

Transportation Options



SERVING THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

FALL 2005

New Vans for Valley VanPool

VPSI, Inc., the provider of our Valley VanPool vans, has recently completed the transition to new Ford 15-passenger commuter vans. The Dodge vans previously used are no longer in production and were beyond the normal 3-year replacement schedule. We will be re-installing our Valley VanPool logos on all the vans over the next few weeks.

We continue to work on getting our vanpool subsidy program up and running. The grant has been placed in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and we are awaiting final approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Once that is obtained we can begin providing subsidies of between 10% and 50% of total lease costs, depending on the route miles, for each van. This will bring the costs down to between \$70 and \$100 for all our vans, based on 12 paying passengers, and even less if they have a full complement of 14 passengers.



If your employer is willing to provide pre-tax payment of fares, as allowed by IRS Commute Benefits regulations, you can reduce the cost even more, up to the tax bracket percentage you are paying, and up to a fare of \$105 per month.

Even without these subsidies and tax breaks, vanpooling still costs a fraction of what it costs to drive alone and to park. Plus you get to read, sleep, relax, work, chat or daydream while someone drives you to work. With rising gas prices and dropping vanpool fares we expect to be forming at least 20 new vanpools over the next year or so. Check out our routes on our website: www.valleyvanpool.info and see if one of them works for you. If not, let us know if you want to start a new route and we'll work with you to get one going. And if you are willing to drive - you get to commute for free as well as have the van for personal use evenings or weekends.



Poetry in Motion

Cherriots has joined transit agencies in 15 other US cities by participating in the Poetry in Motion Program that was developed in 1992 by the Poetry Society of American, and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

The Poetry in Motion Program brings the work of local and national poets to transit vehicles by placing poems in the spaces usually reserved for advertisements, making riding the bus a more pleasurable experience. It was inspired by a similar program in the London Underground and, since its founding, the program has expanded across the country, reaching an estimated 15 million people daily.

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Bike Commute Challenge

It was another great year for the Bike Commute Challenge, which is held annually throughout September. The overall statewide goal (set by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance) of 530 participating workplaces was reached and the participating cyclists racked up enough miles to bike to the moon and back...with a detour to Venus.

Our regional totals for Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties are equally positive. We had 241 riders from 20 companies in our region, logging 8793 miles with 2959 trips by bike. Compared to the 2004 challenge we had an additional 24 riders, even though we had 7 fewer companies participating.

This year Mid-Valley Rideshare offered participants a menu of prizes to choose from depending on how many days they participated in the challenge.

In addition, there were also prizes for the top three cyclists with the largest number of miles ridden. Chris Morscheck from Santiam Bike won first place (\$150 gift certificate) with 720 miles; Felix Rodriguez from Santiam Bike won second place (\$100 gift certificate) with 450 miles; and Gordon Albert from the City of Salem took third place (\$50 gift certificate) with 330 miles.

It's also important to recognize team effort, so this year we are introducing new perpetual "Mid-Willamette Valley Challenge" awards to be passed to the winning teams each year. The divisions were broken down into 4 categories and this year's winners are:

1-24 employees

South Salem Cycleworks with 100.0% participation

25 - 99 employees

Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development (Salem) with 26.7% participation

100 - 499 employees

Willamette University with 10.3% participation

500 + employees

City of Salem with 3.0% participation

For the Statewide results of all the participants in the challenge log onto:

www.bikecommutechallenge.com

Regional Results

Category	Average Participation
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Business & Non-Profits 5-24 employees

VanRonzelen, Dayton and Durning, PC	42.9%
The Book Bin	27.3%
Merrill Lynch	6.3%

Business & Non-Profits 25 - 99 employees

Salem Pediatric Clinic	1.7%
Willamette Autogroup	1.7%

Business & Non-Profits 100 - 499 employees

Willamette University	10.3%
Salem-Keizer Transit	0.9%

Business & Non-Profits 500 + employees

Salem Hospital	0.5%
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Public Agencies 25 - 99 employees

OR Department of Land Conservation & Development (Salem)	26.7%
OR Commission on Children & Families	9.7%
OR Department of Energy	7.1%
OR State Library	7.0%
OMHAS	6.1%
OR OSHA Salem Field Office	4.0%
OR Department of Education	3.1%
OR Bridge Delivery Partners	2.4%

Public Agencies 100 - 499 employees

OR Water Resources Dept	11.5%
Salem Main Post Office	2.0%
OR Department of Agriculture	1.0%
OR Employment Department	0.2%

Public Agencies 500 + employees

City of Salem	3.0%
ODOT - Salem South & East Oregon	1.5%
Marion County	0.6%
OR Department of Revenue	0.2%
Salem-Keizer Public Schools	0.0%

Bike Shops 1 - 5 employees

South Salem Cycleworks	100.0%
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Bike Shops 6 - 15 employees

Santiam Bicycle	77.8%
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New MVRs Staff

Mid-Valley Rideshare is pleased to welcome Robin Rolls as the new Transportation Options Planner. Robin brings a broad range of skills in marketing, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and program development. Her expertise comes from her experience as the TDM coordinator at Stanford University and her recent work on the Regional Trip Planner project at ODOT's Public Transit Division.



