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Commuter Challenge materials coming in March

We're gearing up for the Commuter Challenge, the annual campaign to encourage Twin Cities residents to reduce the amount they drive alone. We hope that your company will participate in this year's efforts, which will kick off on April 1.

The Commuter Challenge is an easy way to encourage your employees to drive alone less often and instead ride the bus or train, bicycle, carpool, walk, telework or vanpool. Promotional materials will be available in early March. If you have questions or want more information about the Commuter Challenge, contact your [employer outreach specialist](#).

Your transit pass program starts here

No matter what business you're in, you know that helping employees get to work through smart commute options is good for business. By adding commuter benefits at your company, your employees can save money and arrive at work relaxed. You'll benefit by attracting and retaining great employees.

Are you considering any changes to commuter benefits programs in 2012? We can help you find out the best transit pass option for your company and employees. [Contact us](#) today! We will answer your questions and connect you with your local [Transportation Management Organization](#) to assist you every step of the way.

We have [convenient options](#) for organizations of any size, with programs that are easy to administer!

Metropass

With Metropass, your employees gain access to deeply discounted, unlimited ride transit passes (stored value required on Northstar). Metropass is available to companies with 10 or more participants.



Go-To Cards

If you have fewer than 10

employees interested in transit benefits, your organization can use convenient online administrator tools to distribute and add value to Go-To Cards for your employees. Options include Fares Direct (with a minimum monthly order of \$500) or My Fare Card List (manage up to 100 Go-To Cards and pay with a credit card).



One Ride Coupons

One Ride Coupons are available to purchase and are valid for any ride up to \$3.00. Purchase One Ride Coupons for very occasional riders or for potential riders that would like to try riding transit before committing to a Metropass or Go-To Card.

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Relax! There's a Guaranteed Ride Home

We often hear from employers with employees who are hesitant to take a smart commute option in case they need to get home in case of an emergency.



Our Guaranteed Ride Home program ensures that they have a ride in an emergency – for example, if they have a family issue or need to work unexpected hours.

Guaranteed Ride Home is open to commuters who ride the bus, light rail or Northstar, or carpool, vanpool, bicycle or walk to work or school at least three times per week. The program can be used for a taxi or a ride on a bus or train.

Registered participants can request reimbursements up to four times per year or \$100 in value, whichever comes first. Guaranteed Ride Home cannot be used for personal errands, appointments, business-related travel or non-emergency/personal trips.

Interested in getting promotional materials for the program? Contact your [employer outreach specialist](#).

Learn more about [Guaranteed Ride Home](#).

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EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

NORTHERN BREWER
HOMEBREW SUPPLY

Northern Brewer

Signs of a bicycling culture are obvious at Northern Brewer headquarters in Roseville. There's a large bike hanger – used by employees to store bikes during the day – mounted in one corner of the company's warehouse, with a bike repair station nearby.

But talk to the company's employees to get a real understanding of how deep the biking culture really is.

"The first week of September, I had three flats on my commute to and from work," said Michelle Thomas, a fulfillment associate at the home-brewing retailer. "A co-worker noticed the morning of the first flat and said 'You didn't ride today, did you? You're happy when you bike.'

"Another co-worker – and fellow cyclist – gave me a spare tube without question," she said. "The next flat, he made sure I knew how to patch a tube."

As the company has grown, so has its support of bicycle commuters, said Human Resources Director Autumn Amadou-Blegen.

For instance, an employee committee meets to plan ways to promote bicycling and alternate forms of transportation. The company regularly participates in Bike Walk Week, Bike/Walk to Work Day and other bike events in the community.

In addition, Northern Brewer reimburses bicycle commuters up to \$20 a month for bike-related purchases, allowed through the federal Bicycle Commuter Act.

"We didn't initially set out to develop those programs, but they grew in response to behaviors our employees were already exhibiting," Amadou-Blegen said.

Northern Brewer's efforts are getting noticed. This fall, the company received a [Commuter Choice Award](#) and was recognized for its support of bicycle commuters. Earlier, the company received a Bicycle Friendly Business designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

What's next for the company? Northern Brewer is now looking at ways to expand its support of alternate transportation options. Once data from a recent employee survey on commuting habits are analyzed, a benefit program for employees who take transit, for instance, could be introduced, Amadou-Blegen said.

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