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North Texas Transportation Agencies Pool Resources to Cut Traffic and Pollution

DART, DCTA and The T Partner For Promotion

Stressing the need to develop regional solutions to the challenge of air quality, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) are joining forces through the May to September ozone season to promote the Employer Transit Benefits programs. In addition to the core tool of increased transit use, other approaches include van and carpools.

Employer Transit Benefits programs help reduce dangerous pollutants such as ozone while benefitting employers and employees, according to the North Texas Clean Air Coalition, an organization that promotes voluntary actions to improve air quality. In addition to lower commute stress and expense, the programs also allow private employers, nonprofit organizations and public agencies, as well as federal government agencies, to pay up to \$2,760 annually in transportation fares for employees. Employees receive the benefit tax-free and employers get a full tax deduction. Employers also do not pay payroll taxes or other costs on the amount provided.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) states that on-road motor vehicles are the greatest contributors to ground-level ozone, a dangerous pollutant often found in North Texas air during the heated summer months. The organization recently ranked the DFW region among the top four for the highest eight-hour ozone concentrations.

Cooperation key to solving regional problem

The multi-media campaign provides the transportation agencies a cohesive voice when asking the public to "Stop Talking Out of Your Tailpipe" and participate in Employer Transit Benefits programs or, encourage their employers to offer the programs. Campaign elements include a microsite, print, outdoor, radio and TV. Commuters will experience new campaign elements through the summer. Commuters can learn more about the programs offered by the three transit agencies by visiting www.StopTalkingOutOfYourTailpipe.com.



The agencies are funding the joint promotion by pooling grants awarded by the North Central Texas

Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Each grant has been allocated for the promotion of Employer Transit Benefits programs. Since most transit trips are made to and from work, focusing on the workplace makes it easier for the agencies to educate commuters on the numerous commuting alternatives the North Texas transit agencies provide and how they can save money, alleviate commuting stress and contribute to cleaner air.