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November 2011



Congratulations to the following partners, for earning recognition as a Best Workplace for Commuters (BWC)!

BWC provides national recognition and an elite designation for offering outstanding commuter benefits. Employers that meet the National Standard of Excellence in commuter benefits—a standard created by the National Center for Transit Research (NCTR) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)—can get on the list of Best Workplaces for Commuters and receive high level programs and services.



South Seas Island Resort

Vanpool Program, Employee Housing

Frank Capo, Osner Danger, Kim Wheeler, Arthur Beltran, Larry Tyler, Julio Jimenez, Chris Touarti, Ana Rivera, Willio Pierre, Dan Bensman, Tom Martin, Brian Sullivan and Clint Webster.

Bealls Inc.
Compressed Schedules (4/10s)
Kim Levine



Lee County DOT
Compressed Schedules (4/10s),
Carpool Benefits
Kathy Awiszus, Ehab Guirguis, and Doraine Wetzel

Lee County Clerk of Courts
Teleworking,
Carpool and
Wellness Benefits
Karen Jaye

For more information, visit: bestworkplaces.org. Contact your outreach coordinator today to see if your workplace qualifies, outreach@CommuterServicesFL.com

ETC Spotlight: Jan Cook, Lee County Government

Since Lee County began their partnership in 2007, Jan Cook, Facilities Services Manager and Commuter Services Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) has taken strides to lead the way in commuter programs and benefits. With a few thousand employees and many site locations, Jan has tackled this daunting task with creative and proactive solutions to help Lee County commuters use commute alternatives. As Lee County continues to incorporate infrastructure, amenities and services for all residents and visitors, Jan's efforts are already paying off.



Log your trips. Track your savings. Get more green.

Trip Track measures the savings of your alternative commute - both to your wallet and the environment. If you use transit, bike, walk to work, telework, or already carpool or vanpool, just log in, record your trip, and watch the savings add up. triptrack.CommuterServicesFL.com

Winners drawn every month; you have to track to win! Congrats recent winners!

July: SHEILA BRUTUS
August: SHELLEY DORAN
September: PAMELA HASKIN

Rural Vans Available! 60% of Cost Covered by FDOT.



Subsidies available in: DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Okeechobee, portions of Collier, and the community of Immokalee. This means that vanpool groups only pay 40% of their total monthly vanpool cost, as well as fuel and taxes. [Rural Van flyer](#), [Tax Incentives](#). Contact David Bannar at 800-VAN-RIDE or david.bannar@vpsiinc.com

JARC Vans in Lee County

LeeTran is the recipient of Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funding to purchase 12-passenger vans for use by employers whose place of business is outside the boundaries of the Cape Coral/Ft. Myers urbanized area. Funds are also available to subsidize 50% of monthly operating expenses.

Contact Joann Haley, LeeTran Marketing Manager, at 239-533-0323 or jhaley@leegov.com

Welcome Commissioner Janet Taylor New Hendry County Ambassador

We welcome Hendry County Commissioner, Janet Taylor, as our new Ambassador for Hendry County. Commissioner Taylor looks forward to advancing the Commuter Services Ambassador role in Hendry County, and we're happy to have her on board!



Commuter Champion

Louie (Jay) Rodriguez, Charlotte County Bicyclist



“Despite my double-handicap (born without part of my right leg and missing several fingers on my hands), I learned to bike at age 36. After my first two days of cycling 12.5 miles from North Port to work at Murdock Circle in Charlotte County, I became hooked.”

“The “trip track” program is such an innovative program. It provokes me to continue using my bike; the many advantages are realized with Trip Track’s reporting. I can see my savings add up, and that’s not including the health and environmental benefits. If all this is not an incentive to continue riding my bike and not drive my car, then I don’t know what is. My co-workers are

impressed! The accumulated savings of riding my bike to/from work will pay me back for the new bike I just purchased recently to commute to work - I see this as a great investment in the long run.”

