

VantagePoint

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2011

INTRODUCING CHRIS BARRY!

Vanpool is pleased to announce the addition of Christine Barry to the Pierce Transit Vanpool Coordinator team!



Chris began working at Pierce Transit in October 2010 in Customer Services. Her enthusiastic approach was immediately recognized by all who came in contact with Chris. As an employee, Chris is praised for her flexibility and great sense of logic. She promotes camaraderie and brings a strong work ethic to whatever she does.

The October 2011 Pierce Transit service reductions and layoffs affected Vanpool in that we lost two coordinators. Fortunately, one got promoted to head Customer Services, and the second initiated a voluntary separation. Vanpool was able to fill one of those positions. So now we just have to hope that Chris can do the work of two people! She probably can...

Outside work, Chris enjoys many outdoor activities. She hikes, jogs, snowshoes, kayaks, cycles and plays golf – wow! Welcome, Chris!

IRS COMMUTER BENEFITS SET TO CHANGE

Heads up! The transit tax benefit of \$230/month that was set up under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is set to expire at the end of 2011. The transit tax benefit will revert to \$125 in 2012. Check out the [IRS website](#) for more info.

Those interested in or affected by this issue may wish to contact one of the commuter groups reviewing this decision. Such groups include the [Association for Commuter Transportation](#) (ACT) and [Commuter Benefits Work for Us](#).

PARK & RIDE CLOSURES

Please note these park & ride lots will close effective January 1, 2012:

- Walt's Fine Foods – 9021 Key Peninsula Highway, Key Center
- Elim Evangelical Free Church – 9421 128th St. E, Puyallup
- Holy Disciples Church – 10425 187th St E, Puyallup



Vantage Point is a publication of Pierce Transit.

EDITORS: **Heidi Hunter** hhunter@piercettransit.org | **Kim Pontsler** kpontsler@piercettransit.org | **Lynne Cunningham** lcunningham@piercettransit.org Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Pierce Transit is scheduled to review vanpool fares in 2012.

Vanpool fares are designed to recover all direct operating and administrative costs and a portion of direct overhead costs. We review fares annually, and historically, fare increases occur every two years. The last vanpool fare increase was in 2010.

The fare review process involves comparing cost recovery to established standards, and takes into account fluctuations in fuel, insurance, and other expenses. It's our policy to control costs and expenses of the program. Changes to vanpool fares may be implemented if needed to maintain our established standards.

MY VAN IS FULL...OR IS IT?

Comfort is important, but is not the bottom line.

Wouldn't it be great to limit a vanpool group to just a few riders, so every rider could have lots of room and really spread out? Well, yes . . . and no.

Sure, fewer riders make for a comfy ride. However, as providers of public transportation and good stewards of taxpayer money, we work hard to fill our vans. Pierce Transit Vanpool requires groups to accept new participants until the group has two fewer riders than seatbelts available on the van. For example:

- 7-passenger van is considered full with five total riders.
- 8-passenger van is considered full with six total riders.
- 12-passenger van is considered full with ten total riders.
- 15-passenger van is considered full with thirteen total riders.

A 12-passenger van with nine total riders isn't quite full. The group must accept one more rider, bringing the total to ten...THEN you're full.

Thanks for helping us fill our vans, so we can serve as many commuters as possible and be good stewards of public money.

And remember...adding monthly riders to a vanpool lowers everyone's fare!



COMMUTING NEWS

PRIZEWINNERS Give Gas Prices a Knockout Punch!



**Pierce Transit vanpoolers
clean up!**

Did you participate in the Summer 2011 RideshareOnline.com Promotion? Anyone who carpooled or vanpooled at least twice a week between August 15 and September 18, and added those trips to the tracking calendar in RideshareOnline.com was included in the prize drawing.

We are thrilled to announce that two of the six grand prize winners are PT vanpoolers!

Brian Dammel was excited to win the Davenport Hotel package including two nights' stay in a suite, a \$100 spa credit, a \$100 dining credit, valet parking, a beautiful flower arrangement, a bottle of champagne upon arrival, plus a \$50 gas card to get there. Brian works for Pierce County Utilities and commutes from Puyallup to University Place.



Laura Pickens is the proud winner of an iPad2! Laura works for AT&T Mobility, and commutes from Tacoma to Bothell.



Congrats to Brian and Laura, and many thanks to all who participated.



PT VANPOOL SERVES MANY EMPLOYERS

Powered by smart commuters...like you!