One of her primary responsibilities at Mid-Valley Rideshare/Cherriots is to provide materials & support for the Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs) throughout the region. The ETCs area a critical link between MVRs and area employers; which include public as well as private organizations. In addition to providing materials and resources about the program to the ETC's, Robin also coordinates our quarterly ETC networking meetings.

Robin will also be working on an elementary school based program designed to assist schools in organizing school pools and walk/bike programs. With new federal law mandating that all school districts have a Wellness policy in place by 2006, this type of program could provide another option for the Salem-Keizer School District.



Another addition to the MVRs team is Michelle Ambrosek. Michelle has been with Cherriots for 3 years and assumed additional responsibility when Mid-Valley Rideshare moved to Cherriots in July. Her experience in office administration (both technical clerical), education, and human services are a real asset to the program.

In addition to the wide variety of responsibilities with the Transportation Development department at Cherriots, she is also responsible for providing ride matching services, assisting with the Emergency Ride Home program and at Mid-Valley Rideshare promotional events.

Poetry in Motion

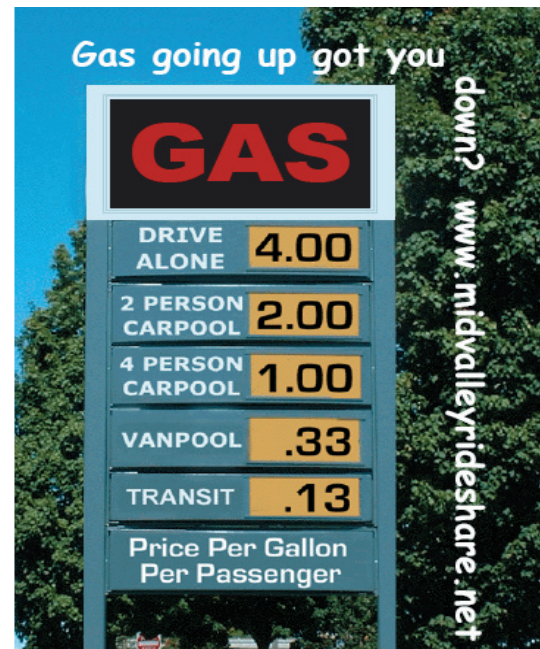
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About 50 people attended the November 4th kick-off event held at the Cherriots facility in Courthouse Square. Guest poets read poems by local, regional, and national poets which have been placed on Cherriots buses in the internal overhead advertising spaces. Some of the other cities participating include Dallas, Los Angeles, Chicago, Portland, and Eugene. During his reading, one of the Poets commented that it occurred to him that the bus on display, loaded with poems, was a "new kind of book" that could also be read. CCTV filmed the event for later viewing at a time to be announced.

Gas Prices Influence Employees Commuting Choices

To save money, 44 percent of employees surveyed would like to telecommute, carpool or take public transportation, but can't. The majority of them would rather telecommute, carpool or take public transportation in the face of rising gas prices, according to a survey* released on August 1st, 2005 by ComPsych Corporation; an employee assistance program provider.

Employees were asked "If gas prices became to high, would it affect your commute to work?" Seventeen percent said that they would look at telecommuting, public transportation or carpooling options. And 44 percent responded that they would like to change commuting habits, but can't.



With so many people open to changing their commuting habits, it's important to make sure they have all the information they need and the opportunity to make smart commuting decisions. Mid-Valley Rideshare can provide you with a wide variety of materials for distribution, as well as help host a transportation options fair for your organization.

*The survey was conducted from June 29 to July 14, 2005, receiving responses from employees of more than 1,000 ComPsych client companies nationwide.



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TravelSmart®

To address the problems of traffic congestion, air pollution, and health concerns, the Oregon Department of Transportation is currently funding three TravelSmart® pilot projects in the cities of Bend, Eugene, and Salem/Keizer.

These projects will help Oregonians to better utilize all of their available travel choices such as public transportation, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking. Partnerships for this project include Salem Keizer Transit, Mid-Valley Rideshare, Lane Transit District, Commuter Solutions, City of Bend and Commute Options of Central Oregon.

For more information about this project please contact Lorna Adkins at (503) 588-2424 or via e-mail at: adkins@cherriots.org

Transportation Options is published quarterly by Mid-Valley Rideshare and is available at no cost.

Mid-Valley Rideshare is a transportation information and referral service sponsored by Salem-Keizer Transit. Commuters throughout the Willamette Valley can call Mid-Valley Rideshare at 503-371-POOL or 1-888-323-POOL, or apply online at www.midvalleyrideshare.net to receive information about carpool, vanpool, transit, and daycare options.

Individuals receive computerized carpool match lists and information on how to join or start a vanpool. Staff are also available to help employers with transportation and parking problems at their work sites. Call for more details.

Bob Ransom, or Robin Rolls
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