

Vantage Point

MAY – JUNE 2010

Pierce Transit Celebrates 30 Years!

PT Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Take a stroll with us down memory lane, starting with Tacoma Transit's old base on Sprague Street, which became the new Pierce Transit Headquarters back in 1980. Yes, right across from Peck baseball field! Just two years later, the first PT buses with wheelchair lifts arrived.

The Vanpool program, with seven vans, kicked off in 1986 and has been growing strong ever since, with 293 vans currently on the road—thanks to all of you. Pierce Transit moved to our new headquarters at 96th & So Tacoma Way in 1987 and started the Seattle Express in 1990 – a very popular service for us Puget Sounders. We went green in 1991, after experimenting with the nation's first natural gas engines, by adding Certified Natural Gas (CNG) powered buses to our fleet. The Tacoma Dome Station, introduced in 1997, became the region's most popular parking spot for express and local bus service and vanpool riders. In 2002, after Initiative 695, Pierce County voters restored PT's funding through a ballot initiative. In 2003, two routes combined to form Route 1, featuring 15-minute service, carrying over a million passengers a year. In 2004, Bus Plus began serving outlying areas. What an exciting ride those 30 years have been!

Today we continue our mission to connect communities with safe, reliable, customer-friendly transit options. Uncertain times and a significant revenue loss from declining sales tax make this a challenge. PT employees are working relentlessly to meet our goals, focusing on ways to increase efficiency, seeking new ways of doing business, and reducing spending. This is helpful, but not enough to carry us through the tomorrows.



Pierce Transit is reevaluating our 30-year-old route structure and services. Our goal is to design a sustainable system that the public values and uses. PT employees, including some vanpool coordinators, listened to you at meetings last fall and this spring. The work continues in developing a plan to provide effective service. Stay tuned with us at pttomorrow.org for Open Houses that will occur the first two weeks of June. There will be a Public Hearing on System Redesign Alternatives on June 14, at 4 PM at Pierce Transit's Training Center at 3720 96th St SW, Lakewood, WA 98499. We value your comments in person or online.



Vantage Point is a publication of Pierce Transit.

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What's New

May – National Bike Month

Ready, Set, Pedal

For shorter distance commuters, dust off your bike and tune it up for Bike to Work week May 17 – 21. Many communities in Washington have organized events for the month, encouraging people to ride their bikes. Pierce County's organized events include bike swaps, trail rides, picnic and bike fashion show, and of course the Bike to Work Week Commuter Challenge. For details, go to PierceTrips.com/mc/page.do?sitePageId=44544.

Work or live outside Pierce County? Check out bicyclealliance.org/news/index.html#BiketoWork2010 for links to other county family and bike-to-work events. Now is the time to psyche yourself up, tune up your bike and plan your route.



Spring Wheel Options

We are all Winners in the Long Run

Jody Cline from Spokane is the lucky winner of the Spring Wheel Options grand prize trip to Hawaii. Pierce Transit vanpooler Debby Keene from Weyerhaeuser won a \$100 REI Gift Card. Congratulations! We really are all winners thanks to the 24,917 participants across the state who participated in Spring Wheel Options between March 14 and 27. In Pierce County alone, there were 1,415 participants, 323,370 miles not driven during the campaign, and 17,785 pounds of CO₂ reduced. Our commute choices are part of a collective solution for managing congestion to help reduce our negative effects on climate change. Visit wheeloptions.org/Winners/22.aspx for a complete list of all prizewinners.



Welcome Aboard

Our New 170 RTM Vanpool Group

Welcome the new Cathy Reed vanpool group – which may well be our longest distance vanpool at Pierce Transit! Four approved volunteer drivers safely transport riders from Castle Rock to Joint Base Lewis-McChord. You thought your commute was long? Think again. For those of you not sure where Castle Rock is, check the map above.

Some advantages to long distance ridesharing? You really get to know your commute buddies, you save lots of green stuff, and riders get some shuteye. It's a win-win for all.

We asked Robert Moriarty, volunteer driver and bookkeeper of a 110 RTM commute since 1999, how he has managed a successful vanpool. We clearly heard the words "trust...safety... respect." He explained that, "Most of the riders shut their eyes and don't open them until they reach the worksite...a sign of deep trust." Robert understands the importance of safety. Thankfully, three other approved drivers help share the responsibility in this vanpool. It's always good to share the drive. We agree that respect goes a long way in the vanpool. With all our different chemistries and characters, this is great advice for all our vanpool groups. Thanks for sharing. We wish many years of great vanpool experience to all the participants of the new Reed vanpool.

