



ST. PAUL **Smart Trips**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUTER CHOICE AWARDS RECOGNIZE INNOVATION AND ADVOCACY

MINNEAPOLIS – (Nov. 20) – Ten Twin Cities organizations and individuals received Commuter Choice awards today for their role in helping to reduce congestion. Metro Transit and transportation management organizations (TMOs) in the region each year recognize people and companies that come up with creative ways to promote alternatives to driving alone to work, including transit, biking, carpooling, vanpooling and telecommuting.

Advertising agency Carmichael Lynch was among those honored at a ceremony today in St. Paul, winning an award for Exceptional Company Involvement. In addition to offering reduced-price transit passes and a bicycle sharing program, the agency reimburses employees who walk to work for the cost of shoes, and gives rebates to employees who take light rail to and from the airport. The company also developed a “green blog” and hosted a seminar on transportation options.

The award for Outstanding Promotion by a small organization went to St. Paul Neighborhood Network, a non-profit community television network that produced several programs promoting alternatives to driving alone during the Republican National Convention. It has a bike-sharing program and subsidizes transit passes at a higher rate than parking.

SRF Consulting Group, Inc. won Outstanding Promotion by a Medium Organization for using friendly rivalry to reduce the number of drive-alone trips. The engineering and design firm held an “Alternative Commute Challenge” that pitted SRF employees against those at a competitor business for the greatest mileage reduction.

The Public Agency Leadership award was presented to Hennepin County, which in addition to hosting commuter fairs and providing a generous subsidy on transit passes and free bicycle amenities, developed a “Trade Time for Fitness” program that helps employees save on bicycle commuting expenses.

Ameriprise Financial, Inc., the nation’s largest financial planning company, won the Corporate Leadership award for its sponsorship of Bike Walk Week. The company organized six bicycle convoys and offered multiple incentive gifts for employee participation. Ameriprise has offered Metropass to its employees for more than 10 years, since the program’s inception.

The Best Technology Solution award was given to Boston Scientific. The medical device manufacturer used a Google map interface to create a customized carpool matching system for its workplace. It also advocated for increased transit service in Maple Grove, where it is located.

The Rookie of the Year award, presented for outstanding effort by an organization that is promoting commuter alternatives for the first time, went to the 934th Airlift Wing of the U.S. Air Force. Through commuter fairs and an online bulletin that assists employees in finding others to share the ride, 50 of its 350 employees now belong to vanpools.

Individual awards were presented in three categories:

Charlie Stark won the Commuter of the Year Award for his enthusiastic advocacy of vanpooling. He drives a bio-diesel vanpool each day from his Northfield home to Travelers Insurance, Inc. in downtown St. Paul. Stark maintains a vanpooling blog, hosts commuter fairs in Northfield and chairs the Transportation Committee of RENEw Northfield.

Benita Warns received the Lifetime Achievement Award. She has been a strong advocate for commuter benefits for more than 15 years at the U.S. Postal Service Minneapolis Bulk Mail Center. She was able to increase the number of carpools at her worksite from two to 20 by offering preferred parking – spaces that were vacated by managers by Warns' request.

The Friend of Commuter Alternatives Award was presented to Alice Tibbetts, who developed a Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) plan for the City of Minneapolis. She is a longtime supporter of SRTS and has served on the Bicycle Advisory Board in St. Paul.

In addition to the presentation of Commuter Choice awards, GE Capital Solutions Fleet Services was commended for being designated as a Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) worksite. BWC is a national accreditation program that recognizes employers that offer excellent commuter benefits.

Metro Transit, a service of the Metropolitan Council, is the transportation resource for the Twin Cities, offering an integrated network of buses and trains as well as resources for those who carpool, vanpool, walk or bike.

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For more information or to schedule an interview with a representative from St. Paul Smart Trips, please contact Brady Clark at 651-224-8555 x24 or at brady@smart-trips.org.