



the way to **go!**

RideOn
3rd Edition 2009
Vanpool Newsletter



Is Here –

ORCA is smart card technology and stands for One Regional Card for All. Participating agencies include Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Kitsap Transit, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit and the Washington State Ferries. This single card will replace more than 300 types of tickets and passes. Cards, with loaded passes or electronic-purse, provide an easy way to pay for bus, train and ferry trips. These cards are not yet available for paying vanpool fares. However, beginning sometime this fall, Pierce Transit plans to equip a limited number of vanpools with a Portable Fare Transaction Processor, commonly called a PFTP, which will read the card and deduct the correct fare. The transit agencies are also exploring other methods to use the ORCA card for vanpool fares and ridership. A review of the potential alternatives will occur sometime in late 2009/early 2010. For more information, please read the ORCA - Pierce Transit Vanpool Questions & Answers document sent along with this newsletter.

I-90 Bridge Repair

Read on if your commute or personal travel includes the I-90 Homer Hadley floating bridge. From May 4-23, WSDOT will completely close the I-90 express lanes on the floating bridge for major roadwork to repair expansion joints. This funnels five lanes of traffic into three. The worst delays will be during the morning westbound commute (could add an extra 30-40 minutes to travel times) as well as eastbound in the evening.



From July 5-28, the westbound general purpose lanes will be closed 24/7 on the bridge. Again, putting five lanes of heavier volume general-purpose traffic into two lanes. WSDOT estimates delays of one hour or more for morning westbound commuters. Go to <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/homerhadleybridgerepair> for updates on this project.

Spring Cleaning

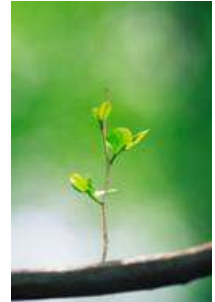


Even the vans need a good spring-cleaning. It is perfect timing with our mileage equalization swaps in full swing. We need your help to make these swaps go quickly and smoothly. If we call you to bring in the van currently assigned to you in exchange for a different van, it is imperative that you return a spotless van to us. This means a clean van inside and out, vacuumed, carpet and seat stains treated, dash and inside of doors and cup holders washed down, clean windows (even inside), all personal items removed, all van inventoried items in place, and a full tank of fuel. Phew! That ought to burn some calories. The group getting your shiny clean van will be most appreciative, as would you when you get an equally clean van in exchange. Thanks.

Springtime Driving Tips

Spring has sprung (finally)! Our Quality Assurance Team has these driving tips to keep in mind as we segue into warmer weather:

- ✓ Things are growing like crazy this time of year, so be conscious of shrubbery and tree limbs that may obscure your view of the road or upcoming intersections.
- ✓ Springing ahead provides more daylight in the evening, but less daylight and cool temperatures in the morning. If you drive during hours of darkness, be **aware that last night's rain could be this morning's black ice.** Use extra caution on curves, corners and overpasses.
- ✓ Wet roads can be just as slick as icy roads. Tires can hydroplane on a layer of water, losing contact with the road and causing the vehicle to skid. Rain lifts oil and other slippery fluids, dripped by passing autos, creating a slick layer on the blacktop. Flooded roads can flood out engines. Slow down on wet roads.
- ✓ As warmer weather approaches, more people will be outdoors. Children will be playing in yards and parks and may be near the street. Watch carefully for them when you are driving. Watch for bicyclists, in-line skaters, and pedestrians using the side of the road for their commute.
- ✓ More motorcyclists and bicyclists will be on the road. Both are smaller and harder to see than cars and sometimes people fail to see them.



