



**November/December 2010**

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### **Change in Commuter Tax Benefit Limits**

Federal law allows employers three ways to reduce the cost of commuting via public transportation (bus, train, ferry or registered vanpool) or qualified parking for employees. Companies can offer employees:

1. a tax-free employer-paid subsidy
2. a pre-tax employee-paid payroll deduction, or
3. a combination of the above (shared employee- employer-paid)

Tax-exempt and pre-tax limits are set by the IRS. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009 raised the tax-exempt and pre-tax limit for public transportation (bus, rail, ferry, vanpool) -- from \$120 per month to \$230 per month for 2009 and 2010. This increase will end effective January 1, 2011.

The following are the limits for the 2011 tax year:

- \$120 per employee per month for vanpool, bus, ferry, rail (all public transportation)
- \$230 per employee per month for qualified parking, or
- \$350 per month per employee for both public transportation and qualified parking.

When the employee pays part or all of the cost of public transportation via a pre-tax payroll deduction, the employee can set aside up to \$120 a month of pre-tax income. The employee saves federal withholding and FICA payroll taxes on the amount deducted. The employer saves paying FICA on the amount deducted. Employees may also share the cost with employers using after tax income. Pre-tax payroll deductions are referenced in the Internal Revenue Code, Section 132(F), as amended by TEA-21, Title IX, Section 910.

## Wheel Options Wrap Up

Thank you to all of you that participated in Wheel Options. Each participant will receive an Amtrak 2 for 1 coupon and a special gift in the next couple of weeks. In Snohomish County and the City of Bothell, we saved 3,417 pounds of pollution from our air, 5,216 gallons of gas, \$16,534.77 in gas costs and saved more than 125,101 drive alone trips.

Wheel Options prize winners were selected on November 17. Please visit [www.wheeloptions.org](http://www.wheeloptions.org) to see the prize winners.

Make sure to visit [www.WheelOptions.org](http://www.WheelOptions.org) and login to your ETC tools. There you can find a "Thank You" certificate you can customize for your worksite and employees.

## \$25\* Recruiter Rewards: New from Curb the Congestion

Curb the Congestion's new Recruiter Rewards may make your job as an ETC easier.

Your employees can already get one-on-one commute help and win up to \$1,000 incentives with Curb the Congestion. Anyone who travels on 164th Street, 128th Street, or 20th Street for their commute, errands, or other trips may qualify.

Now they can earn extra rewards if they encourage their coworkers to choose a smarter commute and register for the program. Imagine the potential impact on your worksite's drive-alone rate!

Active **Curb the Congestion** participants who refer coworkers to the program can qualify for **\$25\*** for each new recruit.

Visit [www.communitytransit.org/CurbIt](http://www.communitytransit.org/CurbIt) or contact [wendy.scholtz@commtrans.org](mailto:wendy.scholtz@commtrans.org) / (425) 438-6136 if you have any questions.

*\*\$25 transportation voucher toward bus or vanpool fare or \$25 gift card for a gas station (carpoolers) or REI (bikers and walkers).*

*Curb the Congestion is a partnership between Community Transit and Snohomish County to reduce traffic and encourage healthy travel options on congested roadways. The program provides commuters and residents who travel 164th Street in Lynnwood, 128th Street in Everett, and 20th Street in Lake Stevens with information and incentives to reduce their drive-alone trips. Incentives are funded by Snohomish County through grants and development fees.*

## Dates to Remember

### Wednesday, December 8, 2010: ETC Holiday Networking Meeting

Networking Meeting, Wednesday December 8, 12 – 2 p.m., Community Transit, 2300 Kasch Park Road, Building A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Everett, WA 98204

**Holiday Networking:** The holidays are just around the corner. Join us at this networking meeting to celebrate the year's successes and talk about the challenges of the New Year. Lunch will be served.

**If you are interested in attending this event, please contact [debbie.anderson@commtrans.org](mailto:debbie.anderson@commtrans.org) by Wednesday December 1, 2010.**

## Wednesday, December 15, 2010: Annual CTR Reports Due

Annual reports are due December 15 for ***all worksites except those located in the City of Bothell.*** (Bothell's annual reports were due October 1.)

Annual reports are completed online at [www.ctrsurvey.org/annualreport](http://www.ctrsurvey.org/annualreport). Your login is your Employer ID number and your password is a set of random numbers and letters assigned by Washington State Department of Transportation.

Once your report is completed online, you will need to print the last page for the signature of the highest ranking official at your worksite. When signed **mail the signature page and a copy of the worksite program information** that you distribute to your employees to:

Mark Melnyk, TDM Specialist  
Community Transit  
7100 Hardeson Road  
Everett, WA 98203

You worksite program information can be in the form of a brochure or a copy of your intranet pages.

If you need your login or password, or assistance completing your annual report, contact Mark Melnyk (425) 348-2304 or Debbie Anderson (425) 348-7185.

## First Quarter, 2011: Smart Commuter Rewards Are Coming

Smart Commuter Rewards is coming soon to help your employees become commuting geniuses. We can help you find alternatives to driving alone, such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, walking or bicycling. And to reward you for being so clever, we offer Smart Commuters Rewards participants the chance to win up to \$25 per month and \$250 per quarter. Enroll in Smart Commuter Rewards, log your trips and instantly raise your commuter IQ!

Watch for more information coming in January.