

# VantagePoint

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2011



## Moving Forward

### Pierce Transit Vanpool – The Other Commute Option

Vanpool has never been more popular, or more necessary. Final transit service cuts associated with declining tax revenue and budget shortfalls take effect October 2. The reduction and modifications to Pierce Transit's services are very difficult for many of our passengers and our community. For affected routes with potential transportation alternatives, go to [piercetransit.org/october/local-route-resource.htm](http://piercetransit.org/october/local-route-resource.htm). Commuter vanpools may see an increase in riders with the loss of some fixed route service. We know you will welcome more riders with open arms.



The Vanpool team is not exempt from staffing changes. We recently bid farewell to Vanpool Coordinators Brenda Davis and Jody Guy. Brenda chose to pursue new adventures outside Pierce Transit, and Jody moved on to the Fixed Route Customer Service Department of Pierce Transit. We miss them both, as I am sure many of you will. For now, the other team members are happy to get to know the vanpool groups formerly assigned to Brenda and Jody.

We look forward to the future and success of Pierce Transit Vanpool, as we focus on these specific strategic goals and priorities. Notice that Quality Customer Experience is on the forefront.

### Ensure Quality Customer Experience – Develop New Markets – Add Value to the Community – Develop New Revenue Streams – Value Employee Success

We are here for, and because of, all of you. We remain dedicated to meeting commuter and community needs via Vanpool.

Vantage Point is a publication of Pierce Transit.

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# Celebrate



## Flash from the Past

### Vanpool in the Making

Remember our vanpool vehicles as they appear in this black and white, circa 1999 photo? How about picking up spare van keys at the transit dispatch office or arriving to your van to find cookies during vanpool appreciation days? Assistant Manager Lani Fowlkes may have been your coordinator, and we may have swapped vans offsite, on occasion. These are some of our memories. Some longtime vanpoolers who started with us pre-2000 shared their own memories and secrets to a successful vanpool. Enjoy!

### What I love most about vanpooling

"I like the bonds of friendships that are formed. The vanpool members are kind of like an extended family, where we laugh together, sometimes argue and sometimes shed a tear with. What can be better than that? With some the friendships I have formed I also socialize with many outside of the working environment. And in some cases, I attended their funerals. R.I.P. to Craig and Paul - we miss you."

Mike B, volunteer backup driver

"We've had a couple of summer BBQs that have been amazingly fun. We include our significant others and just have a good time."

Ellen S, volunteer backup driver

"The money, wear and tear I save on my car, and the stories that I get to hear from my riders, especially Jarrett. He always keeps us laughing."

Jeanie J, volunteer primary driver

### Most Memorable Event

"The most memorable vanpool event was after a long commute getting home. As we crossed the congested single Narrows Bridge I was looking out over the Puget Sound when an eagle flying parallel next to the bridge was carrying a salmon in its talons being chased by a seagull."

Jeff D, volunteer backup driver

### Secrets to a successful vanpool

"Respect for others. I think our riders not only respect each other, but we truly care about each other."

Ellen S, volunteer backup driver

"Appreciating your riders by thanking them and buying them an occasional "Starbucks" certainly helps."

Jeanie J, volunteer primary driver

"Communicate, communicate, communicate – the key to running a smooth vanpool. And maintain a great working relationship with your vanpool coordinator. They are a great resource for most any situation that may arise in a vanpool."

Mike B, volunteer backup driver

### One of the funniest things I recall on vanpool

"Don't think I can pick one thing. Our group is a wonderful, fun group of riders. We laugh every day."

Ellen S, volunteer backup driver

"We pass a farm on our commute in. One morning we noticed that a goose, who obviously decided the grass is always greener on the other side, got caught by sticking his head through the fence. One of our riders noticed, so we had to stop. Joel and I got out, crossed the street, and after some maneuvering, were able to free the goose. He waddled away, as we got back in the van, and continued our commute to work."

Jeanie J, volunteer primary driver







## Back to School

### Driver Safety Reminders

Slow down! Speed limits are 20 mph in school zones, unless otherwise posted. Always obey directions from school crossing guards. Automated traffic safety cameras monitor many areas for safety – citations are costly. Be safe, drive safely. Watch for pedestrians, buses, cyclists.

