

OCTA Challenges Local Corporations to Go Green



The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is challenging local corporations to promote green modes of commuting with the new "OCTA Corporate Challenge."

As the primary transportation agency for Orange County, OCTA keeps the county moving with bus and paratransit service, Metrolink rail service, the 91 Express Lanes toll facility, freeway, street and road improvement projects, administering Orange County's rideshare program for individual and company commuting solutions, motorist aid services and by regulating taxi operations. OCTA's mission is to enhance the quality of life in Orange County by delivering safer, faster and more efficient transportation solutions.

The OCTA Corporate Challenge will recognize local companies that want to provide transportation solutions to their employees or expand their existing rideshare programs. The Corporate Challenge will begin the first week of October, in conjunction with California Rideshare Week. Companies participating in the challenge will tell OCTA what they are currently providing and pledge to support rideshare programs in the future.

Pledges will be reviewed and noteworthy rideshare programs will be recognized in print media and at a special event in the fall.

"We hope that the Corporate Challenge will encourage companies interested in going green to incorporate ridesharing into how their employees get to work," said Jerry Amante, OCTA Chairman and the Mayor of Tustin. "It makes good business sense, because most programs provide benefits to the employees at a minimal effort and expense to the company."

Participating in a Rideshare program may also help companies meet South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) requirements, and can reduce employer payroll taxes. Similarly, employees can have the cost of transit (train, bus, vanpool) taken out of their pre-taxed payroll, resulting in a reduction of taxable income for employees.

OCTA has worked hard to improve traffic flow on Southern California's freeways, with funding help from Measure M1 and M2. There are also 234 miles of carpool lanes in Orange County that benefit commuters who do not drive alone. However, despite lane additions, carpool lanes and widening, the freeways remain stressed during rush hour in Southern California as the population increases and people continue to drive alone.

Sharing the ride is a low-cost solution that will help meet these growing transportation needs.

"There are many benefits for companies that participate in a rideshare program," said Amante. "Most importantly, employees can get to work on time and unstressed, which boosts morale and productivity."

Corporations that embrace green modes of transportation see many benefits for themselves and their employees. These include the following: easier commuting gives access to a larger pool of qualified candidates; fewer employees driving their cars to work results in a reduced demand for expensive parking spaces; and employees can save money on car maintenance and insurance.

Companies who would like to participate in the OCTA Corporate Challenge have many options available to them, including the OCTA Annual Employer Pass, the Metrolink Corporate Program and the Vanpool program.

Annual Bus Pass: An OCTA Annual Employer Pass (E-Pass) is a swipe-card that can be used on any local OCTA bus seven days a week. Employees swipe the E-Pass through the farebox when they get onboard and the fare is automatically paid. With the E-Pass, the cost per ride is \$1.00, OCTA's lowest available fare. The maximum monthly cost of each pass is \$55, even if more than 55 rides are taken.



Metrolink Corporate Program: The Metrolink Corporate Pass program is for employers with five or more monthly Metrolink riders. The program acts as an incentive to ride the train, where the employers subsidize all or part of the cost, or none at all. Metrolink runs approximately 40 round trips every weekday on three lines that serve Orange County. With the pass, commuters can connect to OCTA buses at no additional cost.



Vanpool Subsidy Program: Vanpools are generally ridden by commuters traveling 15 miles or more to work. Commuters can join an existing vanpool or start their own. The cost of the vanpool is shared amongst the riders, or an employer can subsidize all or part of the cost. *OCTA offers qualified vanpools a \$400 monthly subsidy to offset the cost of service. To celebrate Rideshare Week, VPSI and Enterprise will provide an additional \$150 off the cost of the service for the first month to the first 10 vanpools who sign up with each company after August 30.*



The OCTA Corporate Challenge Pledge Form

- A.** Please answer the following questions regarding the transportation options currently provided.
1. The OCTA E-Pass/U-Pass is being used by _____ employees.
 2. Metrolink is being used by _____ employees.
 3. There are _____ OCTA Vanpools providing transportation to _____ employees.
 4. There are _____ carpools serving _____ employees.
 5. Bicycling or walking to work is the primary mode for _____ employees.
 6. There are _____ employees who telecommute one or more days each week.
 7. We have an Employee Commute Reduction Plan filed with the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Yes _____ No _____
 8. Other: _____

B. Accept the challenge to improve your green transportation programs for your employees. Check the box next to the services you are committed to learning about and possibly providing in the future.

- OCTA Annual Bus Pass (E-Pass)
- Metrolink Corporate Pass Program
- OCTA Vanpool Subsidy Program
- Ridematching Assistance
- Workplace Transportation Needs Assessment
- Rideshare Networking and Training
- Worksite Rideshare Promotions

C. Tell us how we can contact you and provide assistance with any studies or planning associated with the Rideshare service you are interested in.

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ Zip _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Please send the completed pledge form to:
 Orange County Transportation Authority
 550 South Main Street
 P.O. Box 14184
 Orange, CA 92863-1584
 ATTN: Marketing Dept., #739