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Commuter SWFL

New Partners

Welcome Aboard!

Charlotte Co. Health Dept.
City of Bradenton
City of North Port
Collier Co. Health Dept
Everest University
Hendry Co. Government
Keiser University - Fort Myers
Lee Co. Supervisor of Elections

December 2010

A Message from Commuter Services...

The holidays are just around the corner, and now is a great time to get your commute into stress-reducing, cost-saving alternatives.

The beautiful weather and bright mornings are perfect for biking and walking. With the holidays close at hand, many of you may be thinking about dusting off your bicycles and enjoying this long-awaited break from the Florida heat. Riding your bike can be a great deal of fun, and it's an enjoyable economical way to keep fit. Make the trip fun by riding with a friend, be sure to wear a helmet, and check out our online [Biking and Walking](#) resources for trails by county, safety information and other tips.

Try sharing a ride with co-workers, even if it's just one or two days per week. You will be amazed by the money you could save - so get into the holiday spirit and get an updated [matchletter](#). Sharing a ride can help you put more cash into your holiday cash reserve. Try our [Cost Calculator](#) to see how much money you can save, or see information below about our upcoming Trip Track program to tally your actual money savings and emission reductions.

Polk County Try Transit Day

The results are in!



Polk County Try Transit Day was designed to promote public transit and encourage participation from local communities, businesses and colleges. Bus fares were free all day, and nearly 2,700 additional riders gave Polk County's three transit systems a try on October 27. Overall, transit ridership increased by 37.4%, with one transit system reporting a 59% increase.



Other activities included an unveiling ceremony for five new buses - a much needed replacement for some very old and tired vehicles. Along with a challenge: the business and school with the most participants on Try Transit Day won the 2010 Try Transit Trophy, which will be awarded to Polk County School Board and Polk State College. Individuals were entered into prize drawings - congratulations to the following winners!



Monthly bus passes: Katie Turner, Wadnez Vincent, Nestar Reyes, Tymeisha Forte and Adam Johnson. **Publix Gift Cards:** Robin Martinez, Steve Steiner, Jesse Torres and Tamara Fussell.

Read more about Try Transit Events from Collier County and Sarasota County - check out our [Media](#) page or view event video:

view.liveindexer.com/ASXGenerator.aspx?mediaSKU=hXQ2ojEA009b0Y5w2fkX8w%3d%3d



Longboat Key Club & Resort
 Manatee County Government
 Naples Transportation Company
 Rooms to Go
 Sarasota Co. School Board
 Sarasota Co. Health Dept.
 Sarasota Co. Sheriff
 Sarasota Co. Tax Collector
 Sarasota Co. Clerk of the
 Circuit Court
 Sarasota Co. Supervisor of
 Elections
 Sarasota Co. Property Appraiser
 Southern Technical College
 Wilbur Smith & Associates

Save These Dates!

SWFL "Earth Week"
 April 17-23, 2011.
 Email us to get
 involved now!



Transit News



"Vote4transit" to show that Floridians for transit is 100,000 strong. Help America become more energy independent, create jobs, improve the environment, and provide alternatives to fight traffic congestion. Cast your vote today! im4transit.org

Big CAT Changes! Collier commuters can expect big changes to their transit system in 2011. A secondary transfer center will open up on Radio Rd, with routes connecting to Pine Ridge Rd, Golden Gate Pkwy and Goodlette-Frank Rd. Techtrans will take over management services. For more information, visit: www.colliergov.net/cat

Charlotte County Transit New Route Match System
 Upgrades include: real-time data collection to improve routing, communications, and technology to view exact location of vehicles and better estimate travel times. Plan tomorrow's trip today by calling 941.575.4000. For more information, visit: charlottecountyfl.com/HumanServices/Transportation

Sarasota County "Commuter Services Day" Awards Ceremony



Congratulations to the following "Commuter Services Day" Office Challenge winners:

- Sustainability Awareness Trophy:** Sarasota County Clerk of the Circuit Court. Accepted by: Alicia Accardi, Communications/Operations Department and Janet C. Cantees, the Chief Operations Officer
- Team Spirit Award:** Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections. Accepted by: Jennifer Lynch, HR Coordinator
- Sustainability Awareness Trophy:** Sarasota County Tax Collector's Office. Accepted by: Barbara Ford-Coates, Tax Collector and Coleen Miller, Community Outreach Administrator
- Commissioner Joe Barbetta's Team Challenge Trophy:** Sarasota County - Planning Department. Accepted by: Tom Polk, Director of Planning Operations.