Traffic Surprises



Volunteer drivers; remember to report citations and accidents to your Pierce Transit Vanpool Coordinator, even if they occur while operating your personal vehicle. The incident may or may not disqualify you from operating a Pierce Transit vanpool, but we need to know. In the volunteer driver section, item #4 of the Volunteer Vanpool Participant Agreement, the volunteer drivers agree during the term of this Agreement to:

“Observe safe and defensive driving habits and all traffic regulations. This requirement is of utmost importance and is required of all volunteer drivers. Any citation resulting from the operation of the van is the responsibility of the person driving the van at the time of issuance of the citation. All Agency-approved volunteer drivers will report any citation resulting from a traffic violation to the Agency within 48 hours, whether received while driving the van or any other vehicle. The Agency will, at a minimum, conduct annual Motor Vehicle Record checks to determine if a volunteer driver continues to meet the established Volunteer Driver Selection Guidelines. The volunteer driver must immediately notify the Agency when he/she is no longer in accordance with those guidelines or can no longer safely operate the vanpool vehicle.”

Insurance and Vanpool Participant Reference Manual Updates

We mailed new insurance cards to volunteer primary drivers March 19. If you have not yet replaced the old Pierce Transit Self Insurance card with the new laminated card listing WSTIP (Washington State Transit Insurance Pool) as the new agency/company insurance, please do so immediately. The new card's effective dates for WSTIP coverage is 1/1/2009 through 12/31/2009.



We mailed replacement pages for primary drivers to insert into the Vanpool Participant Reference Manual in January. Some of you may still have the manila envelope at home. Check in your manual and if the pages do not read December 2008 at the top, it is a clear indication you have the outdated pages that still need replacing.

Behind the Scenes – Take One

Did you know that Pierce Transit's Vanpool Team cleaned over 1,449 vans last year? The vanpool team manages all aspects of the vanpool program including van inspections and cleaning of all our spare vans. Spare vans are the vehicles used by vanpool groups when their regularly assigned vehicle is here for planned or unplanned service. Spare vehicles are available before noon each day to help make the swapping of vehicles more convenient for you. With the agency wide staffing reduction, we lost our second rideshare specialist last October. We could sure use your help to keep the van swap process running smooth. Please return our spare van in the same condition you received it - with a full tank of gas and garbage free. Remember to double check for any personal items under seats and in the side pockets. We appreciate your assistance! Thank you! *Note: daily van preparations are only one small portion of the rideshare specialist's duties; all other tasks are administrative in nature.*



Light My Fire – NOT!

Our Fleet Supervision Team has these fuel pump reminders:

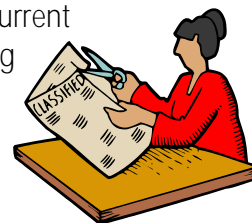
- ✓ Turn off the engine when fueling, just as the signs at the gas stations tell you to. Why? What "gas-ly" things may happen if you do not turn off the engine? Leaving your engine running while fueling the van could start a fire if fumes from the gas being pumped get close enough to a source of ignition. Thankfully, this concern has eased a bit with the new vapor recovery nozzles that *almost* every gas station uses. A running engine can also be risky if the shifter is not completely in park. The vehicle could move hitting the car behind or in front of your car, or even worse, hitting you or another person.
- ✓ Avoid static electricity between your body and the fuel pump by touching a metal object such as **your car's body to discharge any static electricity before picking up the fuel nozzle.** If a spark from static electricity finds any fuel on or in the nozzle, a fire may ignite.



Do you have a vanpool maintenance or vehicle question you would like us to address? Contact a Fleet Supervision Team member. Their contact information is on the last page of each newsletter.

Classifieds: Vanpool Riders Wanted

Has your vanpool lost riders? Are you looking for more riders to join your current group or start a new vanpool? Now, in addition to searching Rideshareonline.com, posting Vanpool Riders Wanted Posters, and advertising at your workplace (if your employer allows this), we are pleased to advertise your current or newly forming vanpool on our website. Give us a call to place your classified ad today!



