

The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

Dallas, Texas, Sunday, June 6, 2004

DallasNews.com

\$1.50

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EDITORIALS



Clean Air

Making the
right choices

Cleaning the Air

We all need to take many small steps

What can one person do to counter the twin perils of air pollution in Dallas-Fort Worth and global climate change?

The honest answer is: little. One person commuting by bus, or buying an energy-efficient refrigerator, or pushing a reel lawnmower instead of one powered by gasoline, isn't going to have much of an impact.

But a lot of people reducing their consumption of fossil fuels can accomplish wonders.

That's the good idea behind two laudable initiatives of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - "Best Workplaces for Commuters" and "Energy Star."

The North Texas Clean Air Coalition of local governments, business chambers and public transit agencies is rightly seizing upon the commuter initiative during June to reduce the 55 percent of the region's air pollution that comes from cars and trucks. It's sponsoring "Commuter Solutions Month" to encourage the region's employers to help their employees use their automobiles less. Employers who meet the initiative's standards would qualify to be honored in October as one of the "Best Workplaces for Commuters" in North Texas.

There are many alternatives to commuting by automobile. The coalition is recommending that employers take a more active role in getting workers to use them. That includes providing preferred parking for car pools, bicycle racks and showers, electric bicycle recharging stations, telecommuting and incentives for employees to live closer to work or for using alternative means for getting to work.

"Energy Star" encourages consumers to buy energy-efficient appliances. The "Energy Star" symbol on a computer or a television indicates that the product sips electricity rather than guzzles it. Last year, the program saved consumers \$9 billion and reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 18 million cars, according to Maria Vargas of the EPA's Washington headquarters.

The government regulates pollution. But employers and individuals have a responsibility to do their share for cleaner air. Everybody must do his part. Otherwise, Dallas-Fort Worth's economy and quality of life will decline. Otherwise, the dire predictions of calamitous climate change could come true.

We're in this together. No one gets a pass. Buy an energy-efficient appliance. Employers, provide your employees with incentives to commute by other than single-occupancy automobiles. Together, we can save each other and ourselves from harming the environment.