

Alternative transportation available to employees

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Dec. 22, 2008 -- As part of continued efforts in "Going Green," Carlisle Barracks employees can now participate in car and van pooling through Commuter Services of South Central Pennsylvania.

The RideShare database offers options for people in seven local counties –Adams, York, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Dauphin and Cumberland – to connect with other commuters in the same area to share a ride to work, explained Laura Lutz, employer outreach manager with Commuter Services.

Commuters can car pool, share the driving cost and use one of their personally owned vehicles. It is a more flexible option, that doesn't need to be used every day. Van pooling is more rigid, and takes up to 15 people at a time.

Local Program

Carlisle Barracks employees just recently started using the RideShare program to travel to the installation from Chambersburg and Shippensburg.

"The van originates at the Scotland exit in Chambersburg at the Park and Ride around 6:25 a.m., and then continues to the Shippensburg Kmart to pick up employees around 6:45 a.m.," said Donna Horton, management analyst. "Then it proceeds to Carlisle Barracks with an arrival time of approximately 7:20 a.m."

"With this program, you have 15 people in one van," said Randy Carpenter, military personnel administration center supervisor and volunteer driver of the local van. "That's 14 less vehicles on the road, 14 less vehicles putting exhaust in the air. Also, people are saving a lot of money. When you factor in gas, vehicle repairs and wear and tear on the car, and multiply that by the number of people using the program, the amount is huge."

So far, the people using the program have been very happy with it.

"I think it's a really good program," said Laurie Christman, secretary to the Chief of Staff. "It's very

convenient, especially not having to drive in bad weather." She had been driving a total of 90 miles each day, and says she is saving around \$120 a month in gas.

Carpenter, who volunteered to be the driver, is enthusiastic about the program.

"It's really a great thing," he said. "Hopefully it will stay around for a long time. It helps so many people. It's all about the team, taking care of one another and looking out for one another."

Payment

People using the system may not have to pay for it.

"There is currently no charge to the employees because the van is full with 15 passengers," Horton said. "The more employees we have sign up, the lower the cost."

Each government employee registered for the program receives a \$115 voucher each month. That money pays for the use of the van, and all of the gas it uses. With a full load of passengers, no one has out-of-pocket costs for the service.

With smaller numbers, people may have a small fee to make up the difference in the total cost of the van and what the government is paying.

Personnel can still use their personal vehicle whenever they need to. Also, if an employee has taken the van to work and an emergency requires an early departure, the program will reimburse a cab ride home, up to six times per year.