

Green Mobile News

TranSComm

Transportation Solutions for Commuters, Inc.



The Earth Day Edition

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A Note from the Editor

Hello all,

Spring's annual awakening often rekindles our appreciation of the Earth. We begin to notice the beauty of nature as it re-emerges after a long winter slumber. Lately, I have found myself deeply appreciating the all-too-limited amounts of greenery as it grows and fills the formerly bare, small front yards along the urban street I dwell on.

It's appropriate then that we celebrate the Earth each April.

The contents of this Earth Day Edition of Green Mobile News are diverse.

A report on the Department of Environmental Protection's 2010 annual analysis of our campus and its commuters offers insight into how we affect our environment daily by commuting.

Whether we're running to catch a bus, picking up the keys to our cars to drive, or strapping on our helmets and sneakers to cycle to work, we sometimes forget to consider how our commuting choices, so often carried out mindlessly as part of daily routines, affect our peers and our environment.

Then, sometimes, we remember to be considerate of the Earth. And, sometimes, others actually take note of our actions.

This past month, Boston Medical Center, Boston University Medical Campus and Boston Health Care for the Homeless were recognized by the state in the first annual "ECO" awards, which are covered in this issue.

And NuRide, MASS Department of Transportation's online alternative commute tracker, aspires to not only recognize, but reward all those who choose an environmentally friendly commute! More information on NuRide, in addition to more news concerning other sustainability initiatives in transportation, is available later in this newsletter.

I hope you enjoy the Earth Day Edition of Green Mobile News, and I also hope that you will take a moment on a forthcoming spring morning to take in the sunshine and to appreciate this good Earth.

Happy commuting and Happy Spring to all,
Jen Covino, Editor

Coming up!

Stay tuned for information regarding **Bike Week 2011**, which takes place this year between Saturday, May 14 and Friday, May 20. TranSComm will be hosting many events: bike safety check-ups, a cyclist luncheon, free T-shirt giveaways and lots more. So take your bike out of the cellar or attic and start cycling!

TranSComm Members Receive ECO Awards



On Friday, April 1st, Boston Medical Center (BMC), Boston University Medical Campus (BUMC) and Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) were awarded the Excellence in Commuter Options (ECO) award. This recognition highlights Massachusetts employers in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through decreasing drive-alone trips while encouraging employees to travel to work by public transit, carpools, vanpools, or by bicycling or walking.

The breakfast award ceremony took place at the Massachusetts State

House. BMC and BUMC received the highest level award, the Pinnacle Award. Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program won the Leadership Award. The first annual Massachusetts Department of Transportation ECO Awards were a celebration of the exemplary contributions in the field of Commuter Options that Massachusetts employers have made toward creating a more sustainable and healthier Commonwealth.

Congratulations to BMC, BUMC and BHCHP and to TranSComm for this prestigious recognition.

Results from the Department of Environmental Protection's 2010 Annual Survey

At the end of 2010, TranSComm filed a combined report on behalf of Boston University Medical Campus and Boston Medical Center detailing the commuting practices of faculty, staff, and full-time students. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) analyzed statistics concerning the commuting populace's use of alternative transportation methods in contrast to driving alone and drew conclusions concerning our impact on the environment. The DEP determined that of the facilities' 17,481 commuters, only 10,230 met state qualifications to be considered an "applicable commuter" as either an employee or a student. Applicable employees work more than 17 hours a week for at least 20 weeks per calendar year; begin and start their workday between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.; and use their personal vehicles during work less than five times per month for work purposes. Conversely, applicable students go to school full-time and reside off-campus; begin their classes between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.; and need their vehicles for class assignments or after-school work less than five times a month.

Commuters voluntarily participated in the random survey during the five-day workweek of Monday, October 22, 2010 through Friday, October 25, 2010. A random sampling of 965 commuters was taken for statistical analysis.

Since the 1999 baseline filing, BUMC and BMC have "together achieved 25,444 Drive Alone Commute Trip (DACT) reductions" meaning the two institutions are

responsible for 25,444 fewer drives alone to work. Public transit is by far the most utilized alternative as host to 14,472 commutes. This number represents approximately 57% and an overwhelming majority of the alternative commutes. Other popular alternatives cited included carpooling, walking, telecommuting and cycling.

Of the surveyed commuters, 31% drove alone to work; 27% took public transportation; 9% walked; 7% utilized shuttle services offered by the hospital or university; 5% bicycled; 4% carpooled; 2% drove alone in a hybrid; 1% used a taxi; and 1% telecommuted.