Pierce Transit serves 291 active vanpool groups. Ever wondered where they all go???

A whopping 33% of our vanpoolers (831 out of 2,500) commute to a Boeing worksite. Talk about a "power employer" that encourages its employees to use smart commute options!

Here's just a sampling of other awesome Puget Sound employers and the number of their smart commuter employees served by Pierce Transit vanpools:

City of Tacoma	291	Costco-Issaquah	37
US Navy-Bremerton.....	285	Microsoft-Redmond	23
US Army-JBLM.....	171	Simpson-Tacoma	21
Pierce County.....	116	Group Health-Tukwila	21
US Homeland Security-SeaTac.....	97	US Dept of Interior-Mt Rainier	20
State Farm-DuPont	77	Propel-Tacoma.....	18
WA State-Olympia.....	52	Multicare-Tacoma	17
Intel-DuPont	50	Symetra-Bellevue	11
US Veteran's Admin.-Seattle & American Lake... 49		Expedia-Bellevue	10
Weyerhaeuser-Federal Way	47	DaVita-Tacoma	4
Kenworth-Renton	45	Honeywell-Tacoma	4

Of course, vanpooling is just one of many smart (and green) commute options. Smart commuters also:

- Ride the bus
- Carpool
- Ride the train
- Bike to work
- Walk to work
- Take a ferry or water taxi
- Work a compressed work week
- Telework

Think of how congested our freeways would be without Pierce Transit vanpoolers!

HOLIDAYS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Including a couple you might not have thought of...

Daylight saving time ends	November 6
Veterans Day – Pierce Transit administrative offices closed.....	November 11
Drowsy Driving Prevention Week – get info here!	November 6-12
World Kindness Week – take it to the streets as a kind, courteous driver!	November 7-13
Thanksgiving – Pierce Transit administrative offices closed.....	November 24
Day after Thanksgiving – Pierce Transit administrative offices closed	November 25
Day after Christmas – Pierce Transit administrative offices closed	December 26



VANPOOL

24/7 Emergency
253.381.3762

Direct Line
253.983.3377
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Fleet Supervision
253.905.5306
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Vanpool Fax
253.984.8227

Vanpool@piercetransit.org

RIDESHARE

1.888.814.1300
RideshareOnline.com

PIERCE TRANSIT

Customer Services
253.581.8000

Toll Free
1.800.562.8109

TDD Customer Service
253.582.7951

Piercetransit.org



Fall Back!

Daylight saving time ends
Sunday, November 6 at 2 a.m.

Remember to set your clocks.

HOLIDAY PARKING

Remember to move your van if you do not park at home or TDS.

If your van is not in operation during the holidays due to time off or a plant closure, please be sure to park your van in an approved overnight location. Vans that are not normally parked at a volunteer vanpool driver's home must relocate to a vanpool driver's home during the holiday period. Please let us know where the van will be parked if your overnight parking location changes.

Note: Vanpools approved to park at the Tacoma Dome Station (TDS) may remain at TDS. We will provide those van numbers to TDS Security so they do not issue parking citations.

SEASONAL DRIVING TIPS

Practice these safe-driving tips to stay safe on the road this fall and winter.

- Keep the van clear of snow and ice. Remove snow from the lights, windows, roof and hood.
- When entering the vehicle, kick as much snow off your feet as possible. Snow tracked inside the vehicle can contribute to fogged windows.
- Use your headlights – to see and be seen.
- Keep your gas tank at least half-full to avoid gas line freeze-up.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on slippery surfaces like water, ice and leaves, or when there is a lot of traffic.
- Leave extra room between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. And remember, larger vehicles (including the vanpool van) take longer to stop.
- On ice and snow, take it slow.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges, and shady spots.
- Do not pass snowplows or sanders, and do not follow them too closely.
- Practice chaining up. All Pierce Transit vans are equipped with tire cables. Maximum speed with chains is 25 mph. It's important to learn how to install your chains before bad weather strikes. Please properly clean and store them once removed.
- If you find yourself behind a snowplow, stay behind it until it is safe to pass. Remember that a snowplow driver has a limited field of vision. Stay back (15 car lengths) until you're sure it is safe to pass or until the plow pulls off the road.
- Slow down and be extra cautious near chain-up and removal areas. There are often people out of their vehicles moving around.
- Remember that deer and other animals are a seasonal driving hazard. November is prime time for road kill—deer in particular. Crashes are most common at night, between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m., when deer are active and it is harder to see them. Most vehicle collisions involving deer happen October through January.

