**GoTriangle** is a partnership of the region's transit and ridesharing services including Cary's C-Tran, Chapel Hill Transit, Durham's DATA, NC State University's WolfLine, Raleigh's CAT, and Triangle Transit; and employer and student outreach services including Go! Chapel Hill, NC State University's WolfTrails program, SmartCommute@rtp, Triangle Transit, and UNC-CH's Commuter Assistance Program.

**SmartCommute@rtp** is The Research Triangle Park's transportation management association (TMA) created by the RTP Owners & Tenants Association. The initiative was established in 1999 in coordination with the NC Department of Transportation. The purpose of the SmartCommute@rtp committee is to coordinate the transportation demand management efforts of organizations in RTP to address common transportation concerns, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. The SmartCommute@rtp program has 26 member employers that represent the majority of the Park's 42,000 full-time workers.

## 2009 STATISTICS & TOTALS

**Avoided equivalent of 232 round trips to melting polar ice caps** - 1.7 million miles saved\*

**Saved enough gas to fill up 100 hybrid-electric cars...65 times!**  
- 77,321 gallons of gas saved\*

**Reduced CO2 emissions equivalent to the annual carbon footprint of 39 Americans (about 4 softball teams)**  
- 773 ton reduction of CO2\*

**Eliminated weight of nearly 200 gold bars in VOC pollution** - 2,472 kg reduction of VOC pollutants (volatile organic compounds)\*

**Reduced NOx pollutants equivalent to 25 adult Americans in weight** - 1,996 kg reduction of NOx pollutants (nitrous oxides, including NO2)\*

\*\*These numbers are the savings calculated only for those who participated in the follow-up survey (3,927 pledgers). Our actual results are much higher!

- **11,074** pledges
- **31** sponsors
- **113** pledge drives
- **71** participating employers

## SURVEY RESULTS [35% participation rate]

**9 of 10** respondents rated their SmartCommute experience as excellent or very good!

**3 of 4** respondents were new participants in the Challenge.

**3 of 5** respondents usually drove alone to work or school before the Challenge.

**44%** of existing SmartCommuters used an alternative mode more often during the Challenge.

**9 of 10** respondents usually have a car available for commuting but chose to try a smarter commute!



## In Their Own Words...

Each of us has different needs when it comes to our commute. The Challenge is a campaign that provides motivation for thousands to think about those needs and to try new ways to meet them. While the Challenge only comes once a year, it can be a year-round motivator to save money, relax, get fit, and Go Green!

### Walking to the Bus is Great Exercise

"By riding the city bus instead of driving to and from work I was able to get in some needed exercise. I am happy to say that the result of walking from the bus to my home helped me lose weight and go down 2 pant sizes in just one month."

~ Tiffani E. at UNC Health Care System, 35-44 years old

### Teleworking Restores Work/Life Balance

"I drive approx. 100 miles round trip each day. I worked from home 2+ days per week and enjoyed it. I spent more time with my family, saved money on gas, and helped the environment, all while matching, and in some cases exceeding, my typical workload."

~ Lowell B. in downtown Raleigh 35-44 years old

### Carpooling is Fun

"Car pooling was fun. Better to talk to someone than sing alone with the radio."

~ Carol C. at Duke University

### Vanpooling Saves Money

"Using vanpool 80% of time, saving \$10/day!"

~ Male Employee in Clayton 45-54 years old

### Biking is a Great Way to Get Fit

"Riding my bike to work inspired me to get in shape. I've tried to cut out fast food and I've lost 10 pounds. I will keep commuting on my bike. It's fun!"

~ Seamus K. in southwest Durham 22-34 years old

## WHERE'S YOUR MOTIVATION?

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Participation by Employer Location:

- Orange Co: 15%
- Wake Co: 36%
- Other: 3%
- Durham Co: 15%
- RTP: 31%

### Commuting by Each Mode:

(Participants could choose more than one mode)

#### Typical Commute

#### Modes Pre-Challenge:

- Carpool/Vanpool: 22%
- Bus: 18%
- Bike/Walk: 17%
- Telework: 17%
- Carpool in Hybrid: 2%
- Drive Alone: 65%

#### Modes Pledge to Try

#### During Challenge:

- Carpool/Vanpool: 35%
- Bus: 25%
- Bike/Walk: 25%
- Telework: 36%
- Carpool in Hybrid: 3%

## SMARTCOMMUTERS SAVE BIG!

Today's economic situation has left a lot of people in the Triangle looking for ways to spend less. The average American driver is spending more than \$1200 per year – nearly \$5 per day – to operate and maintain a car for the work commute.\* Finding a SmartCommute option that works even once per week will reduce hundreds of dollars in transportation expenses.

Participants in the SmartCommute Challenge saved an average of \$49.20 per person over the six week period. That's enough money to cover the average monthly cell phone bill!

\*Calculated using a commute calculator at publictransportation.org.

Thank You to Our Platinum & Gold Sponsors:

