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Schlumberger Vanpooler Puts New Spin on Commuting

It is nearly dawn and another steamy summer morning in Houston greets Peter Wang as he pedals his Schwinn mountain bike 24 miles to work. With the sun peeking over the horizon, he rides along the shoulder of a road past a wooded area, tall oaks providing the stage from which birds sing and coax him along. This is certainly not your typical morning commute and Peter would have it no other way.

The Chicago native has lived and worked in the Houston area for over twenty years. An experienced Geophysicist, now in his fifth year at Schlumberger, the world's largest oilfield services company, Peter's daily round trip commute is 48 miles and takes about an hour each way when traveling by car.

Towards the end of 2001, after growing tired of the daily hassles associated with driving to work and racking up thousands of commuting miles on his car, Peter decided to start up one of the first vanpools at Schlumberger. Instead of using his VPSI-provided vanpool in a traditional manner, he decided to use a "multi-modal" approach. Three days a week, he bikes to work in the mornings, avoiding the searing Houston heat, and travels home in the air conditioned comforts of his



vanpool in the evenings. Peter's bike fits neatly behind the rear seats of the nine passenger Ford E-150 vanpool vehicle.

As a result of his cycling routine, Peter notices significant health benefits from his rides to work. "I was looking for more fitness activities," he explains. Peter was interested in optimizing his health and decided to take his fitness to a new level. "For not much additional commuting time, I get an almost two hour workout. The road is my health club."

And what do his colleagues in the vanpool think of Peter's unusual commuting habits? He has developed great relationships with his fellow vanpoolers, noting, "We all get along well on our vanpool. We have excellent social relationships. When I decided to start biking to work, they thought I was crazy at first. But they've gotten quite used to it."

See *Peter Wang*,
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More Than 590,000 Accident Free Vanpool Miles

The Foster Wheeler vanpool, travelling from Wyckoff to Clinton New Jersey, has called it quits. Their mainstay, Walter Van Dyke, a vanpooler for more than 18 years, piloted his van one last time on June 30.

"They [VPSI] did it all for us," said Walt. "The good service, the convenience and the outstanding benefits of vanpooling: I'm only sorry to leave my group and sincerely hope that they will be able to replace me and continue to vanpool."

Walt continued to reflect on his van over the years. He thought about the two "arguments" they had as a group which centered on the time that everyone was to meet

to go to work and the speed at which the van was to be driven. The first was quickly resolved by vote and they installed a meeting time and an amount of time to wait. The second concerned a driver's alleged "lead foot". The driver was shown the error of his ways; he apologized and became a consistent cautious driver thereafter. The other stuff, Walt said was just the reality of life: sometimes the snoring was too loud and sometimes, when the highway was clogged, they would try an alternate route which invariably took longer to get home. By and large it was really a good deal. He estimated that they probably had almost 40 riders of which half became drivers, at one time or another. "That's what made it so easy," said Walt, "the 130 mile commute became a non-factor."

Walt's group traveled 33,000 miles a year and never suffered an accident or incident. He jokingly attributes this good fortune to the fact that there were always several alternating drivers and extra sets of eyes on the road and multiple sets of feet to apply to the brake. The fact that the van was routinely serviced

and mechanical issues were quickly resolved also provided a comfort in knowing that we were traveling in a safe and sound vehicle."

It's all a blur now...the rain, the snow, good days and bad. They went by just too fast for Walt. He'll miss the group, the banter and the camaraderie; and they'll miss him.

Walt left us with one last thought. "Ya know," he said, "I've traveled many times around the world in my vanpool." When asked what he meant Walt said that the more than 590,000 miles he's racked up over the past 18 years is at least equal to twenty complete trips around the equator.



From left: Rich Docherty, Walter Van Dyke, Yen Huie and Alex Paulescu
Missing are: Art Ley and James Chou

Gas Prices Cause Employees to Consider Alternate Commuting Options

A recent article printed in WorkSpan Weekly suggests "the majority of employees would rather telecommute, carpool or take public transportation in lieu of rising gas prices."

According to a survey by ComPsych Corp., a provider for employee assistance programs, behavioral health, work-life, wellness

and crisis intervention services, 16% said they would change the way they commute if gas prices continued to rise.

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

BWC Registration Deadline Approaches

It's not too late for Fortune 500 employers to get on the list! On October 19, 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Transportation will unveil the 2005 list of Best Workplaces for Commuters from the Fortune 500 Companies.

As long as your company is amongst the Fortune magazine's 2005 Fortune 500 companies and satisfies Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) program criteria, you can take a place within this coveted listing. To learn if your company qualifies, visit the BWC website at www.bwc.gov or call your local VPSI representative at 1-800 VAN-RIDE. Don't delay as BWC applications must be submitted to the EPA by the first week of September.

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Communication is Key at Compuware Corporation

Employees of Compuware Corporation were introduced to the VPSI administered MichiVan Commuter Vanpool Program (sponsored by the Michigan Department of Transportation) after the company decided to relocate its corporate headquarters to downtown Detroit nearly three years ago. Compuware's Commuter Assistance Center (CAC), also



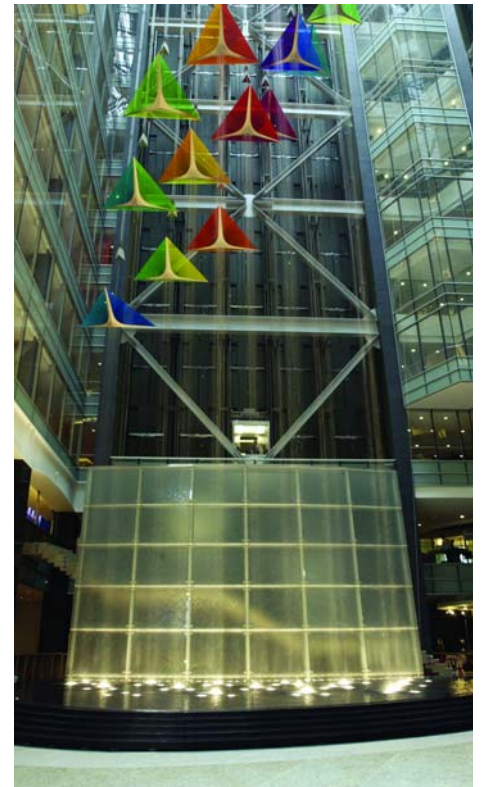
Compuware Corporation's Corporate Headquarters in Detroit, Michigan. (Right) Interior of Compuware Building

administered by VPSI, is charged with reducing single occupant vehicle trips to the headquarters by forming carpools, vanpools and encouraging bus ridership.

"Employees who vanpool understand the cost savings and benefits of a stress-free commute in an area where peak travel time congestion continues to grow," said Cecilia Cannon, CAC Manager. Cannon added that in May 2005, "employee commitment to the MichiVan Program was acutely evident when they helped support the long-term viability of the federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Program, a key funding source of the MichiVan Program. Employees called U.S. Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow and urged them to oppose an amendment that would reduce CMAQ program funding. The amendment was defeated and Compuware employees were pleased they made a difference."

It took all of two minutes to make the call or send the e-mail.

Communication of a successful vanpool program to your employer, program sponsors or funding agencies, and sharing your vanpool experience are just a few ways to get involved.



Peter Wang (continued from Page 1)

Currently, about 10% of Schlumberger's employees commute using VPSI vanpools. "That's a good start," Peter explains, "but our facilities managers thinks we can get it up to 30%!" Many of the company's employees are still not familiar with vanpooling, but Schlumberger is looking for ways to reduce employee trip miles. In addition to being concerned with good corporate citizenship, Schlumberger is located in an Ozone Non-Compliance area. They realize they can't force their employees to vanpool, but do as much as can be

expected to encourage it by offering preferential parking and a \$55 per month vanpool benefit.

When asked if he's experienced any difficulties or frustrations from vanpooling, Peter responds, "There's no downside I've ever found! If my schedule is irregular, I can just drive. I still have a car. I just don't drive it very much, although I do have to start it every once in a while."

Peter has definitely found many benefits to biking to work. It's healthy, environmentally sound, cost efficient and fun. For the most part, he just enjoys the ride. "If the

cars are stopped, I'm going by in the bike lane or shoulder. That's a good feeling!"

While biking to and from work is a great way to improve your health, Peter warns that "People need more training before they just go out and do it." Training courses and information can be found from a variety of sources including the League of American Bicyclists (bikeleague.org). If you are just starting an exercise program, are over 40 or have any health concerns, see your doctor first.



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Transportation News That Moves You

New Ford Hybrid Earns Sierra Club Kudos

While the Sierra Club has historically been a staunch critic of automakers, Ford Motor Company earned rare praise from the San Francisco-based environmental group with the release of its second hybrid vehicle, the new Mercury Mariner Hybrid. The Sierra Club will market the new hybrid Mercury SUV to its members and will offer them the opportunity to test drive the vehicle at their annual summit in September. The Mariner Hybrid, which gets about 33 miles per gallon in the city and 29 on the highway, will be sold primarily through the Mercury website, www.mercuryvehicles.com.

Acela Express Back on Track

Amtrak resumed limited service of their beleaguered high speed train, the Acela Express, nearly three months after a spate of problems curtailed the much heralded service. Only two daily round trips between Washington and New York City were run, far fewer than the fifteen per day scheduled before brake problems abruptly halted service in April. Amtrak has an additional 18 Acela trains that will require new braking systems before it can ramp service back up to previous frequencies. The passenger railroad has pledged to add express service during the coming months though no word was given about resuming Acela service to Boston.

William Crosbie, Amtrak's Senior Vice President, acknowledged the Acela service cuts had cost Amtrak about \$1 million per week in lost revenue. However, Crosbie said as many as 95% of northeast corridor passengers had used older, slower Amtrak trains during the Acela service suspension. "Acela Express is enormously popular with our passengers, and we're very glad to begin rolling these trains back into service this week," Crosbie noted.

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you'd like to contribute,
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