## Envision

### New Driver Monitoring Program

As you know, Pierce Transit has strict standards in the selection and retention of our volunteer vanpool drivers. These processes and our conscientious drivers contribute greatly to the PT Vanpool kudos we receive from our insurance company as “efficient, productive, and a model vanpool program in the state of Washington.”

Our risk management has improved even more with the recent addition of a new driver monitoring service called Envision. Envision notifies us of accidents and citations within a few weeks of when our drivers receive them, so we can promptly follow up with the driver and determine that driver’s eligibility to continue driving for our program.

Safety is our number one priority, and we require all of our drivers to report citations from traffic violations and accidents to the Agency within 48 hours, whether received while driving the van or any other vehicle. Vanpool drivers must also immediately notify us if they are no longer in accordance with our guidelines, or can no longer safely operate the vanpool vehicle.

Kudos to you, PT vanpool drivers! And thank you for the huge part you play in keeping our program one of the safest on the road.

## VANDALISM ON THE RISE

*Stolen catalytic converters, cut fuel lines, and broken windows – always inspect the van before starting your trip! Notify local police if your personal vehicle is compromised, and contact Pierce Transit if the vanpool vehicle was vandalized. We work closely with local authorities.*



## Stop on Red PSA

Listen up at [stopredlightrunning.com](http://stopredlightrunning.com) to hear a powerful Public Service Announcement reminding all drivers that failure to stop on red is life threatening.

# News & Reminders



## VANPOOL

**24/7 Emergency**  
253.381.3762

**Direct Line**  
253.983.3377  
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Fleet Supervision**  
253.905.5306  
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**Vanpool Fax**  
253.984.8227

[Vanpool@piercetransit.org](mailto:Vanpool@piercetransit.org)

## 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 Service**  
253.582.7951

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



## December Plant Closure Fare Update

### Discontinuing Fare Adjustments for Plant Closures

We are no longer offering fare adjustments for December plant closures. Volunteer bookkeepers will charge full monthly fares for December. This eases the burden of calculating the fare adjustments. With incentives and subsidies often designated in advance, this change should also ease the burden on riders and employers needing to reduce benefit elections or subsidies for a month, only to increase them again for the following month. Note: this change does not impact plant closures due to labor actions.

## RideshareOnline Campaign Reminder

### Give Gas Prices a Knockout Punch – Deadline September 18

You still have a few more weeks to carpool or vanpool at least two days/week for a minimum of one week and add those trips to the tracking calendar on [www.RideshareOnline.com](http://www.RideshareOnline.com) before 9/18/11. For eligibility and prize info, visit [RideshareOnline.com/knockout.html](http://RideshareOnline.com/knockout.html). Don't miss the boat, or the van, on this.

## Announcing Wheel Options Fall Campaign

### October 16-29 – Plan your Rideshare Trips and Win Big

Participate in Wheel Options by choosing not to drive alone to work at least twice during October 16-29, log those trips at [wheeloptions.org](http://wheeloptions.org) if you work outside of Pierce County, and <http://www.piercetrips.com/> if you work in Pierce County, and you will be eligible for fantastic prizes including \$2,500 cash!



- Weekend Getaway for two at [The Coeur d'Alene Resort](http://TheCoeurdAleneResort.com) in Idaho (courtesy of WSRO and The Coeur d'Alene Resort): Package includes two nights lodging in a premier lake view room and \$200 dining credit for use in the resort restaurants.
- Weekend Getaway for two at [Ocean's Edge Bed and Breakfast](http://Ocean'sEdgeBedandBreakfast.com) (courtesy of WSRO and Ocean's Edge Bed and Breakfast): Package includes two nights lodging in the Zen Retreat and "Fire on the Beach" package with choice of wine and cheese or S'mores.

Volunteer members of the Washington State Ridesharing Organization (WSRO) have collaborated to bring this exciting promotion to you! Wheel Options promotions support the mission of WSRO by encouraging commuters to reduce their driving, which helps reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and energy consumption.