

Smart Trips Program 2007 Annual Report

Events and Programs

Smart Trips kicked-off the year promoting the six-month long Commuter Challenge culminating in Smart Trips Month. Many hours were spent recruiting sponsors, brainstorming and executing innovative event ideas, and putting together media coverage and print materials. As a result, Smart Trips received a great deal of positive media attention.

The first Employer Transportation Coordinator Luncheon was held on March 22. More than 125 individuals were invited to join us for lunch to learn more about what the Smart Trips program can offer companies and commuters. Two companies signed on as official Smart Trips employers and have scheduled kick-off events at their worksites.

During Smart Trips Month in April each week focused on different modes of transportation – carpool/vanpool, transit, biking and walking. The month was packed with events bringing awareness to alternative modes and encouraging commuters to give up their solo commutes.

The month included many fun and exciting events such as the Take the Mini to the Max promotion where local companies competed to see who could stuff the most employees into a Mini Cooper. The 2nd Annual Pedal versus Metal Race pitted men (and women) versus machines in a race to complete errands around town. Cyclists set a new event record, completing the race in just 22 minutes. The car crossed the finish line some thirteen minutes later, proving that it is not always faster.

Knoxville Mayor Haslam, Knoxville City Councilman Woodhull, Missy Kane, UT athletes and the KAT General Manager competed in the second annual Mayors' Cup Racewalk, a quarter-mile race in Market Square. Other Smart Trips Month events included Fare Free Tuesday (which also included Bus mentors to help first-time riders at seven KAT bus stop locations), a worksite bus challenge, bike pools to EarthFest and Blount County Air Fest and numerous bike seminars.

April community events such as Blount County Air Fest, Knoxville's EarthFest and the Knox County Spring Health Fair gave Smart Trips the opportunity to showcase our programs and promote the Commuter Challenge.

Smart Trips sponsored two student art contests in the spring: Blount County Air Fest Student Billboard Art Contest for Blount County middle school students and the Smart Trips Student Art Contest for Knox County students K-8. Numerous entries were received illustrating better air quality, healthy living and alternative transportation. All participants received a certificate of achievement. Finalists were displayed at events and the Smart Trips website. The Blount County winner's art work was displayed on a billboard in May.

Smart Trips worked in conjunction with Knoxville Area Transit on the Second Annual National Dump the Pump Day. June 21, commuters were encouraged to try transit free. With help from Smart Trips on marketing and promotional efforts, KAT saw a 35% increase in passenger riders on Dump the Pump Day compared to that same day the previous year.

Beginning in October, “Commuter Bucks” became the new incentive program for Smart Trips participants. Participants who logged 30 alternative commute days, or 60 one-way trips, within a quarter qualify for a \$10 gift card. An eligible one-way commute qualifies as one carpool, vanpool, transit, bike, walk or telework trip to work. Eligible commuters can choose a \$10 gift card to one of the following retailers: Regal Entertainment, Prestige Cleaners, Panera, Tomato Head, Salsaritas or Food City, or a 1 week pass to the Rush Fitness Center. Previously, commuters were eligible for one of five \$25 monthly prizes. The new Commuter Bucks incentive program rewards every commuter who participates regularly.

Smart Trips marked the end of the six-month Commuter Challenge with a finale and premier party October 2 at Downtown Grill and Brewery. Before announcing the grand prize winners, participants ate popcorn and watched the premier of ABC’s new fall show “Carpoolers.” During the Commuter Challenge, Smart Trips gave away more than \$3,200 in prizes to local commuters who gave up the daily solo drive to work. Eligible Commuter Challenge participants used an alternative mode to get to work at least 30 days during the six month challenge. Grand prizes included a weekend for two at Grove Park Inn in Asheville, two cabin rentals in Gatlinburg (courtesy of Patriot Getaways), five iPod Shuffles, and more. The winner of the weekend for two at Grove Park Inn was Shelly Powers, an employee at the UT College of Architecture & Design. Shelly commuted to work by KAT bus 116 out of the 130 days during the Commuter Challenge. During the six-month challenge, participants helped to remove more than 405,000 miles from our roads and saved themselves a total of \$202, 762 in commuting costs!

Smart Trips finished out the year attending benefit fairs at Knox County, City of Knoxville, Maryville College, Goody’s Corporate Offices, and BWXT Y-12

Business Luncheons & Outreach Opportunities

Smart Trips personnel spoke at both the Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership transportation committee meeting and the Blount County Women in Business luncheon.

These events resulted in the creation of new partnerships and opportunities. Smart Trips Month kicked off the Smart Trips Commuter Challenge, a six-month challenge aimed at getting drivers to ditch their solo commutes while giving them a chance to win a grand prize weekend at a luxury resort, weekend cabin rentals, iPod shuffles, and \$50 restaurant gift certificates.

Following these two events, Smart Trips began a series of lunch and learns which focused on educating area businesses about Smart Trips programs, such as the Commuter Challenge, Commuter of the Quarter, and promotion of alternative commute modes.

Throughout the year the lunch and learn series continued and were held at sites such as the Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership, City of Alcoa, TVA, ITT Tech and ImagePoint.

Funding

For the second year in a row, Smart Trips received an Alcoa Foundation grant in the amount of \$5,000. The grant will be used to increase our marketing and outreach efforts in the community during the next year.

Conferences

In September, Smart Trips staff attended the 2007 International Association for Commuter Transportation conference in Seattle, WA. The conference was an opportunity to share best practices and learn new tools for recruiting commuters to participate in incentive-based commute programs.

Statistics

Thanks to the efforts of Smart Trips participants, 2007 saw more than 1 million VMT reduced – the exact figure was 1,016,794. This translates to the removal of 509,879 grams of NOx; 720,469 grams of VOC; 6,429 grams of Particulate Matter and the reduction of more than half a million pounds of CO2 emissions. All of which adds up to a savings of \$95,323.59 or roughly \$270 per commuter.