View [proclamation](#) and [awards ceremony](#)...jump to proclamations. Sarasota County Special Edition Newsletter [archive](#) or [PDF](#). Check out [SEACTivities](#) page 11.



Commuter Spotlights

Carpoolers!



Raymond Nottingham and his wife, Bea, FDOT (top right), started carpooling 17 years ago, though, Raymond rode with co-workers years before he and his wife started working together. "I've also ridden the bus to work and appointments," says Raymond "and only driven alone to work about one and a half years out of the 33 years I have worked here."

Randy Lachler (right) and Raymond Nottingham, FDOT, biked to work from 1983-1991. Randy continues to ride his bike everywhere, which keeps him in great shape!



"I've been biking to work everyday for 20 years, and think it's really great to see you all out here, encouraging more people to do it. Sure it's exercise, but it's also fun and a great way to clear my head." Chuck Hull, Sarasota Memorial Hospital

Collier Healthy Communities Coordinator/Smart Growth Coalition Chair Stacy Revay and intern Lindsey Dompier met on CAT to discuss innovative ways for potential riders to take the bus to fun locations, such as downtown, the beach or the mall. Stacy and Lindsey regularly commute on the bus: "It's cheaper than fixing my car," says Stacy.



"I'm a very strong supporter of bicycle safety and awareness - and would love to help make Florida the #1 safest state in the US to ride a bike." -Grady Barr, Sarasota-Manatee Bicycle Club

Citrus Connection now offers multiple options:

Using your mobile phone, download the FREE RouteShout app on your Android/iPhone or visit m.routeshout.com and search for Citrus Connection. *Google Transit* (works just like driving directions) provides step-by-step directions. findmyroutes.com allows a user to see route details including all available bus stops, physical location of stops; nearby landmarks and even photos of the location! For more information, visit: ridecitrus.com

LeeTran online Trip Planner works just like other mapping websites: select your travel points, arrival or departure times, and click "Plan My Trip."

You'll never have to read a bus schedule again! The Trip Planner will return an exact itinerary, including walking directions, boarding times, and any necessary transfers. Plan trips by address, list of popular locations, or drag and drop markers on the map.

January 19 is "Find your Ride Day" at the Rosa Parks transfer center - *Get Where You're Going with LeeTran!*

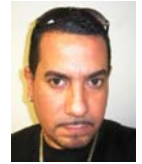
Visit rideleetrans.com and give the Trip Planner a try. For questions or more information, call 239.533.8726.

MCAT Free Beach Express service on Anna Maria Island, operating along SR 64/Manatee Ave on Sundays and Holidays and a free daily Trolley service on the island.



MCAT Manager Ralf Heseler voted secretary of FPTA, and MCAT won the FPTA First Place 2010 Safety Award, among

"For 6 months now, I've been riding Winter Haven Area Transit (W.H.A.T.), and my experience is better than imagined. Living in New York City for most of my life, I've used transit frequently, but W.H.A.T. exceeds my expectations. It is cost efficient and I know I will get there safely and on time. The drivers and other commuters are pleasant and respectful. It's a pleasure riding and I encourage others to do so every time I get a chance." Victor E. Morales, FDOT



"I bike to work when I can and love it. I live about 12 miles away, so it takes me over an hour, but I ride slow and ride cautiously." Michele Miller, Ranger, Lee County Parks and Recreation (pictured with Marjorie Ziff-Levine from UGottaGoGreen.com)

Partner Spotlights

Leading the Way - Polk County and Lee County

Polk County is taking a strong initiative to set an example for Southwest Florida. Earlier this fall, hundreds of Polk County School Board employees registered with the program, keeping Polk County in the lead with over 4,000 commuters registered with the Commuter Services program. Lee County comes in second with 2,484 registered commuters. Polk County also recently unveiling their preferred parking program for carpools, with Lee County following closely behind - downtown commuters should expect to see similar incentives in January 2011.



