



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LOCAL COMPANIES, INDIVIDUALS RECOGNIZED
FOR COMMUTER PROGRAM INNOVATION

ST. PAUL, MINN. — (Nov. 14) — Ten awards were presented to regional companies and individuals today for innovation in helping people get to work without adding to traffic congestion. They received Commuter Choice Awards, presented by Metro Transit in cooperation with regional transportation management organizations (TMOs), in a ceremony in St. Paul.

Commuter Choice Awards recognize creative solutions by companies and individuals who promote transit and other commuting options.

“Employers all over the metro area have increased their efforts to promote commuting options, especially since rising gas prices and congestion continue to be of concern,” said Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb. “It’s great to see innovative work by these leaders from across the region who are helping in the battle against gridlock.”

St. Paul Travelers won the Large Organization Award (for companies with more than 500 employees) for recruiting about 25 percent of its employees to use transit and other alternatives to driving alone to work. In the Medium Organization category for firms with 101-500 employees, SFM, a Bloomington-based insurance company, won for increasing employee participation in the annual Commuter Challenge by 200 percent over 2005. Small Organization winner Perkins+Will, a Minneapolis architecture and design firm, received an award for promoting commuter options and for increasing its monthly employee transit subsidy, used by about half of its employees.

IKEA Twin Cities won the award for Outstanding Promotion for sponsoring a month-long campaign that offered free shipping for shoppers who took transit, biked or walked to their store. Carlson Real Estate Company received the Property Management Award for organizing five commuter fairs and a Bike-to-Work Clinic as well as publishing regular commuter articles in its newsletter.

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The Friend of Commuter Alternatives Award went to the City of Bloomington for its commitment to expanding commuter options. The city promotes alternate commuting options to city staff, residents and employers. In addition, Bloomington is considered a pioneer in transit-oriented development and has a development project underway along the Hiawatha light-rail line. Bloomington created a bicycle trail map, and city staff worked with adjoining cities to improve connections to enhance bicycle and pedestrian movement.

Individual awards were presented in four categories. Rookies of the Year Award went to Anne O'Meara and Nicole Winslow, who coordinate commuter benefits for Boston Scientific CRM. They were recognized for helping to increase participation in the Van-GO! vanpooling program and for coordinating four commuter benefits fairs and a Bike-to-Work Day. David Van Hattum, program manager for Transit for Livable Communities, won the Individual Achievement Award for his advocacy with the legislature and other agencies, his coordination of educational forums on transit-related issues and his research on transportation options.

Johnelle Rahn of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans received the Lifetime Achievement Award for her work to help Thrivent set up extensive incentives and benefits to employees who commute to and from its corporate center in Minneapolis. The Commuter of the Year Award was presented to Paul Fonstad of Best Buy, Inc., a volunteer driver of a Van-GO! vanpool from Northfield to the Best Buy campus. By one estimate, in the five years that Fonstad's vanpool has been operating, members of the vanpool have saved 22,500 gallons of gas.

Metro Transit, a service of the Metropolitan Council, is the transportation resource for the Twin Cities, offering an integrated network of buses and trains as well as resources for those who carpool, vanpool, walk or bike.

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