Of those who drove alone to work, most cited "irregular hours" and the "inconvenience of public transit [and its schedules]" as the primary causes for not seeking a more environmentally friendly alternative commute.

The most used MBTA lines of service were the Blue Line (44%), various Bus Lines (22%), and the Orange Line (9%). The top bus routes included the #1 (31%), the CT1 (19%), and the #10 (15%).

Commuters mostly hail from neighborhoods including Roxbury (10%), Brookline (6%), Cambridge (5%), Fenway (5%) and Dorchester (4%).

The typical commute to or from work averaged between 11-45 minutes with most commuting less than ten total miles back or forth to the campus.

Mayor Menino announces “Hubway” Bicycle-Sharing System

Mayor Menino has announced the creation of Boston’s first bicycle-sharing service, Hubway, which is scheduled for completion in time for the upcoming summer season. Bostonians will finally have access to public bicycle shares, joining the ranks of Americans, Canadians and the French whose cities already offer this environmentally friendly transit system.

The \$6 million project is to be financed primarily by a \$3 million grant awarded to the city by the Federal Transit Authority, who recognized that bicycle-sharing will supplement public transportation by providing the first-leg of many commutes. Another \$1.5 million has been donated by local businesses. New Balance led the way with a \$600,000 donation to the cause. Corporate sponsorship and revenue generated by riding fees will cover annual operating costs, making the system self-sufficient economically. No tax dollars were used in creating Hubway.

Boston will initially install sixty-one kiosks this summer, which will host 300 bikes close by commuting centers; however, the Hubway fleet can potentially expand to include 5,000 bicycles throughout a multi-city network of more than 300 kiosks if the pilot program is successful. Transportation planners from Cambridge, Somerville, Brookline and other nearby neighborhoods have expressed interest in joining Hubway as early as 2012. Cyclists can pick up a bicycle at one location and drop it off at another.

Cyclists can select a membership plan that best suits their specific riding habits from a variety of plans (ranging between \$5 daily memberships and \$85 annual memberships). Online kiosks will be available for registration at each station throughout the city. The first half-hour of cycling is free with rates incrementally increasing for more time needed thereafter.

The bicycle-sharing system in Paris is by-far the most recognized in the world. Montreal and Washington, DC have also developed large-scale networks. In fact, Hubway’s developers, Alta Bicycle Share, planned Paris and Washington’s celebrated bicycle-sharing systems.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, in collaboration with Action for Boston Community Development and other planning bodies, have played an influential role in the coordination of this project. The venture should bolster Boston’s reputation as a bike-friendly city, an initiative spearheaded by Mayor Menino who began undertaking steps toward this goal as early as 2007.



Green America – A Series on Why We Need Alternative Energy (Part II)

By Deedee Sun, TransComm Work Study Student

MBTA commuters remain divided on what the policy should be for nuclear power plants in the U.S. as Japan continues to battle the crisis at the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant.

The shocking series of catastrophes at Fukushima led some commuters to say “nuclear no more” and that the U.S. should let existing permits on nuclear plants expire, while others remain adamant in their support for nuclear energy.

Nuclear energy plants emit little to no greenhouse gases, and provide about 20 percent of energy in the U.S., according to the most recent data provided by the Nuclear Energy Institute, from 2009.

Plug-in Electric Vehicles produce zero tailpipe emissions, but in order for them to benefit the environment, the source of the electricity used to power them must be clean energy. Nuclear plants are currently the only source of alternative energy that doesn't depend on external factors such as wind, flowing water, or sunlight. This makes nuclear energy more reliable and the location of the power plants more flexible than other non-fossil fuel options.

“Should we build more nuclear power plants here?” pondered Scott Gillespie, 53. “My gut reaction is to say no,” he said. “There's no way to safeguard it completely. Japan thought they were in the clear, and now it's a fiasco over there.” Gillespie, a practice assistant in the Radiology department at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, acknowledged the limited options for alternative energy other than nuclear power. “Hydro, geothermal, wind – they don't work as well,” he mused. “I'd say the more important thing is to use less energy, not just look for something to replace coal and gas.”

Others remain committed in their support for Nuclear Energy in the U.S.

Adriana Lavergne, 37, an editor at DoubleO Publishing Services from Arlington, MA, thinks we need to revisit the safety standards of existing nuclear power plants, but finds it impractical to let permits expire. “Nuclear energy is necessary. Many people, especially in California, rely heavily on this source for energy,” Lavergne said. “Sure there are drawbacks to using nuclear power, but what doesn't have a drawback these days?”

