



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 1, 2012

## **28 commuters form area's two newest vanpools** *Indy-area residents defy rising gas prices by traveling together to work*

Twenty-eight more commuters will get to and from work in vanpools starting June 4.

One new vanpool meets at the Sam's Club in Greenwood, where the 15 participants board the van and travel to Columbus, where they work for Cummins. The other new vanpool meets at the Wal-Mart in Westfield, where 13 participants board the van and travel to Kokomo, where they work for Delphi.

Until recently, most of the 28 commuters drove to work separately. Now, with help from Central Indiana Commuter Services (CICS), they've formed vanpools that will transport them to work while also relieving Central Indiana roads of 26 additional vehicles.

Here's how the vanpool works: each participant pays a monthly fare for their seat on the van (provided by an outside vendor that CICS arranges) and shares the cost of gas. The vanpoolers meet at their designated park-and-ride location every morning and return to it after work. All of the passengers are volunteers, including the driver, who takes the van home every night.

The two new vanpools' schedules are below.

### **Greenwood to Columbus:**

7:15 a.m. Volunteer driver and passengers (15 total) meet in the parking lot at Sam's Club, off I-65 at Exit 99 in Greenwood.

8 a.m. Van drops passengers off at several Cummins buildings.

5 p.m. Van begins picking up passengers at same locations as drop off, with an expected arrival at Sam's Club at 6 p.m.

**Westfield to Kokomo:**

7:10 a.m. Volunteer driver and passengers (13 total) meet in the parking lot at the Wal-Mart at 151<sup>st</sup> Street and US 31 in Westfield.

7:50 a.m. Van arrives at Delphi.

5:00 p.m. Van departs for return trip.

“Vanpools are a great option for people who want to save money, reduce their carbon footprint, and use their commuting time to read or do things other than drive,” says Lori Kaplan, business development and vanpool manager for CICS.

With gas prices near \$4 a gallon, residents who vanpool stand to save thousands of dollars in transportation costs each year. The fuel costs alone for a 70-mile daily round trip commute are more than \$230 per month.

“When the hidden costs – such as routine maintenance, insurance and vehicle depreciation -- are factored in, the real costs can exceed \$850 a month,” said Kaplan. “By contrast, the cost for vanpoolers with a 70-mile daily commute averages \$120 per month.”

According to federal law, employers can provide a transit benefit of up to \$125 a month to defray costs of public transit, which include public bus service and vanpooling. For employees who do not receive such a benefit, CICS is able to provide a monthly subsidy of \$50 per passenger for vanpooling. Vanpool participants with a 70-mile daily commute who take advantage of the CICS subsidy can reduce their annual commute costs by over \$8,000.

Vanpools offer a significant environmental benefit, too. Every car on the road emits its own weight in carbon dioxide each year. Carbon dioxide is the leading cause of greenhouse gasses. The average carbon savings per vehicle taken off the road as a result of joining a vanpool is 10,000 pounds per year.

CICS helps connect commuters who want to carpool or vanpool. A federally funded Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) service, CICS helps people who commute in or out of the 9-county Central Indiana region use alternative transportation to get to work.

CICS has started nine other area vanpools, four of which commute to DFAS from Anderson, Greenfield, Plainfield, Westfield and the south side of Indianapolis. Other vanpools originate in Bloomington, Cloverdale and Westfield/Carmel, and commute to varied locations such as Delphi in Kokomo and key downtown Indianapolis stops, including AT&T, the Federal Building, VA Hospital, Riley Hospital, Ely Lilly and the State Government Center.

In all, 132 Central Indiana residents participate in eleven vanpools to get to and from work.

“One of the big selling points is that registered commuters have access to a free cab ride home, up to 50 miles, for such emergencies as a sick child or for those who have to stay late unexpectedly,” says Kaplan.

There are several open seats in existing vanpools, as well as the capacity to start an unlimited number of new vanpools throughout central Indiana. For more information, visit [www.327ride.net](http://www.327ride.net) or call 317- 327-RIDE (7433) for more information.

Funded through a CMAQ (Construction Mitigation and Air Quality Act) grant, the CICS program is designed to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion by promoting the use of alternative transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, biking and walking. There is no charge for employers or employees to use CICS’ services.

###

MEDIA CONTACT: Jen Schmits Thomas, 317-441-2487, [jen@jtprinc.com](mailto:jen@jtprinc.com)  
Lori Kaplan, CIRTA, 317-327-RIDE, [lkaplan@cirta.us](mailto:lkaplan@cirta.us)