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News Release

OZONE SEASON 2005

Commute Solutions offers matchlist request incentive program

San Antonio, April 15, 2005 – You know San Antonio is at its hottest from April through October, but did you know that this is also when ground-level ozone is at its highest? Commute Solutions, an alternative commute program coordinated by the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), works to educate the public on air pollution and encourage the public to take volunteer action through alternative commute planning, such as carpooling. This year, Commute Solutions and Gus Mann Automotive will offer an incentive program to citizens requesting a matchlist for any of the alternative commute programs.

Each month of Ozone Season (April-October), Commute Solutions will award free oil change coupons, redeemable at Gus Mann Automotive, to two randomly drawn matchlist requests. All matchlist requests processed during Ozone Season will receive a Car Care 101 booklet to help keep vehicles at peak performance. Cleaner vehicles help keep our region's air a little cleaner.

During this time of rising gas prices and pollution, the need for alternative commuting practices is significant. Carpooling saves commuters time and money. While this is obvious for commuters living significant distances away from their work, it is also true for commuters living nearby. According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), driving alone costs the average American 56.2 cents per mile; thus, one commuter driving 13 miles each way spends \$14.61 each day on the home-to-work commute—that's \$73.05 per week and \$3,799 per year.

Aside from carpooling, the AACOG Commute Solutions staff also provides other free commute coordination services, including Bike Buddies (matches employees who live within biking distance of their workplace), SchoolPool (helps parents find alternatives to their home-to-school-to-work commute), and Vanpool matching. The state of Texas allows a 10 percent insurance discount to Vanpool participants. According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Best Workplaces for Commuterssm, employers can provide up to \$105 a month in tax-free transit/vanpool benefits to employees. As a result, this benefit is less expensive for an employer than giving an employee a \$105 raise, and the employee takes home more.

According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), exposure to ground-level ozone can cause:

- Shortness of breath;
- Coughing or wheezing;
- Headaches and nausea; and
- Throat and lung irritation.

Ground-level ozone's effects are most profound on children, senior citizens, and those with respiratory conditions such as asthma or emphysema. Reducing the number of vehicles on the road reduces the potential amount of ozone that can be made.

Contact Commute Solutions at (210) C-A-R-P-O-O-L (227-7665) or visit www.aacog.com/commutesolutions for more information on our services.

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