

# VantagePoint

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2010

## Behind the Scenes – In the Van Shop

### Fine-tuned mechanics provide fine-tuned machines!

Meet the Maintenance Team – who services the engines, changes the oil, checks the belts, checks the tires; providing preventive maintenance on our 300 plus vanpool vehicles within a 4500 - 5500 mile window. All right here at Pierce Transit in Lakewood! Perhaps you met one of them when you came in to wait for a quick tire repair. Maybe you met one of them when being rescued from a ditch after sliding in the ice. In 2009, this team handled 16 road calls, with Renton being the furthest to travel. They also prepared, and performed safety inspections on, the 64 vans replacing those vans that will become spares, surplus, and reserve vehicles. Way to go!

They may be behind the scenes, but they are out front with customer service. Primary volunteer driver Mark N. wrote: "I really appreciate the effort of the maintenance department to fix these problems for us. Please pass our appreciation on..." And primary volunteer driver Pam E. wrote that she "appreciated the time one of them took to explain the heating/air controls in their van. Please thank him for being gracious and taking the time to explain the system to me. I think I understand how it works now and why it does what it does." Pam said he was "very patient and considerate" and wanted us to extend to him her thanks for his courtesy. We have done just that Mark and Pam, and now we share with all our vanpoolers. We feel the same way – very appreciative.



Your Pierce Transit Maintenance Team: Jon Newman, Steve Miller, Dan Sciacqua, Bob Silvia, Steve Adams. Missing but not forgotten: Mike Benton and Bob Schmid.

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PIERCE  
TRANSIT  
the way to go!





## Vanniversary

### What you get when you cross a vanpool with a birthday!

At Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU), ETC Randy Stearnes takes pride in the many vanpools serving the various TPU sites. He tracks the date each vanpool group started operation.

The start dates are their “vanniversaries” and Randy recognizes these annual dates in their employee newsletter, with a certificate of recognition, and with treats such as a tin of cookies or candies. This lets the riders know they are appreciated and the hoopla is a way of attracting more employees to vanpool. Nice job!

## Drive Alert – Arrive Alive

### Part one in this series: FATIGUE AWARENESS

You are traveling the same road you have traveled a hundred times before. It may be long and boring. Your passengers are asleep. You yawn. You yawn again. Your eyelids feel heavy. Your head may begin to nod. You feel a thump and realize you were veering into another lane. This time you were lucky.

Lack of sleep is creating a major public safety problem. The National Sleep Foundation’s 2009 SLEEP IN AMERICA POLL finds that more than one-half of adults (54%) – potentially 110 million licensed drivers – have driven when drowsy at least once in the past year. Nearly one-third of drivers polled (28%) say that they have nodded off or fallen asleep while driving a vehicle. Most are oblivious to the consequences of drowsy driving. Sleepiness actually impairs your driving in the same manner as alcohol and drugs. Studies show that being awake for 18 hours produces impairment equal to blood alcohol concentration 0.05%. Friends don’t let friends Drive Drowsy!

### DO YOU KNOW?

*What is in the Volunteer Vanpool Participant Agreement? It is on the must read list! Bookkeepers, please remind new riders to read it, not “just” complete the Acceptance page.*



No, this is not spare van row in Pierce Transit’s parking lot. This is just a few of the many vanpools at TPU.



Long commute? Look familiar? Drivers – if you feel sleepy, don’t hesitate to ask a backup volunteer driver to relieve you. Backup drivers – be prepared to help out with the drive.



# Vanpool Update



## Safer Roadways

### Congratulations to 278 new volunteer drivers.

Our Puget Sound roadways are now safer since there are 278 well-skilled defensive drivers out on our roadways and highways. That's how many vanpool participants attended and successfully completed Pierce Transit's vanpool defensive driving and orientation classes in 2009. Thank you for volunteering and making our roads safer. Now, if only we could get all the John Q. Publics to drive as defensively, we'd all be in good shape. Thanks for the great job you do.

## Driver Class Reviews

### What recent class graduates had to say.

Primary volunteer vanpool driver Gerald A. emailed a newly approved volunteer driver in their group, with a cc to us: "Congratulations and thanks John for volunteering as a backup driver." *Note: very nice of him to thank the backup.* He went on to tell us that "Today he drove the van to work with me riding, for his first time...and he will be driving home. He performed excellent and cautiously." He continued to say that John commented to him "how good the Saturday class was" offering congratulations to "Jody and Kim M. for doing such a good job." Kudos all the way around.

