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The Price of Gas Influences Commuter Driving Habits

Washington, D.C. – Daily commuter transportation decisions in metropolitan Washington are being influenced by the price of gasoline. A recent statistical analysis conducted by Commuter Connections, a regional transportation network coordinated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), revealed that over a two-year span there was a correlation between applications for car- and van-pooling and the cost of a gallon of gasoline.

In 2011, Commuter Connections experienced a 20 percent increase in the number of car- and van-pool applications over those submitted in 2010. The average price of gasoline in 2011 was 27% higher than in 2010 and may be heading to even higher levels this year. Rideshare applications from the past two years (January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2011) were compared with gasoline price data during the same period. The comparison revealed a relationship between the incidence of Rideshare applications and the price of gas.

A spike in the price of fuel prompts considerable interest in transportation alternatives, particularly when it comes to individuals who are underemployed in a flat economy or have a spouse or other household member who has lost a job. “Commuter Connections can provide commuters with options that reduce the impact of high fuel prices and changing travel behavior just one day per week can cut commuting costs by 20%,” says Nicholas Ramfos, Director of Commuter Connections.

No matter the motivation to sign up, Commuter Connections continues to make getting to work more economical. In addition to free services that enable commuters to find individuals who share similar travel routes and work hours, the Commuter Connections “Pool Rewards”

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program offers incentives for starting new carpools, and it will soon offer a \$200 monthly incentive for vanpools. “In these challenging economic times, a little extra money can make a big difference,” says Ramfos. “Ridesharing is a safety valve in this type of an economy and allows commuters control over how they travel on a daily basis.”

Commuter Connections has everything commuters need to make informed decisions, from a way to calculate the cost of a drive-alone commute (<http://www.mwcog.org/commuter2/resources/commutingcalc.html>) to identifying the right travel alternative program, earning money for carpooling and vanpooling with “Pool Rewards,” and ensuring that in the case of an emergency commuters can get home free-of-charge with the Guaranteed Ride Home program. With Commuter Connections, commuters are just a click or a phone call away from a more economical and environmentally friendly commute.

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Commuter Connections is a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Commuter Connections promotes bicycling to work, ridesharing and other alternatives to drive alone commuting, and provides ridematching for carpools and vanpools and offers the free Guaranteed Ride Home program. Commuter Connections is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and U.S. Departments of Transportation.

www.mwcog.org / www.commuterconnections.org

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