Working for You! As a community coalition for complete streets in Lee County -- streets designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users of all ages and abilities, BikeWalkLee is pleased to report good news:

- Completion of improvements to bicycle usage of the Sanibel Causeway
- Bike/ped facility plans for the new Matlacha Bridge
- The Gladiolus Road bike/ped friendly widening project
- Sanibel designated as a Bicycle Friendly Community - just one of six in the state
- Shoulder improvements on the Buckingham Road project
- First annual status report to commissioners on the complete streets program

Connect: BikeWalkLee blog bikewalklee.blogspot.com, www.bikewalklee.org or contact Darla Letourneau at dletourneau@bikewalklee.org.



Charlotte County Health Department Imagine pedaling to work with co-workers, where you can lock up your bike to an artsy bike rack, or stow it away in a secure locker, then walk inside, take a shower and get started with your day.

These amenities, along with supplies for repairs, bike helmets and staff certified to ensure a good fit, resources on bicycle commuting and more, have earned the Charlotte County Health Department a bronze award for being a bicycle friendly business from the League of American Bicyclists. Charlotte is the first health department in the U.S. to receive this award. Additionally, they have taken on Green Initiatives, such as following LEED guidelines in constructing their new Loveland clinic.



This fantastic team is leading the way in Charlotte County, to show local business and schools that great things can be done with a little initiative.

Pictured: Karen Mays, Bill Holland, Marne Cothran, Kathy Drake and Eric Stockley

Read the Charlotte County Health Department's news release: www.charlottechd.com/Media/Release/092310_BicycleAward.pdf

similar sized systems, with its innovative and proactive safety and training programs - the sixteenth first place win in 33 years. For more information, visit: mymanatee.org

Polk County Transit Services Award of excellence from the FFTA for Marketing transit videos, and two safety awards. In this issue: Polk Try Transit Day article. For more information, visit: polk-county.net

SCAT general manager, Anthony Beckford, was recently named



chairman of the FFTA. "My mission is to bring FFTA in the fore front and recognizable as a viable organization for Public Transit and to work securing a source of dedicated funding for transit operations."

The FFTA acts as a collective voice in promoting the recognition, use, expansion and enhancement of public transportation. The Florida transit industry employs tens of thousands of Floridians, transports about 262 million riders a year, and creates billions of dollars in annual economic activity. For more information, please visit: scgov.net/scat.

Rural Vanpool Program: 60% subsidy for vanpools: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act FTA Section 5311 Program. 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. Contact David Bannar or Jon Chase at VPSI, Inc., 1-800-VAN-RIDE, david.bannar@vpsiinc.com, jon.chase@vpsiinc.com.

The City of Lakeland recognized the benefits of alternate modes of transportation quite awhile back. Ranging from their improvement of bus shelters and the transit system to the development of concurrency determinations, they have now added marketing initiatives to their list. Check out the new kiosks!



Edison State Hendry-Glades in LaBelle In just a few days, nearly 150 students taking evening classes at this Hendry County campus registered to participate in the Commuter Services program. Recognizing that long and lonely commutes can be improved by sharing the ride with fellow classmates, students can catch up on their readings while someone else drives, study for tests, send texts or make new friends. With an increasing number of new enrollments at this campus, coupled with limited parking and the construction of a new sports complex, carpooling and biking has become a growing solution for students. With saving money as the most likely outcome, who could blame them?



Edison State College Collier Campus Recently launched their preferred parking for carpools program designating seven prime locations for student carpools of three or more. As one of the leaders for Collier County's green initiatives, this is yet another way local organizations can go green and reduce traffic congestion. Students looking to sign up should contact Dr. Christine Davis Associate Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.

Manatee County County-wide kick-off coming soon in 2011!

Trip Track is coming!

Log your trips. Track your savings. Get more green. Get ready for the launch of Trip Track, our online tracking system that will help you measure both the monetary savings and carbon footprint of your alternative commute. If you use transit, bike, walk to work, telework, or already carpool, just log in, record your trip, and watch the savings add up. Participate in monthly prize drawings and make your commute count for a better Southwest Florida. Let us know what you think - take Trip Track for a test run: tdmdev.basetech.com/Florida

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 organizations to help their commuters find a better way to get around, besides driving alone. We also 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 organizations with program development assistance, on-site events, marketing tools, and motivation programs. Contact us today, to get started.