Driver's Digest



Tougher Cell Phone Driving Law

Starting June 10, police can pull someone over for texting or talking without a headset and issue a \$124 ticket. It has been, and remains, Pierce Transit policy to disallow the use of cell phones and other wireless devices while operating the vanpool. You should be in good practice of no cell phone use while driving. Volunteer drivers, even if you are in your personal vehicle and you receive a citation for this activity, it could affect your vanpool driving privileges. Save calls for another time and place. It just makes sense.



Spring Driving Reminders

Springtime is here in its full glory, bringing new driving challenges:

- Shrubbery and flowering trees are in full bloom, obstructing views that in winter were clear.
- Continue to take care when driving during hours of darkness. Cool temperatures could still be a recipe for black ice.
- Wet roads can be as slick as icy roads. Remember that hydroplaning can occur at speeds as low as 30 mph and/or whenever you see a glare on the roadway. Slow down.
- More people are outdoors. Children are walking to parks and schools and playing outdoors. Tossed balls mean children are not far.
- Nicer weather offers folks a chance to actively commute and get some exercise. Watch for bicyclists, inline skaters, runners, and walkers.
- More motorcyclists are enjoying a spring ride. Share the road. Be safe.



“Patience is the ability to idle your motor when you feel like stripping your gears.” – Barbara Johnson, Author



Fatigue Awareness Part III – How to Sleep like a Baby

It is easy to identify the things that go bump in the night keeping us wide-awake. What we need are tricks to keep those “bumps” away. Here’s some tips to help us sleep like a baby – especially important to volunteer drivers to help ensure alertness when driving the van.

- Exercise regularly. It can help us fall asleep and sleep more soundly.
- Use the bedroom for sleeping. Avoid working in the bedroom, and no falling asleep to a favorite TV program.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol too close to bedtime. Caffeine can make it difficult to fall asleep, while alcohol leads to a night of restlessness.
- Establish a set bedtime. Maintaining a usual bedtime helps regulate our body’s natural “circadian rhythm”.
- Pass up those late night snacks at least 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- Fashion a “sleep-conducive” environment. Lower the thermostat at night and keep the room as dark as possible.
- Try using eye masks and earplugs – especially shift workers who need to sleep during the day.
- Wear socks to bed. Feet are our body’s worst circulators, often becoming cold before any other body part.
- Have a comfortable mattress and pillow. Experts suggest a feather pillow for its ability to hold shape...and they are free of allergens.
- Listen to “white noise” or relaxation music. “White noise” is sound made by humidifiers, fans, etc.

Visit the National Sleep Foundation at sleepfoundation.org for more info.



In 2010...we will

do it best. do it together. do it for less.

VANPOOL

24/7 Emergency
253.381.3762

Direct Line
253.983.3377
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 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

Voyager Fleet Cards

Expiring Soon

Primary volunteer drivers: The Voyager fleet cards expire July 31, 2010. In early July, we will mail new cards to the mailing address we have on file for you. If you have recently moved or changed your mailing address, please contact your vanpool coordinator to ensure we have your updated address.



RideshareOnline.com

Powered by brilliant commuters. Like you.

Have you logged on to RideshareOnline.com and checked out the new features? Once you log on and answer a brief survey, you are ready to use the latest generation of tools to turn efficient trips into personal rewards. New tools and features include:

- Interactive ridematching to help you find riders or a different vanpool or carpool anywhere along your route
- Expanded ridematching for one-time trips, such as meetings, errands and special events such as a game, concert or show; use the HOV lanes; and split the cost of parking
- New commute calendar to track your trips, estimate your cash savings and greenhouse gas reductions and earn rewards

Note: if you commute to a worksite in Pierce County, please continue to log your trips at PierceTrips.com.

Use RideshareOnline.com to help find additional riders for your vanpool. We can also post your vanpool on the Riders Wanted page of our website.

Riders transferring to a new worksite or a different work shift can use RideshareOnline.com from their home computer at their convenience. Riders unable to find just the right match can call us at 253.983.3377 for further assistance. We may find that a new group already in the formation process will meet your commute needs. Alternatively, starting a new vanpool might be just the ticket. We have a short wait list right now so give us a call. We are all about ridesharing and helping you get to and from work.



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