Syndie H. wrote "Thank you. It was a very informative class and I felt so relaxed on the way home just putting to good use all that I learned." That's what we like to hear! Put those skills to use immediately.

If you are a rider and want to improve your defensive driving skills and put them to work in your vanpool, just ask your volunteer bookkeeper for the driver application packet, complete it and send it on in. We will review, and then contact you about class.

## How do you spell relief?

### We're talking...bookkeeper relief!

Some lucky former bookkeepers welcomed some time off from quoting fares, collecting monies, and getting those darn miles and days to balance at the end of each month. Congratulations to the 95 vanpool participants who successfully completed our vanpool bookkeeper training class in 2009.

We thank you for stepping up to the plate to help your vanpool keep going; either by filling in for someone who left the group, by relieving a burned-out volunteer bookkeeper, or just by assisting with ridership and mileage record keeping. Can't run a vanpool without this very important person.

## Out with the Old – In with the New

### Time to update vanpool vehicle inventory.

Volunteer primary drivers, please ensure that the **2010 Insurance Card** is in the vanpool vehicle assigned to your group, replacing the laminated 2009 card which is now expired. We mailed the new insurance document on December 17, to all primary volunteer vanpool drivers.

### Coming soon is the updated Volunteer Vanpool Participant Manual.



Please watch for the package being sent to all volunteer vanpool primary drivers.

Once received, please insert the revised pages in the manual and remove and

recycle the 2008 outdated pages.

Returning soon to our vanpool web page: The revised online Vanpool Participant Reference Manual.

# 2009 News

## ORCA replaces PugetPass.



### VANPOOL

**24/7 Emergency**  
**253.381.3762**

**Direct Line**  
**253.983.3377**  
**6:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Fleet Maintenance**  
**235.905.5306**  
**6:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Vanpool Fax**  
**253.984.8227**

### RIDESHARE

**1.888.814.1300**

[RideshareOnline.com](http://RideshareOnline.com)

### PIERCE TRANSIT

**Customer Services**  
**253.581.8000**

**Toll Free**  
**1.800.562.8109**

**TDD Customer Services**  
**253.582.7951**

[piercetransit.org](http://piercetransit.org)

## ORCA and VANPOOL

### One Regional Card for All

January 1, 2010, marked the full public transition to ORCA cards! Puget Passes, as we've all known them, are no longer available for sale to the general public. While working to transition individual customers, we've also been very busy transitioning businesses from Puget Pass and FlexPass to one of two different business accounts: (1) Business Choice – businesses and employers supply their employees and clients with retail-priced "virtual" Puget Passes\* loaded onto ORCA cards or (2) Business Passport – the new version of FlexPass.

In the last few months, more than 425 companies in the Puget Sound Region have entered into Business Passport agreements. Each agreement includes full access to regular transit services on Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Sound Transit (including Sounder), Kitsap Transit and Pierce Transit. 100% vanpool subsidy is included in nearly 400 of those agreements. Other agreements may include vanpool at a lower subsidy, or not at all. Check with your company's employee transportation coordinator or call a Pierce Transit vanpool coordinator to find out if your company has a Passport agreement and if it includes vanpool.

So, what do you need to know right now? If you have a current FlexPass that is valid on Pierce Transit vanpools, you're good until the expiration date. Once your company transitions to ORCA Business Passport, you should receive an ORCA card. If that Passport is valid on Pierce Transit vanpools, simply copy the front and back of the ORCA card – ensure that the serial number and card verification number on the front of the card is legible – and write your name on the copy. Then submit the copy to your volunteer vanpool bookkeeper who will send it on to the assigned Pierce Transit vanpool coordinator. You only need to provide the copy once – and then again only if you receive a new card!

\*Puget Passes are not valid fare payment for Pierce Transit vanpools.

## Adopt-a-Highway

### Have you noticed HWY 512 looks greener?

Have you traveled HWY 512 Eastbound between Pacific and Portland Avenue lately? Did you observe our vanpool team as we volunteered over 30 hours of personal time towards our Adopt-a-Highway project? What did we get out of it? A great feeling! Along with 37 bags of garbage and interesting conversation about the things that littered that strip. Most interesting so far is animal intestines. Well – we think that is what it was. Sorry but that – we left alone! Even rubber gloves could not convince us to pick that up.



Thanks to vanpool coordinator Brenda Davis, who got us involved in the Adopt-a-Highway Program. We look forward to more exciting pick-ups in 2010.