

Area groups seeking best workplaces for commuters

ONLINE ARTICLE

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A group of area organizations and agencies are challenging area employers to help reduce traffic congestion and traffic-related air pollution.

Citizens for Modern Transit, RideFinders, the American Lung Association and the St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership are among nearly a dozen organizations teaming up with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to compile a list of the region's best workplaces for commuters. The list will recognize employers that provide environmentally friendly commuter benefits to encourage and help employees take mass transit to work or telecommute.

Some of the qualifications include being a member of the Guaranteed Ride Home Program, offering various transportation benefits such as tax-free transit passes or carpooling and offering the benefits for at least 18 months. More qualifications are at www.cmt-stl.org.

Margo Oge, the Environmental Protection Agency's director of the Office of Transportation and Air Quality, said if just half of all U.S. employees were covered under commuter benefits, traffic and air pollution could be reduced by the equivalent of taking 15 million cars off the road a year and save workers about \$12 billion in fuel costs.

Citizens for Modern Transit said companies that participate in transportation benefit programs save money through reduced payroll taxes, parking expenses, reduced parking demand, increased employee job satisfaction, enhanced recruiting and retention, improved community relations and national recognition as an environmental leader.

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