

dart RideShare

NEWSELETTER

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Sweetheart Deal leads to Pot of Gold

Do you have friends or co-workers still paying the cost of driving alone?

If you refer a friend who joins RideShare between Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day, you can cash in early on your referral bonus.

You'll receive \$50 bonus as soon as your referral's first month's fare is paid, and we'll throw in a \$10 AMICI gift card to sweeten the deal.

Plus, riders signing a new agreement between February 14 and March 17 will receive a 50% discount on the first full month's fare.

On Average, Transit Users Save \$9,000 Annually

Public transit users saved an average of \$9,581 annually, according to the Transit Savings Report put out by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

APTA compared the average cost of monthly bus passes to the cost of driving as formulated by AAA. That includes the cost of gas, maintenance, tires, insurances, license and registration.

Riders win with vanpool stories

Rider Jessica Triggs, who vanpools between Mount Ayr and Des Moines, was one of the first-place winners in DART's Tell Your Transit Story Contest last fall.

Triggs's winning essay described her despair when she lost her job in Decatur County office of the Iowa Department of Human Services during a round of layoffs.



Jessica Triggs

"I thought my life was over," she wrote. "I cried night after night trying to figure out how I was going to

be able to support my family."

Triggs was soon offered another state job, but this one was 92 miles away, in Des Moines. It was a great opportunity, but she worried about time away from her family and the long commute.

She took the job. At first, she commuted by car.

"After a few weeks I caught myself trying to doze off driving down the interstate," she wrote.

"I was so tired from the commute, I barely had enough energy to prepare supper, do

laundry, and even play with my kids."

Then she remembered her friend's recommendation to try RideShare. She did, and it made all the difference.

"I felt like a whole new person," she wrote.

"I truly believe if it wasn't for DART and RideShare, I wouldn't have been able to keep this job."

Triggs's essay won first place in the economy category of the Tell Your Transit Story, for which she was recognized by the DART Commission and awarded an iPod.

RideShare riders Vicki Albrecht and David Kallemyn received honorable mentions for their submissions.

In her essay, Albrecht clearly articulated the many benefits to vanpooling, while dispelling the fears people have of untethering themselves from their cars.

"It was the easiest transition I ever made," she wrote.

Kallemyn tried his artist's hand at cartoon animation and came up with an incredibly charming clip on the superiority of sharing a ride.

Clips from the animation are at left. The entire cartoon can be viewed online at:

youtube.com/ridedart



How could RideShare use social media?

Are you on Facebook? Twitter?

DART as a whole is beginning to use social media, at Facebook.com/ridedart, Twitter.com/ridedart, and YouTube.com/ridedart.

Now we're wondering if and how we could use social media specifically for RideShare, and we'd like to ask you a few questions.

Please email your responses to us at rideshare@ridedart.com.

1. Do you use social media such as Facebook and Twitter now?
2. Would you like to communicate with RideShare staff using social media?
3. Are there other ways social media could be used to promote RideShare?
4. Should RideShare be part of DART's social media pages or have pages of its own?

Where Do They Come From?

RideShare currently has 93 vanpools traveling from 45 communities to Des Moines, West Des Moines, Urbandale, Grinnell and Knoxville.

Knoxville leads the pack with 12 vanpools commuting to Des Moines each work day. Among employers, the VA Hospital in Des Moines draws the most vanpools, with 12 vanpools coming from four communities.

Ames commuters come in a close second with 10 vanpools. Indianola holds third with eight. Newton and Winterset tie for fourth with five. Adair, Boone, Marshalltown, Osceola, Pella and Pleasantville boast three each.

Other RideShare communities include Ankeny, Carlisle, Chariton, Colfax, Creston, Greenfield, Humeston, Huxley, Lacona, Leon, Lucas, Melcher, Menlo, Milo, Monroe, Nevada, Panora, Perry, Pleasant Hill, Prairie City, Stuart, St Charles, Truro and Waukee.

If you have friends or co-workers without service in their area, please have them contact RideShare to find out how they can form a new vanpool.

DART RideShare

1100 DART Way
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Phone: 515.288.7433
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Email: rideshare@ridedart.com

DART Commission

Angela Connolly	Christine Hensley
Bob Mahaffey	Tom Gayman
Ted Boesen	Steve Van Oort
Skip Conkling	Gaye Johnson
Steven Brody	

General Manager
Brad Miller

RideShare Manager
Rebecca Lovig

RideShare Assistant
Paula Covington

If you have questions, comments or story ideas, please send them to: DART RideShare, 1100 DART Way, Des Moines, IA 50309; call 515.288.RIDE; or email rideshare@ridedart.com.

The Manager's Corner

In this installment I would like to touch on the RideShare budget and late fees.

The RideShare Budget

DART began providing vanpool service 15 years ago with a goal of the program paying for itself. While the average cost of a gallon of gasoline has risen from \$1.03 in 1998 to \$2.91 today, DART has worked very hard to minimize other costs in order to keep fares low.

Back then, you could ride in a minivan up to 30 miles per day roundtrip at a cost of \$70 per month. Fast forward to 2011, and that same trip costs you \$74 per month. There have been only two fare increases in that time.

However, in order to continue to cover the rising costs of the program, we are looking for ways of increasing revenues. This

could mean fare increases or other program changes in the near future.

With the average vanpool fare at \$84 per month, we strongly believe RideShare is still a great value. We will continue to work to make sure this service remains a great value for years to come.

We will be sending out a survey in the next few weeks to get your opinions on various options on changes to the RideShare fare structure and policies. We look forward to hearing from you and getting your feedback.

Late Fees

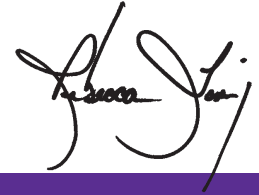
Given all of the changes with the billing process of the RideShare program over the last 2 years, we have not enforced the late fee policy on payments. Now that the EZ pay system has been up and running for

the last six months without any major hiccups, it is time to reinstate the late fee on payments received after the due date. A \$15 charge will be assessed to your account for any payment received after the 28th of the month starting in March.

We would encourage you to take advantage of the recurring payment feature available through EZPay. Now would be a great time to set up your account so you never have to worry about paying a late fee. Feel free to contact the RideShare office if you need any assistance in getting set up on EZPay.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,



Paula's Ponderings



**PAULA
"CAPTAIN OBVIOUS"
COVINGTON**

Today I am Captain Obvious.

Let me start by saying: "It is COLD, and snowy, and icy!" You may ask me: "How cold is it?" Let me tell you... It is so cold, that for the last week I have had to scrape the insides of my windows.

I know that what I am about to say may seem obvious, but sometimes it is good to restate the obvious:

Take extra time and care when driving (or walking) on the snow and ice. Whether you are driving a van or your personal vehicle, here are some tips from the DOT for driving on snow and ice:

1. Arrive in plenty of time to warm up and scrape the snow and ice off the van (or your car). If you are riding in a van, leave your home earlier to make sure you are on time and don't miss the van.
2. Take it slow.
3. Give your full attention to the task at hand – driving.
4. Keep an extra-large safety cushion between you and the vehicle in front of you.
5. Do not use cruise control.
6. Allow extra travel time and plan ahead.
7. Check the DOT travel

information website before you leave: www.511ia.org

8. If you do not feel safe driving – DO NOT DRIVE. If you are uncomfortable behind the wheel, rethink your trip.

In other miscellaneous news:

- Be courteous of your fellow riders and arrive at your van a few minutes before your departure time (Captain Obvious would say: "Don't Be Late"). This will give you a chance to find a seat and get situated before the van leaves.

- The RideShare contract that all riders have signed is now available on our website: <http://www.ridedart.com/vanpools.cfm>. It is under the heading "Everyone into the Pool." Take time to review the contract. It can be helpful.

MAKE FRIENDS, NOT TRAFFIC!