Polk BOCC Awards

The Polk County Transit Authority recognized Polk County Try It Week participants, which commemorated the second anniversary of Polk County’s Commuter Services Kick off. Commissioner Edwin Smith presented commuters with certificates of appreciation and thanked them for their participation.



Pictured (Left to Right): Thomas Phillips (Citrus Connection), Jan Parham (FDOT), Christine Diaz (Commuter Services), Richard Dreyer (TOA), Commissioner Ed Smith (Polk BOCC), Mayor Gow Field (City of Lakeland), MJ Montgomery (TOA), Bill Ball (TOA), Joel Rey (TOA) and Russell McDermott (Commuter Services). Russell McDermott (Commuter Services) and Joyce Webb (Polk Co. Clerk of Courts) and Becky Howell (Polk Co. Clerk of Courts - not pictured). Jan Parham (FDOT), Mayor Gow Field (City of Lakeland), Terri Kohler (Polk Co. Property Appraiser), Ellen Edwards (Polk Co. Property Appraiser), Christine Diaz (Commuter Services), and Russell McDermott (Commuter Services).

In addition to the awards ceremony FDOT Commuter Services Project Manager Jan Parham officially named City of Lakeland Mayor Gow Fields (pictured at right with Polk County Commissioner Ed Smith) as the official Commuter Services Polk County Ambassador.



Lee County Park and Rides

Looking for a place to park and share a ride to work? Lee County has taken a creative approach to address your needs. In addition to five libraries designated through the county, Parks and Recreation has also joined the initiative and added a few other spots.

[District Park and Ride Map.](#)

LeeTran LinCs with CAT



On October 6, LeeTran began operating service connecting Lee and Collier counties. The LinC will run from Coconut Point Mall to US 41 and Immokalee Road in Collier County, seven days a week.

For more information visit rideleetran.com or call 239-LEE-TRAN.

Charlotte to Sarasota County Transit Connection?

It is still too early to tell, but representatives from each county, as well as the MPOs and FDOT met in October to devise a plan to provide some type of transit service.

Clew-Belle Express

Clewiston to Belle-Glade Community Bus Route operator stops on demand along the route - **just wave!** \$1.00 to ride and service is Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. [View Route Map.](#)

Citrus Connection Welcomes New Executive Director!

"My first goal is to acclimate myself to LAMTD (Lakeland Area Mass Transit District), to meet employees and give them a chance to meet me," said Thomas Phillips, the new Executive Director for Citrus Connection. "We are extremely excited about making Lakeland our new home." He realizes these are tough economic times for his agency. "We need to make sure we are utilizing all federal, local and state dollars," Phillips said. "We need to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars." For more information visit: www.RideCitrus.com



Congratulations Polk County!

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged presented Polk County Transit Services and its partners with five awards for ongoing commitment to service.



Pictured left are the 2011 Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged award winners from Polk County: Delisia Pelt, Dispatcher/Scheduler of the Year; Brenda Bland, Driver of the Year; Rebecca Leng of the

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, as the Local Coordinating Board of the Year and Sheila Winitzer Shining Star Award; Jan Parham of the Local Coordinating Board of the Year and Jane Hammond and Paul Simmons (not pictured) Volunteer Driver Program as the Innovation of the Year

SCAT's North Port Express Bus

Get to downtown Sarasota from North Port in no time! Hop aboard SCAT's new express service at North Port City Hall and relax during your morning commute. The route features a deluxe bus complete with reclining seats and individual controls. Call SCAT today to learn more about this service: 941-861-5000. Note: SCAT fare increases that began October 3rd do not include the Express Service. For more information, visit: scgov.net/scat



"I get up a 5:30 am to catch the 6:54 bus from the Mullins Center. This is a big job for me, as I am not a morning person at all, but I know the bus will take me directly to my job. That is well worth the extra effort. I love to be able to read or just rest while commuting to work. Thanks SCAT!" - Steve Hatcher

"I started riding the SCAT Express Bus shortly after the new service started. During my commute, I've read a few books, watched movies, and got to know new friends. It is a wonderful service and I will continue to ride the SCAT Express Bus to work." - Lisa Allen



Florida Department of Transportation Completed First Series of Public Workshops for SMART Connect

FDOT District One held three public workshops in September to present the **SMART Connect Study** to residents of Sarasota and Manatee Counties. SMART Connect is a new feasibility study for premium transit services from south Sarasota County into north Manatee County. Visit: smartconnectstudy.com.

