



# Commuter CHRONICLE



**News for Smart Commuters**

**Summer 2008**

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## *VPSI Grows 13.7% in First Six Months of Year*

### **High Fuel Prices Drive Commuters to Seek Economical Mode of Transportation**

Leading the effort to find less expensive methods of transportation for commuters, the nation's largest vanpool company, VPSI, Inc., said today the number of vanpools it operates expanded by 13.7% in the first six months of 2008.

"We experienced robust growth across the nation with the largest expansion in Southern California," said Jeff Henning, president and chief executive of VPSI Inc. "This included over 150 additional vanpools serving the Los Angeles area and 76 in San Diego. We are seeing increased demand for new vanpools in virtually every region of the country."

Many commuters are struggling to manage the rapidly escalating cost of transportation in their household budgets, and vanpooling provides a welcome relief from the cost of commuting to and from work.



"VPSI vanpools average more than 150 passenger-miles per gallon and the typical vanpooler pays less than 40¢ per gallon," according to Steve Pederson, VPSI's Vice President, Fleet and Risk Management. "I'm delighted we are able to provide a safe, comfortable and economical mode of transportation for commuters."

In addition to the economic rationale for embracing vanpools, an increased awareness of and appreciation for being good stewards of the environment are also contributing factors to VPSI's impressive growth.

"Vanpooling reduces the number of vehicles on the road, along with their emissions" stated Henning. "In fact, we are proud to note that in 2007, VPSI's vans were responsible for eliminating nearly 6.9 million vehicle commuting trips, conserving more than 26 million gallons of fuel and eliminating more than 275,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the atmosphere."



*Jeff Henning*

## VPSI Takes Safety Seriously

### By Andy Bawden

Since coming to VPSI in 2002, I set a goal to increase vanpooling safety awareness and reduce the risk of accidents. I believe we have a responsibility to promote customer safety awareness and give our drivers opportunities to share their experiences on the road.



Andy Bawden doesn't mess around when it comes to safety

Good driving skills are habits we have learned. Good habits are reinforced by repetition and rewarded by rider confidence and safe commutes.

I like to compare safety to comfort. If you and your riders feel comfortable while riding the van, it is probably being safely driven. On the other hand if stops and starts are abrupt, braking is frequent, or corners are taken with too much speed, riders become uncomfortable and may not feel safe.

Driver Safety Meetings (DSMs) are scheduled at the request of VPSI Office Managers working with their customers and drivers. The meetings are an opportunity for VPSI staff and vanpool drivers to meet with me and discuss safety. I use short video clips to highlight good and bad driving



Examples of VPSI's safety materials

behaviors and utilize a workshop type format to get everyone involved. I also use a workbook to complement the video material.

The meetings are fun. I involve the drivers by asking them to describe situations they experience on the van.

Contact your VPSI representative at 800-VAN-RIDE to schedule a DSM for your vanpool group.

Andy Bawden is the Loss Prevention and Vanpool Safety Manager at VPSI. He conducts DSMs throughout the country for VPSI customers.

## AAA Releases Study Results on 2008 Driving Costs

AAA recently released their 2008 edition of *Your Driving Costs*, a PDF workbook to help commuters calculate how much they spend annually on fuel, maintenance, tires, insurance, license, registration and taxes, and depreciation and financing.

The methodology for determining driving costs in this edition are comparable to the 2007 version. The process used to estimate annual driving costs incorporates standardized criteria designed to model the average AAA member's use of a vehicle for personal transportation over five years and 75,000 miles of ownership. The use of standardized criteria ensures AAA's estimates are consistent when comparing driving costs of different vehicle makes and models.

Actual driving costs will vary based on individual driving habits, location, operating conditions and other factors. Estimates are provided to help consumers make informed vehicle purchase decisions and budget

for annual automotive expenses.

Driving costs in each category are based on average costs for five top-selling 2007 models selected by AAA. By size category, they are:

- **Small sedan** - Chevrolet Cobalt, Ford Focus, Honda Civic, Nissan Sentra and Toyota Corolla.
- **Medium sedan** - Chevrolet Impala, Ford Fusion, Honda Accord, Nissan Altima and Toyota Camry.
- **Large sedan** - Buick Lucerne,

Chrysler 300, Ford Five Hundred, Nissan Maxima and Toyota Avalon.

AAA's analysis covers vehicles equipped with standard and optional equipment including automatic transmission, air conditioning, power steering, antilock brakes and cruise control, to name a few.

To calculate your driving costs, you can download the PDF worksheet at [www.aaanewsroom.net/Assets/Files/200844921220.DrivingCosts2008.pdf](http://www.aaanewsroom.net/Assets/Files/200844921220.DrivingCosts2008.pdf).

### AAA Average Costs per Mile

Miles per year	10,000	15,000	20,000
<b>small sedan</b>	55.1 cents	42.1 cents	35.7 cents
<b>medium sedan</b>	71.9 cents	55.2 cents	46.9 cents
<b>large sedan</b>	85.8 cents	65.1 cents	54.8 cents
<b>composite average</b>	71.0 cents	54.1 cents	45.8 cents

## VPSI Opens Three New Offices

### Vanpooling Revs up in El Paso, Tucson and Colorado

As gas prices continue to climb, residents in three locations now have a new commuting option that will lighten the load on their wallets and the help environment.