Bridget Ipswich, 43, a nurse at Beth Israel, supports nuclear energy in the U.S. “We absolutely should reissue permits to existing plants. We should support those and continue to build more power plants,” Ipswich said. “We are running out of energy options. There isn't much we can do but build more.”

Some are more adamant in the stance against nuclear energy.

Marie Pierre, 38, clinical safety associate from Cambridge, said, “We should eventually stop using nuclear energy. It can’t be done overnight, but it’s important to phase it out. The damage that radiation causes to our environment and the people isn’t worth the environmental benefit it brings. It just doesn’t balance out.”

Brian O’Hearn, 26, is a staff accountant at Phoenix Media Group from Brookline. “I’m not sure if we should build new plants just yet,” O’Hearn said. “We should first evaluate the ones we have now. I know there’s a plant near Plymouth. We don’t get earthquakes there, but it’s near the ocean – you never know what could happen.”

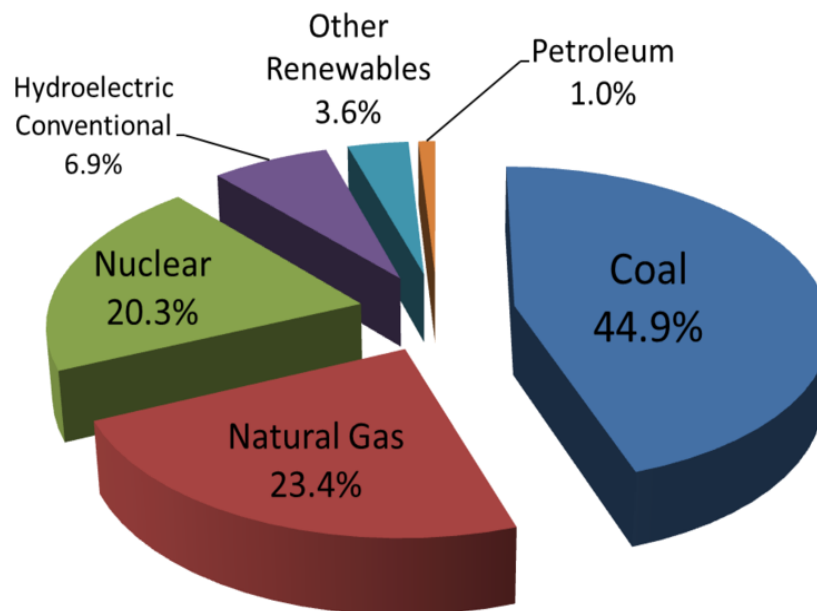
Although an earthquake initiated the meltdown at Fukushima, it is important to clarify that most of the damage occurred because of an extended loss of electricity to the reactor cores at the plant. When emergency generators failed, the source of power that kept the plant cool disappeared, and this led to the meltdown.

The extent of damage at the Fukushima plant would have been considerably reduced if there been additional back-up methods in place for the emergency generators, and the plant was kept cool.

As Earth’s supply of fossil fuels dwindles, nuclear energy becomes an increasingly crucial alternative. Safety regulations and standards of U.S. nuclear power plants need to be revamped and reexamined. The need for nuclear energy continues to incite controversy, but attention must be paid to this crucial question.

For more information, visit the Nuclear Energy Institute’s website: www.nei.org

2009 U.S. Electricity Generation by Source



Good green news: TranSComm & NuRide

It is with great pleasure that TranSComm introduces NuRide to our commuting community! Get rewards when you walk, bike, carpool, vanpool, telecommute or take public transit (such as the subway, train, bus, ferry, etc.) It's a wonderful (and fun!) way to track your commute, see how much money and emissions you've saved and collect rewards for every green trip.

It's so easy, simply: CLICK, COMMUTE, COLLECT! CLICK to join, COMMUTE your green trip, and COLLECT your rewards!

PLEASE NOTE: IT'S IMPORTANT to register with your work or school email address (do not use Gmail, yahoo, etc.) Your email address will connect you to your place of work/school. As an extra bonus, when you register use the promo code "TranSComm" and you will receive 1,000 extra points to spend on any of the rewards available to you from dozens of local, on-line and national sponsors.

To begin, please visit: www.nuride.com

Feel free to call TranSComm with any questions.



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