

“Flex in the City” Happening in Houston in September!

You gotta give them credit in Houston for coming up with a snappy name for a workplace flexibility initiative! “Flex in the City” is a two-week effort spearheaded by Houston Mayor Bill White and his staff to encourage employers to allow more flexibility in workplace and hours for their staff, thereby reducing traffic congestion and giving Houston-area employees more control over their work lives. This sounded like such a great program that we thought our BWC Network members might want to know about it and think about how some of its elements might be replicated in your area.

Employers will participate by adding such workplace flexibility options as telework, compressed work weeks, and flexible start and end times. The short-term objective for the two-week period beginning September 18 is for each employee to be able to avoid at least one peak time commute. Mayor White, along with a steering committee of traffic engineers and human resource professionals, and Flexible Workplace Program Director Kathleen Kelly, are working together to assure that the initiative will be a success, offering technical assistance to employers and tools for evaluating success. The City of Houston will be assessing changes in mobility during the initial two weeks.



In the long term, the objective of “Flex in the City” is that these flexible workplace and schedule options become a part of daily work life in the Houston area. Program Director Kelly’s goal is to “have Houston lead the way in workplace flexibility, have more productive workplaces, to attract workers, and increase quality of life through achieving a significant improvement on the freeways.” Way to go, Houston!

For more information, visit the Flex in the City home page at: < www.houston.tx.gov/flexworks/flexinthecity/index.html > or check out the Policy Brief available online from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) in the **Work Life Balance** Series (July 2005; Brief No. 4) at:

< www.clasp.org/publications/flex_in_the_city.pdf >.

Updated Telework Benefit Brief (and Others) Now Available

As fuel prices increase, more and more American commuters are looking for ways to save money through telework, making it a more sought-after benefit among the workforce. But there are many other great reasons to telework, which benefits not only the employee, but the employer offering the benefits, as well as reducing congestion and air pollution. Wouldn’t it be sweet to have a spiffy off-the-shelf resource laying out information on telework programs in hand when trying to promote telework, complete with up-to-date supporting data, frequently asked questions (and answers), implementation guidance, and case studies?

Well, wait no longer—the Best Workplaces for Commuters team is ready with an updated Telework Benefit Brief, now available on our web site at:

< www.bwc.gov/employ/benefits.htm >.

While visiting the page, check out our other Benefit Briefs, including such topics as marketing commuter benefits to employees, vanpool programs, commuter tax benefits, and others. We also have a limited supply of hard copies of the Telework Benefit Brief available in hard copy. To order these, e-mail Patrice Thornton:

< <mailto:thornton.patrice@epa.gov> >.

Best Workplaces for Commuters will be represented in a session on telework at this month’s Association for Commuter Transportation Conference in Boston (see Dates to Remember below for more information on the conference). If you’re going, do come to the session, and visit our booth to get your Best Workplaces for Commuters ribbon for your nametag.



Letters from EPA Administrator to FORTUNE 500 CEOs Urge: “Get on the List!”

Over 500 letters bearing EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson’s signature were sent this month to the Chief Executive Officers of FORTUNE 500 companies. The Administrator encouraged them to apply for the **2006 Best Workplaces for Commuters from the FORTUNE 500 List of Companies** or, if they are already designated, to be sure to update their information to include any new additions. Submissions for the 2006 list must be made by **August 31, 2006**.

Dates to Remember...

- August 27-30** **2006 Association for Commuter Transportation International Conference**
Sponsored in part by Best Workplaces for Commuters, this four-day conference in Boston highlights such topics as telework, parking management, and marketing, as well as offering professional development courses and workshops. Click here for more information:
< <http://data.memberclicks.com/site/asct/bostonregistrationpkt.pdf> >
- August 29** **2006 Race to Excellence Awards Ceremony**
Awards will be presented at the Association for Commuter Transportation International Conference (see above)
- August 31** **Application deadline for Best Workplaces for Commuters from the FORTUNE 500 List of Companies:** < www.bwc.gov/campaign/f500-exclusive.htm >
- September 13** **Clean Air Excellence Awards entry deadline:** < www.epa.gov/air/caaac/clean_award.html >
- September 28-30** **College & University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) National Conference and Expo 2006** “Reflecting on the Past, Focusing on the Future” (of higher education human resources management). Best Workplaces for Commuters is a sponsor of this conference in San Diego, CA, which includes formal educational sessions to informal collegial exchanges. Stop by our booth (#2) to get a ribbon for your nametag identifying you as being one of our partners in Best Workplaces for Commuters! Register at: < www.cupahr.org/conference2006/reg-info.html >
- Week of Oct. 16** **Metro list releases** tentatively planned to occur in conjunction with the **Best Workplaces for Commuters from the FORTUNE 500 List of Companies release:** Houston, North Texas, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle, Triangle Region of North Carolina, Tucson. (New Jersey also anticipates an October list release, possibly in conjunction with FORTUNE 500.)
- October 18** **Best Workplaces for Commuters from the FORTUNE 500 List of Companies Release**
< www.bwc.gov/campaign/f500-exclusive.htm >

