

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 17, 2003

Daily Record



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VOL. 16, NO. 323

35¢

MORRIS COUNTY

Daily Record, Morris County, N.J., Friday, October 17, 2003 **A15**

Pfizer wins praise for helping reduce commuter traffic

Company first to make list of Best Workplaces for Commuters in region

BY CHRIS GOSIER
DAILY RECORD

MORRIS PLAINS — Traffic jams would be significantly reduced in the region if more companies acted like Pfizer.

That was the message Thursday from a group of officials who lauded the pharmaceutical manufacturer's efforts to help its employees share rides or take the train to work. Pfizer helps organize employee car pools and runs daily shuttles to the Morris Plains train station and its other locations in Morris County and New York City, among other efforts.

"I really want to encourage every other company in New

Jersey to look at the example Pfizer is setting," said Jane Kenny, regional administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "It doesn't take that much, and it can have a tremendous benefit, not only (for) your employees, but also (for) our environment."

Kenny and other local officials appeared at Pfizer headquarters in Morris Plains to announce the Best Workplaces for Commuters program for the New York metropolitan area. Pfizer is the region's first company on the list; the rest will be announced in May 2004.

The program is being launched jointly by the EPA and TransOptions, the regional transportation management agency in Cedar Knolls.

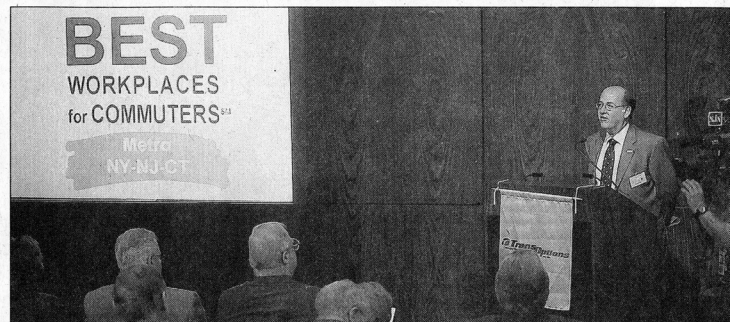
Companies are eligible if they offer their workers incentives such as vanpool subsidies, bicy-

cle racks and transit passes so they can avoid driving to work alone. The benefits for companies include public recognition, as well as training and networking to help them set up the program.

The BWC program already is underway in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Houston. It is sponsored nationally by the EPA and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Pfizer provides a commute options office for workers and offers subsidies up to \$100 a month for transit users. Carpoolers get preferential parking and van pools get subsidies from the company in addition to those provided by NJ Transit.

One Pfizer employee, paralegal Brenda Clements, has been vanpooling for more than a year from her home in the Poconos of Pennsylvania.



John Ciaffone, right, president of TransOptions, a regional transportation management agency, kicks off the Best Workplaces for Commuters program at Pfizer headquarters in Morris Plains on Thursday.

It's less stressful than driving, and "there's a huge cost savings," she said. "The month-

ly cost of \$50 to \$60 is basically what I would spend on gas in a week."

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