The El Paso Vanpool Program office was the first new VPSI branch to open in 2008. The office was opened in partnership with El Paso County in order to provide a convenient solution for commuters and companies looking for relief from high gas prices.

The El Paso office is located at 4050 Rio Bravo Drive in El Paso, Texas. Judith Flood is the VPSI project manager.

“A VPSI vanpool is a convenient solution for commuters and companies who want to save money and have a positive environmental impact through organized ride sharing,” said Ms. Flood.

“We are excited to support the growing vanpool population in Texas with the launch of the El Paso County Vanpool Program.” VPSI now operates 464 vanpools in Texas, with additional branches in the Houston, and Dallas/ Ft. Worth areas.

“The timing could not be better

for the introduction of a vanpool service to our residents,” said Bob Geyer, Rural Transit Manager for El Paso County. “We are excited to partner with VPSI to bring El Pasoans a 30 day, pay-as-you-go vanpool program and we encourage people to consider the advantages of sharing a ride.”

El Paso County provides some creative incentives to encourage commuters to take advantage of vanpooling, including a 50 percent subsidy for the monthly vanpool lease and fuel and also an emergency ride home program in case a passenger must deviate from the regular ride schedule.

To meet the growing demand in southern Arizona, VPSI has opened an office in the heart of Tucson. This office, managed by Keith Jones, services all of southern Arizona including Pima, Pinal and Cochise counties. Both Pima and Pinal counties offer generous subsidies to groups that vanpool to their respective counties.

As new companies relocate in outlying areas of Arizona, VPSI is there to meet their transportation needs. Employers in these areas are often faced with recruitment and retention



issues and VPSI is there to offer vanpooling as a solution.

Finally, in order to better serve a rapidly growing customer base in Colorado, and in partnership with Pueblo Transit, VPSI recently opened a new office in Pueblo. This office will serve the entire state with vans as far east as Burlington and as far northwest as Breckenridge. Nick Sands has been hired as manager to oversee the customer service and marketing duties for this project.

## Commuter Chronicle to Become e-Newsletter

In our continuing efforts to reduce waste, pollution and save natural resources, VPSI has decided to transition the Commuter Chronicle to become a paperless e-newsletter, available as a downloadable PDF file from our website at [www.VPSIINC.com](http://www.VPSIINC.com).

For the past few years, we've released the newsletter in two formats each quarter. One was a printed version, mailed to all of our approved vanpool drivers. For the second version, we simply e-mailed a link to the PDF file on our website.

Now, instead of wasting paper by printing the hard copies, we plan to

expand our e-subscriptions to include everyone who formerly received the printed copies.

This will be the last issue we have mass printed. Starting with the fall 2008 issue, subscribers will simply receive an e-mail directing them to the PDF file hosted on our website. A limited supply of newsletters will still be printed, for customers without internet access. If you would like to continue receiving a printed copy of each issue, please call 248-597-3506.

Of course, all of our back issues will still be available for free download. And anyone wanting to sign up for a free



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Note: If you've already been getting the newsletter via e-mail notification, you won't notice any changes.



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***Be sure to check out VPSI's  
blog, Pooling Resources, at  
www.pooling-resources.com***

## ***Transportation News That Moves You***

### **Hybrid Owners Get New Service Options**

When it comes to finding automotive service, hybrid vehicle owners no longer have to look very far. BFS Retail & Commercial Operations, LLC (BFRC), which owns and operates the largest number of company-owned automotive retail generalist stores in the world, has begun servicing hybrid vehicles at select Firestone Complete Auto Care, Tires Plus, ExpertTire and Wheel Works locations.

“Almost 40 percent of our stores are now approved to service hybrids,” said Darrell Rowe, Manager of Education & Development for BFRC. “We’re committed to providing our store teammates with the most current training and information available to ensure that our customers have a

positive experience every time they visit one of our locations. In order to service hybrid vehicles, a store must complete a comprehensive training program.”

At BFRC Protecting the environment is a top priority. BFRC stores were the first in the automotive repair industry to commit to using steel wheel weights instead of traditional lead wheel weights. Throughout the country, BFRC store locations recycle tires, car batteries, oil and oil filters, antifreeze, air conditioning refrigerant and many other automotive products. Community members also have the opportunity to bring used oil and automotive batteries from do-it-yourself (DIY) projects to BFRC store locations for proper recycling at no cost to the consumer.

### **House Passes Transport Bill**

As reported by Sustainable Business.com, the US House of Representatives passed a bill encouraging energy conservation through the use of public transportation. H.R. 6052, the Saving Energy through Public Transportation Act of 2008, passed the House by a vote of 322 to 98.

H.R. 6052 provides support to states and public transportation agencies and also increases incentives for commuters to choose transit options.

H.R. 6052 also extends the Federal transit pass benefits program to require that all Federal agencies offer transit passes to Federal employees throughout the United States. Current law requires that all Federal agencies within the National Capital Region implement a transit pass fringe benefits program and offer employees transit passes.