Clean Air Excellence Awards – Another Chance to Shine!

You're doing a great job promoting commuter benefits and improving air quality as a Best Workplaces for Commuters employer or BWC Network member (or both), and we love to see our partners get the recognition their programs deserve. Do you feel your program shows real innovation and leadership? Here's a great opportunity to get more visibility and kudos for the work you've done.



Now in its seventh year, the **Clean Air Excellence Awards Program**, sponsored by EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, recognizes programs, projects, or technologies that directly or indirectly (i.e., by encouraging actions) reduce emissions, are innovative, provide a model for others, and result in positive, sustainable outcomes. The five basic categories for award are:

- Clean Air Technology
- Community Action
- Education/Outreach
- Regulatory/Policy Innovations
- Transportation Efficiency Innovations

There are also two special award categories. One is for excellence in work that cuts across two or more of the five categories above. The other is to recognize individual leadership, commitment, and achievement.

For more information on the awards program, how to apply, award criteria, and award winners from previous years, go to < www.epa.gov/air/caaac/about.html >. Applications must be postmarked by **September 13**. The application is not hard to complete, so why not fill one out for yourself or pass the word along to someone you think is deserving of recognition, too? We hope to see our fine Best Workplaces for Commuters partners represented when the awards are presented next spring in Washington, DC.

Best Workplaces for Commuters in the News...

Here are some more of the recent articles on Best Workplaces for Commuters online or in trade journals. You may find some good ideas for your program or quotes for your newsletter... or even see your own employer or community mentioned!

"Commuter Aid" Syracuse Post Standard (Syracuse, NY), Aug. 7, 2006. For article text, click here:
< www.bwc.gov/pdf/commuter-aid-article.pdf >

"The roads not taken: Creative, economical ways of getting to campus abound" Stanford Report, July 26, 2006
For article text, click here:
www.bwc.gov/pdf/economical-ways-of-getting-to-campus.pdf

"The Best Workplaces for Commuters annual **Race to Excellence** gives community partners another way to ignite community interest in congestion and air quality issues" It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air, July 25, 2006.
For article, click here:
< www.italladdsup.gov/about/inthenews_race.asp >

"Regarding oil, all in US are facing a crisis" Albany Times Union (Albany, NY), July 20, 2006.
For article text, click here:
< www.bwc.gov/pdf/oil-crisis-albany-new-york.pdf >

For more media coverage of Best Workplaces for Commuters, check out the Web site at:
< www.bwc.gov/media/index.htm >



BWC Network News

August 2006

Fun Facts...

A national survey conducted by the Dieringer Research Group from August 15 – September 1, 2005 indicated a **30% increase in employee telecommuters between 2004 and 2005**. The survey also found that, out of 135.4 million American workers, a great many worked at home or from other places outside of their employer's office:

- 45.1 million worked from home,
- 24.3 million people worked at client's or customer's place of business,
- 20.6 million in their car,
- 16.3 million while on vacation,
- 15.1 million at a park or outdoor location, and
- 7.8 million while on a train or airplane

Overall, the survey indicated that 26.1 million people worked from home at least one day a month, and 22.2 million at least once a week.

The study was conducted for ITAC, the Telework Advisory Group for WorldatWork. The press release announcing the study's findings and linking to more information can be found at:

www.workingfromanywhere.org/news/pr100405.htm



Watch for our *Race to Excellence* Special Edition after the ACT Conference!



Visit www.bwc.gov Call 888 856-3131 E-mail bwc@epa.gov

