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VPSI Tackles Parking Problems

Today, both public and private sector employers are developing new strategies to reduce employee demand for parking. One approach that has produced significant benefits for employers is promoting alternatives to single occupancy vehicle (SOV) commutes like carpooling and vanpooling. These shared ride arrangements eliminate the need for up to fourteen employee parking spaces for each vanpool. The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, MI and The Aerospace Corporation in El Segundo, CA are examples of organizations that realize substantial savings in parking costs by actively promoting and utilizing vanpooling programs.

The University of Michigan (U-M) has offered vanpooling since the late 1970s. The program sought to reduce dependency on scarce energy resources by promoting shared ride arrangements. Eligible faculty and staff were provided fully insured and maintained U-M owned vans to use in making their daily commute in exchange for a monthly participation fee. In 2001, U-M introduced a new incentive to their program: free vanpooling. David Miller, Director of Parking and

Transportation Services at the university noted, "U-M recognized that vanpooling offered a mitigation solution for our growing shortage of parking on campus. If we could find the right mix of incentives to reduce vehicle trips to campus, we were committed to trying the idea." Over the next three years U-M saw vanpool ridership rise from 62 to 117 employees.

In late 2003, U-M partnered with the Michigan Department of Transportation's MichiVan Program, a comprehensive vanpool service available



***A Vanpool Program of Only Ten
Vehicles Can Reduce Parking
Requirements by Over 100 Spaces***

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VPSI Subsidiary in Ireland Launches Commuter Center

Vipre - Ireland, a subsidiary of VPSI, Inc., recently opened a new "commuter center" to serve both the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and the Temple Street Children's Hospital in Dublin, Ireland. The Travelways Commuter Center will implement the hospital's employee transportation plan, known as a *mobility management plan* in Ireland, by providing an on-site facility that brokers a wide range of employee transportation services to the workforce in an effort to reduce traffic congestion around the hospitals and develop sustainable transportation practices as they merge and expand.

By the end of this decade, Dublin will have a major new acute adult and children's hospital arising from the combined facilities of the two institutions. The combined Mater and Children's Hospital will cost approximately €340 million to build, making it the largest public health project in Ireland's National Development Plan.

Ms. Una McGrath will run the Vipre-managed Travelways Commuter Center, serving the travel needs of over 4,000 hospital staff and visitors daily. "The challenge of undertaking a major construction project within a heavily developed urban site while simultaneously ensuring the existing hospital facilities can continue to function is exceptional," said Ms. McGrath. Travelways will offer a range of services to promote alternative

travel choices for staff, visitors, fleet, deliveries and contractors accessing the hospitals. These include carpooling and van-pooling programs, information



about walking and cycling routes, public transportation ticketing and promotion, car parking demand management and lobbying and collaborating with local transportation authorities. Travelways will soon launch a website to promote these services.

Further information on the Mater & Children's Hospital project can be found at www.mchd.ie or by visiting the Vipre website at www.vipre.ie.

VP of Fleet and Risk Management Nominated for 2005 Fleet Manager Award

Steven Pederson, Vice President, Fleet and Risk Management, for VPSI, is among eighteen nominees competing for Automotive Fleet's prestigious 2005 Fleet Manager Award. Pederson, who has been with VPSI for nearly 25 years, oversees the extensive modification of approximately 70 percent of VPSI's vanpool vehicles, manages the commercial insurance program, and leads the company's risk management and loss prevention efforts. Pederson and other outstanding fleet professionals from companies like Eli Lilly, Honeywell, Pfizer, and USAA are featured in the March issue of Automotive Fleet. After narrowing the list to three finalists, Automotive Fleet will announce the 2005 award winner on April 10th at the National Association of

Fleet Administrators - Fleet Management Institute Conference in Dallas, Texas.



