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Offices praised for traffic plans

By Steve Johnson

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A coalition of business and government groups praised 103 Bay Area employers Wednesday for helping reduce traffic and air pollution by offering their workers carpools, subsidized transit passes, emergency rides home and other such services.

It is the second year the group -- Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition -- has honored local employers for providing transportation-related benefits. Last year, 84 employers were recognized, which suggests the coalition's message is catching on, according to Robin Snyder, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official involved with the coalition.

"I think it's amazing that we're able to increase the list because the economy really hasn't turned around much," Snyder said. "It also says something about the companies' commitment to the environment."

To be honored, employers must offer their employees at least one major service -- such as a transit pass, paying workers not to use company parking, or significant telecommuting opportunities -- as well as three other benefits. The benefits could include services like van pools, showers for bicyclists and on-site day care facilities.

Cisco Systems was among those that made the list. Among other things, it subsidizes employee use of light rail and other public transit, and it runs shuttles from its buildings to nearby transit stations.

Genencor International of Palo Alto, which says one-third of its employees use public transportation, provides cars for its employees to use during the day for emergencies, medical appointments and errands.

And the city of Mountain View recently bought bicycle shelters at a light-rail station to encourage its employees to leave their cars at home.

TOP WORKPLACES

A complete list of the best Bay Area workplaces can be found at www.bwc.gov. Here are those in the South Bay:

- 3Com, Santa Clara
- Adobe Systems, San Jose
- Agilent Technologies, Palo Alto
- Altera, San Jose
- Apple Computer, Cupertino
- Applied Biosystems, Foster City
- Ariba, Sunnyvale
- Canon USA, San Jose
- Cisco Systems, San Jose
- City of Milpitas
- City of Mountain View
- City of Palo Alto
- City of San Carlos
- City of San Jose
- City of Santa Clara
- City of Sunnyvale
- Ditech Communications, Mountain View
- Genecor International, Palo Alto
- Genentech, South San Francisco
- Globallinx Network, Palo Alto
- Hewlett – Packard, Palo Alto
- Hitachi Global Storage Technologies, San Jose
- IBM-Almaden Research Center, San Jose
- Juniper Networks, Sunnyvale
- Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Sunnyvale
- Minerva Consulting, Palo Alto
- National Semiconductor, Santa Clara
- Oracle, Redwood Shores
- Peninsula Traffic Congestion Board, San Bruno
- Rigel, South San Francisco
- San Jose State University, San Jose
- San Mateo County Commute Alternatives Program
- San Mateo County Transit District
- Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, San Jose
- Space Systems/Local, Palo Alto
- SRI International, Menlo Park
- Stanford University, Stanford
- Sun Microsystems, Newark
- Triangle Software/SF Bay Traffic, Sunnyvale
- XenoPort, Santa Clara
- Yahoo, Sunnyvale

Source: Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition