



Partners Kick-Off “Don’t Pollute. Switch Up Your Commute.” Campaign as Daily Air Quality Forecasting Season Gets Underway

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ST. LOUIS - Transportation is one of the biggest contributors to air pollution. In conjunction with the start of the St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership's daily air quality forecasting season, more than half a dozen partners, who collectively provide an

array of transportation options that extend beyond driving in single-occupancy vehicles along with resources and incentives for doing so, are joining forces to kick-off a “Don’t Pollute. Switch Up Your Commute.” campaign.

With increasing numbers of people heading back to their offices as we move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, this summerlong effort will work to inform people the way they choose to travel impacts the quality of air St. Louis area residents breathe, while motivating them to modify commuting behaviors as often as they are able.

“The St. Louis region is no stranger to poor air quality conditions,” said Susannah Fuchs, Director of Clean Air for the American Lung Association in Missouri. “There is a lot of work to be done to protect our local communities from the continued risks to public health resulting from high levels of ozone, particularly during the summer months. It’s very important that area residents stay informed about the quality of the air we breathe and continue to take voluntary steps to reduce emissions to help improve outcomes.”

Area residents can visit www.SwitchUpYourCommute.com to download the color-coded air quality forecast, which provides daily updates via email or text stating if the forecast for the following day is a GREEN (good), YELLOW (moderate), ORANGE (unhealthy for sensitive groups), or RED (unhealthy) air quality day. The first 200 people to download the forecast will receive a free, STL-STYLE campaign T-shirt. From there, individuals are being encouraged to show they care about clean air by taking transit, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, biking, or telecommuting. The site provides detailed information about all transportation options available on both sides of the Mississippi River – and links to associated schedules, pricing, programs, ride-matching services, incentives, and more.

“The region is in a race for cleaner air and the campaign is two-fold,” added Kimberly Cella, Executive Director for Citizens for Modern Transit. “First, partners aim to educate. Then, as the summer heats up and the potential for poor air quality days to be forecasted increases, we want people to take action.”

When an ORANGE or RED air quality day is forecasted, those who have registered for the daily air quality forecast will receive a text message asking them if they plan to modify their commute the following day – and if so – how. These respondents – along with those who post a picture of themselves on Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter taking transit, carpooling, vanpooling, or telecommuting on a poor air quality day and include #SwitchUpYourCommute – will be entered to win a variety of prizes through the end of the air quality forecasting season on September 30, 2022.

“In light of rising gas prices, area residents should consider the cost savings with the alternatives. Not only is there savings on day to day gasoline, but also the maintenance costs of vehicles,” added Taulby Roach, President, and CEO of Bi-State Development, which operates Metro Transit. “It’s a win-win with cleaner air and fuller wallets!”

The partners behind the “Don’t Pollute. Switch Up Your Commute.” campaign – which includes Citizens for Modern Transit, the Clean Air Partnership, Commute with Enterprise, Madison County Transit District, Metro Transit, the Missouri Department of Transportation, RideFinders, and St. Clair County Transit District – officially kicked-off the summerlong effort during the morning commute on Monday, May 2, 2022.

Representatives of these partnering organizations were at a number of different Metro Transit Centers and parking lots throughout the region handing out gold coin chocolates and keychain coin pouches stating “Don’t Pollute. Switch Up Your Commute. See the Savings.” as well as educational materials encouraging people to download the daily air quality forecast. Throughout the summer, they will also be asking businesses and organizations to join in this race for cleaner air by encouraging their employees and colleagues to take part in this campaign.

To learn more about the region’s air quality, transportation options, campaign efforts, and how area businesses can get involved, visit www.SwitchUpYourCommute.com.

Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) is the region’s transit advocacy organization. It was established in 1985 to help bring light rail to St. Louis and works to develop, support and enhance programming and initiatives to ensure safe, convenient and affordable access to the region’s integrated public transportation system. CMT champions, challenges, encourages and advocates for public transit in an effort to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life in the St. Louis region.

The **Clean Air Partnership** was formed in 1995, led by the American Lung Association, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Washington University, and others, to increase awareness of regional air quality issues and to encourage activities to reduce air pollution emissions.

A service of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, **Commute with Enterprise** offers one of the most sustainable and cost-effective commuting solutions available today. Each year, our vanpools eliminate up to 843 million commuter miles, clearing 35,000 individual cars from the road and reducing carbon emissions by 655 million pounds annually. As one of the largest U.S. vanpool operations, Commute with Enterprise addresses both local and national needs by reducing traffic congestion, parking real estate and carbon emissions, while providing commuters with a smarter, better way to get to work. And businesses

that offer our programs as an added employee benefit not only gain a competitive edge in recruiting, but also a way to build their corporate sustainability profile. Our vanpooling service is supported by the extensive Enterprise Rent-A-Car neighborhood network, which delivers an unmatched level of fleet flexibility and local service.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service to the Muny and sporting events. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary curb-to-curb service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of more than 137 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing

RideFinders, the St. Louis region's FREE carpooling and vanpooling program. RideFinders uses an easy online ride-matching program that connects St. Louis-area workers looking to share the ride, the driving, and the cost of a smart commute!

Metro Transit operates the St. Louis region's public transportation system, which includes 24 battery-electric buses and nearly 400 clean-burning diesel buses that serve 59 MetroBus routes in eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois. Metro also operates MetroLink light rail vehicles on 46 miles of track serving 38 stations in the two-state area, and operates Metro Call-A-Ride, a paratransit fleet of 122 vans. Metro Transit is a Bi-State Development enterprise.

MoDOT's mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that is safe, innovative, reliable, and dedicated to a prosperous Missouri. MoDOT designs, builds, and maintains roads and bridges and works to improve airports, river ports, railroads, public transit systems, and pedestrian and bicycle travel. The agency also administers motor carrier and highway safety programs.

Founded in 1981, St. Clair County Transit District contracts with Bi-State Development to provide public transportation services in St. Clair County, Ill., by way of 11 Metro Transit Centers; 12 MetroBus routes; on-demand, shared-ride services and more – connecting individuals to jobs, education, healthcare, entertainment, the MetroBikeLink, and other destinations.