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Go Green on Earth Day and Take the SmartCommute Challenge

Alternative Options Support Earth-Friendly Commuting

Research Triangle Park, N.C. - April 17, 2009 - The 2009 SmartCommute Challenge, an annual non-profit public service campaign aimed at reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality in the Triangle, is celebrating Earth Day with pledge events in Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh. The SmartCommute Challenge, coordinated by GoTriangle and SmartCommute@rtp, encourages commuters and college students who work or attend classes in Durham, Wake or Orange Counties to try a smarter, greener commuting alternative. Commuters can take the Challenge at www.SmartCommuteChallenge.org and pledge to ride the bus, carpool, vanpool, telework, bike or walk at least once during the six week campaign, which runs until May 30.

To celebrate Earth Day 2009, Triangle residents looking for ways to incorporate more earth-friendly, 'greener' choices into their lives can opt to try the Challenge. By using an alternative form of transportation to work or campus just once before May 30, residents can "Go Green" and reduce their carbon footprint. In 2008, the 12,000 Triangle drivers who took the Challenge saved more than 1.7 million pounds of carbon, which equals the annual carbon footprint of 43 Americans, or about four softball teams. This year's goal is to save 2.2 million pounds of carbon.

Rainer Dammers, who lives in Chapel Hill and works in Research Triangle Park, celebrates Earth Day year round by using a cleaner and greener commute at least twice a week. One day, Rainer teleworks from home, which offers him the greenest commute of all, and a second day he chooses to bike to work a second day which saves gas and decreases air pollution.

"As a result of teleworking and biking, I have put only 5,500 miles per year on my car since 2002, compared to the national average of almost 12,000," said Dammers. "At \$2.00 per gallon, that has saved me more than \$500 annually in gas costs. Plus, I am lowering my stress levels and staying in better shape."

On Earth Day, April 22, pledge drives and events highlighting the SmartCommute Challenge are scheduled at the campuses of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University. On April 25, additional opportunities to sign up for the Challenge will be offered in Cary and at the Earth Day celebration in Durham.

"North Carolina greenhouse gas emissions increased by 57 percent between 1990 and 2005, and are projected to increase 106 percent from 1990 levels by 2020," said David King, general manager of Triangle Transit, a GoTriangle partner and presenting sponsor of the SmartCommute Challenge. "Commuters are realizing now, more than ever, the importance of choosing more environmentally friendly transportation options."

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For more information about the SmartCommute Challenge or the Earth Day events or to pledge to participate in the Challenge, visit www.SmartCommuteChallenge.org.

About SmartCommute@rtp

SmartCommute@rtp is the transportation management association (TMA) of The Research Triangle Park. Its purpose is to coordinate the transportation demand management (TDM) efforts of RTP employers to address common transportation concerns, reduce traffic congestion, and improve air quality. SmartCommute@rtp currently has 27 member employers, which account for over 80% of RTP employees. SmartCommute@rtp is staffed by the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina, developer and manager of The Research Triangle Park. For more information, visit www.SmartCommute.org.

About Triangle Transit

Triangle Transit is a regional public transportation provider, offering a wide variety of transit, paratransit, and vanpool services to North Carolina's greater Triangle Region and outlying counties. Bus service is available to Apex, Cary, Chapel Hill, Durham, Garner, Hillsborough, RDU International Airport, Research Triangle Park (RTP) and Raleigh. For more information, visit www.triangletransit.org or call (919) 485-RIDE.

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