Commuter Benefits



Carpool Parking Only!

Worksites all over Southwest Florida are designating preferred spaces. Check with your employer or school for details.

Emergency Ride Home

If you currently carpool, vanpool, ride the bus, bike or walk to work, and your site offers the [Emergency Ride Home](#) program, you qualify for free rides home in the event of an emergency.

Commuter Services will reimburse up to four rides per year via taxi or rental car; or reimburse mileage for a co-worker who drives you home.

The program can only be used for personal and family emergencies or unscheduled overtime per supervisor request. It is not intended for rides to work, scheduled appointments or planned overtime. Register today!

What are the benefits?

- [Find](#) co-workers that share your commute, so you can save time and [money](#)
- Find a backup, in case your car breaks down or for some other emergency
- Reduced stress induced by traffic or the costs of daily commuting
- Use of the [ERH](#) program
- Win from monthly drawings when you track with [Trip Track](#)
- Find [traffic information](#) and local services
- Notices of [upcoming activities](#), incentives and periodic prize drawings
- [Information](#) on carpools, vanpools, biking, walking, local transit, teleworking, flexible scheduling, green initiatives and more!

I already bike/walk/ride the bus, why should I register? You qualify for the [ERH](#) program, and any upcoming incentives. You will be entered into periodic prize drawings, receive notices of upcoming [activities](#) and [promotions](#), like [Tow to Go](#), [Bike to Work Week](#), [National Walking Day](#) or [Dump the Pump](#). You can also start tracking your trips with [Trip Track](#), a tracking system that rewards commuters for reporting their daily modes of travel.

What are the environmental benefits by commuting by carpool/vanpool/bike/bus?

Changes in travel behavior, and worksite operations can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce a worksite's overall carbon footprint. Considering that one gallon of gas produces 20 lbs. of CO₂ ([fuelconomy.gov](#)), even small changes in commute behavior and fuel usage can have a positive impact on the environment.



What happens after I register?

You will be matched with people who live and work near you and travel to and from work at the same time. Next, you will be emailed (or mailed) the name, phone number and email address of people who could potentially share your commute. To get started, check out the [carpool checklist](#), interested cyclists can organize group rides, or maybe you want to find someone to share a [transit](#) ride. For

commuters with a longer drive, [vanpooling](#) is an ideal solution.

Farewell to Russell McDermott

Russell McDermott, Commuter Services Outreach Coordinator, who worked with partners, stakeholders and commuters in Polk, Hardee, Highlands, Manatee, Sarasota and DeSoto counties is applying his knowledge and experience in Transportation Demand Management as the new Operations Coordinator for **Connecticut Commuter Services**. His great attitude and friendly service will surely be missed. We congratulate him on his new promotion and wish him well on his next Commuter Services adventure!

For more information about Connecticut Commuter Services, visit:

<http://ctrides.com>



About Us

Commuter Services is a FREE program, sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation, serving travelers in the 12 county region of Southwest Florida.

We work with businesses to help their employees find a better way to get to work rather than driving alone. We work with local governments and transportation partners to help build better communities that offer a wider range of transportation choices - like bicycling and walking, and better accessibility for carpools, vanpools, and transit services. We provide employers and schools with a turnkey solution, including program development, on-site events, marketing tools, and motivation programs.

For more information:

Call: 1.866.585.RIDE (7433)

Visit: www.CommuterServicesFL.com

Track: TripTrack.CommuterServicesFL.com

Email: CustomerService@CommuterServicesFL.com