National Bike Month

The League of American Bicyclists is promoting Bike-to-Work Week during Bike Safety Week May 11-15 and Bike-to-Work Day on Friday, May 15. It is fun, healthy, and green. Visit www.bikeleague.org for the most up-to-date information on National Bike Month. The site offers great tips for commute biking and rules of the road.

Bicycling has been around the block, literally, for some time. A bicycle in 1956 was not something the average person could readily afford. The Smart Lady, pictured right, was sold on a monthly installment plan. By purchasing them in monthly installments, sales were very successful. The Smart Lady later evolved into the staggered pleasure bicycle and the mini bicycle. Perhaps you have one of these beauties in your garage.



2009 Bike to Work Week Commuter Challenge

Pierce County employees, if you bicycle for your commute to worksites in Pierce County two or more days during May 11th - 15th, you can be eligible to win one of these fabulous prizes upon registering at www.piercetrips.com:



• **\$250 REI Gift Card** • **\$100 REI Gift Cards** • **Bike Light sets** • **Bike Tune-ups**

Ride on your own or form a workplace team and encourage your coworkers to join you! Visit PierceTrips.com to learn more about the Pierce County Commuter Challenge and check out the Bike Month Events Calendar. Pierce County, City of Tacoma, MultiCare, and Pierce Transit is sponsoring this event.

Vanpool: Then and Now

Are you aware that Pierce Transit was founded in 1979 when local voters approved a 0.3% sales tax to fund public transportation? Did you know that seven years later, the Board of Directors granted Daphne Tackett (then our one and only Rideshare Coordinator and currently the Vanpool Department Manager) approval to purchase our first seven vans? Pierce Transit Vanpool was born!



Since then, Vanpool has become an integral part of Pierce Transit's **service and has grown** in leaps and bounds. Today, we along with our regional partners boast the largest and most successful public vanpool program in the country. Pierce Transit Vanpool continues to thrive, with more than 300 vans providing service to over 140 employers.

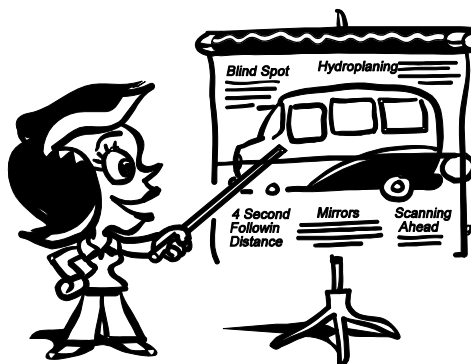
Proudly, in 2008 more than 2,500 Washington state vanpools eliminated more than 20,000 vehicles and 40,000 trips daily, and reduced the annual mileage traveled by single occupant vehicles (SOVs) by over 4.0 million miles annually. Today, vanpools continue to save program participants money, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and help the environment. Go, Pierce Transit! Go, Vanpool!

Upcoming Defensive Driving Orientation and Bookkeeping Classes

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|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| May 6 | Wednesday | 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. |
| May 30 | Saturday | 8 a.m. – Noon |
| June 3 | Wednesday | 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. |
| June 20 | Saturday | 8 a.m. – Noon |
| July 1 | Wednesday | 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. |

Defensive Driving/Orientation classes are listed above. Each class must have a minimum of five Pierce Transit volunteer applicants registered. We generally hold Bookkeeper classes from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. on these Wednesdays and from Noon – 1 p.m. on these Saturdays.

We must receive all applications at least one week prior to the date of the class in order to pre-approve and schedule you for that training.



An optional online vanpool defensive driving refresher course sponsored by the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP) is available to all active volunteer vanpool drivers. Please contact your Pierce Transit Vanpool Coordinator if you are interested.

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 Rideshare hotline toll-free 888.814.1300
 Online Ridematch RideshareOnline.com

Heidi Hunter and Kim Pontsler, Editors. We distribute our newsletter bi-monthly with several issues retained on our web site at piercetransit.org. Thanks for article suggestions and letters to the editor.