



# **NEWS RELEASE**

**550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

Patrick Wilmot (847) 228-4225

## **PACE ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF RIDESHARE WEBSITE**

Enhanced website to make it easier to form and join carpools and vanpools

Adding another method to fight high gas prices and commuting costs, Pace has launched PaceRideShare.com, a new web resource for commuters looking to form or join carpools or vanpools. Pace Board Chairman Richard Kwasneski said, "This website is one-stop shopping for people looking to cut their commuting costs. We wanted this to be a simple way for people to find others who have similar commuting patterns so they can form their own carpool or join Pace's Vanpool Incentive Program."

Previously, the region's ridesharing system was administered by CATS, the Chicago Area Transportation Study. PaceRideShare.com replaces the previous program and offers new interactive features to track mileage saved and estimate carbon emissions reduced. Users set up a profile that includes their home address or closest intersection as well as their place of work, shift times, and other preferences. When setting up the profile, users are automatically notified of potential matches, and when new matches register. "This is a very user-friendly format and a great way to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. Not everyone has a train or bus route that can get them to and from work, so this is an alternative that can help people reduce the costs associated with driving," said Kwasneski. The new website is an improvement over the previous system because now the database of carpools and that of vanpools is cross-referenced into a single list, improving the ease of use and likelihood of finding matches during a single search. Additionally, this site will be able to track the number of carpool participants in the region for the first time. One of the incentives for users to maintain an updated profile on the site is automatic entry into monthly drawings for prizes, such as fuel cards.

For groups of five to thirteen commuters, an alternative to carpooling is Pace's Vanpool Incentive Program. Launched in 1991, it has become the nation's second largest vanpool program with more than 670 vans on the road. Pace provides a van, fuel, insurance, maintenance, roadside

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## **Pace Rideshare 2**

assistance, tolls and more for a monthly fare from each participant that's based on a sliding scale of how many participants are in the group and the mileage travelled. The participant that agrees to serve as the driver does not pay a fare, receives 300 miles of personal van usage and agrees to take a safety course and store the vehicle at their home. "The Vanpool Incentive Program has grown substantially over the years because it offers a great deal of flexibility to commuters. They are able to set their own travel schedule and routing while enjoying the benefits of a less costly commute," said Kwasneski.

Development of the PaceRideShare.com system, upgrades and maintenance for five years is estimated to cost \$150,000, which will be paid for through a federal Unified Work Program (UWP) grant. Additionally, federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds were awarded to finance Pace's efforts to market the site. "The fact that federal money is covering the costs associated with the launch of this program is a win-win for Northeastern Illinois. We're providing the region with a great resource to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution while saving commuters a significant amount of money, and local resources aren't being spent to do it."

Planned enhancements scheduled to be added during the next year include Spanish and Polish language translations and an emergency ride home program which will reimburse participants up to a set amount annually for taxis or other alternative transportation for situations in which the rider needed to leave work before or after their van or carpool.

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