

PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release
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Area Carpoolers Craft Their Own Economic Stimulus Package

Santa Barbara County, CA.: SBCAG Traffic Solutions, the countywide rideshare organization, has created a new program called *Carpool for Cash* that will give thousands of dollars back to commuters, as well as a chance to win \$500 a month by carpooling. Commuters registered at www.trafficsolutions.info are entered into a monthly raffle for five \$100 gift certificates each day they make a carpool trip. If you don't know anyone to carpool with, the website will also help you find a carpool partner.

More and more people are carpooling to work in Santa Barbara County. Commuter surveys indicate that over 14% of all commuters carpool to work, which is nearly a 50% increase from five years earlier. Although fuel prices are low right now, AAA points out that fuel only makes up about 22% of the average cost of driving, now estimated at be approximately 71 cents per mile. "People are trying to find ways they can cut their household spending during these tight economic times," explains Kent Epperson, the Director of Traffic Solutions. "A household of two long distance commuters can save upwards of \$5,000 to \$6,000 a year just by carpooling. That is four times the amount of tax refunds households are expected to receive under the economic stimulus signed by President Obama in February." For other commuters, carpooling is a way to address climate change and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. By carpooling just 14 miles to work, you can reduce your carbon footprint by 10-15%. Using Traffic Solutions Online, you can calculate how much carbon emissions you save by not driving alone to work. The website will also calculate your commuting cost savings.

Most carpooling takes place between family members or coworkers, but many commuters don't know how to find carpool partners who match their commute. With Traffic Solutions' web-based service, commuters can find potential carpool partners with a click of the mouse "It is kind of like online dating, but for carpooling," explains Kent Epperson. The web-based matching is confidential and hosts thousands of locals looking for carpool opportunities. Some commuters are hesitant to carpool out of fear that a personal or family emergency will leave them stranded at work without a car. To resolve this concern, Traffic Solutions offers commuters up to \$55 towards a taxi or rental car to get them home when they register for the free Emergency Ride Home program.

Traffic Solutions is the Countywide rideshare organization in Santa Barbara County, offering carpool and vanpool cash incentives, transit schedule assistance, bicycle maps, telecommuting consulting and operates the Clean Air Express. For more information about the *Carpool for Cash*, visit trafficsolutions.info or call 805-963-SAVE (7283).

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