**Steve Pederson, Vice President,
Fleet and Risk Management**

Approaching The Million Mile Club

Robert Stewart, a native of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, received his first vanpool from VPSI in April of 1983. Twenty-two years later, Mr. Stewart is still at it, making the 130 mile round trip commute to and from the CIA's headquarters in McLean, VA. Much has changed during the past two decades and Bob's



Bob Stewart Has Been Vanpooling With VPSI Since 1983

had a front row (drivers) seat in observing the steady march of progress. While traffic congestion around the nation's capital worsens, Bob's travel time has actually decreased with the opening of two major highways, the Dulles Greenway and Dulles Toll Road, and the availability of High Occupancy Vehicle lanes en route to the office. "Twenty-three years ago there were three stoplights from my home to work, now, if I was using the same route, there would be about 45," observed Stewart.

Like most people, Bob and his wife initially gravitated towards vanpooling as a means of saving money and reducing the wear and tear 3,000 commuting miles per month would inflict upon their personal vehicles. "We wouldn't have our 'toys' at home [two sparingly used, mint condition cars] if we didn't vanpool. My vehicles don't move

from Monday through Friday," Stewart said.

Even taking big savings into consideration, there must be something else that has inspired Bob to commute over three quarters of a million miles with fourteen other people? "I've made lots of friends," Stewart remarked. "80% of the riders on my van are people I grew up with. I've made lots on new friends too!"

Bob plans on retiring in another four years, or 131,040 miles, bringing him very close to one million commuting miles traveled with VPSI. Bob's total miles traveled will be roughly equivalent to making two round trips to the moon. Like Cal Ripken's Major League Baseball consecutive games played record, Bob has set a standard which may be difficult to eclipse.

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to Michigan residents operated by VPSI, Inc. Through this program U-M vanpoolers were provided with vans owned, maintained, insured, and managed by VPSI. The transition to a VPSI-managed program produced a considerable cost savings to U-M. A year-and-a-half later, the U-M vanpool program has more than doubled to 280 participants.

For over 25 years, The Aerospace Corporation operated

a vanpool program to optimize the efficiency of their existing parking infrastructure investment. Five and a half years ago, the company decided to transition their program over to VPSI, outsourcing the ongoing management of their vanpool program to a vendor specializing in employee transportation management. Today, VPSI provides 37 vanpools to The Aerospace Corporation reducing

demand for employee parking by approximately 370 spaces.

Ms. Jean Ghianuly, Senior Employee Transportation Coordinator at The Aerospace Corporation observed, "With the cost of building and managing additional parking facilities in El Segundo being so high, an actively promoted vanpool program for our employees was a logical alternative to adding parking."



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Transportation News That Moves You

In January the American Automobile Association (AAA) announced that the average cost of driving a new passenger car in 2004 was 56.2 cents per mile or \$8,431 for the typical American motorist. Most of us were well aware of rising fuel prices, with the average American spending nearly \$1,000 to gas up their vehicle last year, but who would have thought we'd look back fondly at 2004's fuel prices and categorize them as reasonable?

It's time to start waxing nostalgic. On March 16th, oil traders, expressing concerns about OPEC's ability to sustain

promises of increased output, bid up crude oil prices to a 22 year high of \$56.46 per barrel. As a result the U.S. government now expects gasoline prices to hit new record highs of around \$2.15 per gallon this spring.

While gasoline prices are rising, those of us fortunate enough to receive a tax-free commuter choice transportation allowance from our employers have reason to celebrate. Effective January 1st, the maximum tax-free value of the popular benefit, which can be given to employees that vanpool or use transit, was increased to \$105 per month.

Commuter Choice can also be used by employees who travel to work using commuter rail. What many don't know is that looming budget cuts for Amtrak could impact the operations at several commuter rail providers especially in the busy northeast corridor of the country. "They talk about shutting Amtrak, but the hurt would be on the commuter side," Virginia Railway Express chief executive Dale Zehner told The Wall Street Journal.

***If you have a story idea
you'd like to contribute,
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