

Way to **GO**

American Idle

How to survive the carpool line

inside:

What a Trip!

Body Mechanics

Winter Driving Tips

Boost Your **BIG** Business

with **BIG** Ideas from BMC

In today's business environment, it's more important than ever to take advantage of any opportunity that can provide a competitive edge. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council offers services and products that can help enhance employee morale and also assist in strategic planning.

Happy Employees are Productive Employees



Traffic congestion and fluctuations in the price of gasoline are just two of life's little annoyances that can add up to big-time stress for your employees. BMC's RideShare program can save your employees time and money, at no cost to you. AND – reducing employee stress can boost productivity.

RideShare is a free computerized matching service that assists in forming carpools and vanpools. Applicants are entered into a database of thousands of commuters, covering the area from southern Pennsylvania to

northern Virginia. RideShare provides a personalized list of potential matches to each applicant, who then makes his or her own arrangements.

Both employees and employers benefit from RideShare.

Commuters who carpool or vanpool save an average of \$2,000 per year on gas, maintenance and insurance. That doesn't include potential savings in parking.

Employees who carpool or vanpool are more likely to arrive on time than workers who drive alone. They're more likely to arrive at work feeling relaxed and ready to take on the day.

RideShare services are free to employers as well as employees. Your local RideShare coordinator can provide information for you to share with your employees, or even set up a Transportation Fair at your workplace and provide information directly to your employees. RideShare coordinators can also share information about transit, including the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit for employers who provide qualified commuter benefits and the Commuter Choice voucher program.

Call BMC's RideShare Coordinator at 410-732-6000 or visit: www.metrorideshare.com to learn more.

Community Profiles

If you need economic or demographic data about the Baltimore region, one jurisdiction, or even a particular neighborhood, chances are you can find what you're looking for on the BMC website.

BMC has compiled a wealth of information in a series of 94 Community Profiles. Each includes data on population, households, types of housing, labor force, employment, education, income, residential and commercial development, and socioeconomic projections. Maps indicating census tracts and transportation analysis zones accompany each profile.

To learn more, visit: www.baltometro.org/CP/CommunityProf.html

Know Your Market – Today & Tomorrow

Does your business have a strategic plan? Do you know where you want to be a decade from now, or where your customers are likely to be?

Demographic experts at BMC can provide comprehensive support for strategic planning. BMC analyzes census data and tracks development trends to determine the transportation needs of the region over the next 10, 20 or 30 years. You can use the same tools to help identify potential customers, map out delivery routes, determine where to expand, or find a labor pool.

Customized Demographic Data & Mapping Services

BMC offers comprehensive demographic information, including population, housing units, education, occupation, and disability with breakdowns by race, gender or age. Maps can provide a complete, easy-to-read profile.

Building Permit Data System

For more than three decades, BMC has been compiling and organizing the region's building permit information. BMC staff uses this information as a leading indicator of new regional development patterns, and so can you. Data from permits for both new and renovated residential, commercial/industrial and institutional building projects are available by subscription as printed reports and a searchable electronic database.

For more information, call the Regional Information Center at 410-732-9570 or e-mail ric@baltometro.org.



Baltimore Metropolitan Council
PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

inside



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Have a comment or suggestion? Contact us at waytogo@baltometro.org.

For information on alternate commute options contact RideShare at 410.732.6000 1.866.645.0022 www.MetroRideshare.com

On the cover: Preschool carpool line at Garrison Forest School.

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Products that will make you a more stylish, savvy commuter

The last quarter of 2005 will surely go down in memory as a time when \$2.99 for a gallon of gas seemed like a bargain, at least for a while. Then, almost as precipitously as the numbers at the pump went up, the price came back down.

While the prices were at an all-time high, many folks found ways to keep their budgets in check by trading in their gas guzzlers, finding alternative ways to get to work, and just plain driving less. We feature a few of them in this issue.

Although the price of gasoline is down for the moment, we're being warned about increases in the cost of heating fuels this winter. To all those who began practicing driving economies but are tempted to revert to their old ways, I impart a bit of wisdom from my grandmother: A penny saved is a penny saved. The pennies you save at the pump can help keep your family warm this winter.

You know what to do. Keep your vehicle well-maintained. Make sure your tires are properly inflated. Combine trips. Try carpooling, transit or even walking to work. You'll save money and maybe even add some productive time to your day. And you know what? That's a pretty good way to start the new year. Happy 2006!

Barbara Herron
Editor



American Idle

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING THAT IT takes a village to raise a child. In the Baltimore suburbs, it takes a battalion of carpool moms, armed with calendars and phone lists, to make sure that their children get to school, sports, jobs and social events on schedule. Whether they're full-time moms or have outside careers, these women all agree – carpooling isn't just for grown-ups.

Julie Manley's family lives in the Lutherville-Timonium area. Her three daughters attend Garrison Forest School in Owings Mills. Julie carools with another family with two girls. She usually drives all five girls in the morning, but shares afternoon driving duties. Two of her daughters are ready to come home at 4, but one has sports until 5. "The other mother and I talk every week and figure out what works," Julie explained.

On a typical day, Julie and her daughters leave home at 7:20 to pick up the other girls. She knows a number of routes and adjusts according to traffic conditions. "I can always find a back road," Julie said.

School starts at 8:15, but parents tend to drop the girls off over a period of about half-an-hour, so getting in and out in the morning is generally not a problem.

Afternoon pick-ups are a different matter. "Carpool lines are a trip," Julie explained. "You have to sit there and idle. I listen to books on tape while I wait."

The lower school line is very structured. There are five pick-up stations, each with a teacher equipped with a walkie-talkie who identifies the arriving parent and calls for the child. *(Continued on page 11)*

Their cars may be idling,
but these moms are anything but...



Lower school students at Garrison Forest School line up to await their rides.

The Commuter Bus

How to add hours to your day ... and save money, too.

What do you do on your daily commute? If you're one of the 900,000 or so people in the Baltimore region who drives to work alone every day, your options are limited. You can listen to music, news, talk radio, talking books or educational material. You probably use your cell-phone once in a while, which really should be set up for hands-free use. You may even try eating with one hand, all the while keeping your eyes on the road. It's generally not a great way to start and end the day.

What would you do with an extra hour or two a day, all to yourself? And what if taking back that time would also save you money? Sound too good to be true? It's not.

We recently caught up with some Fallston residents who have done just that, and would never go back to life the way it used to be. They're all regular riders of the #411 commuter bus that provides daily service from Hickory/Bel Air in Harford County, to downtown Baltimore and the Johns Hopkins medical campus in east Baltimore. Gloria Siekierski has been riding the bus to her downtown job with the Taxpayer Advocate Service for 18 years. "I wouldn't work downtown if I had to drive," she said. She can read or take a nap, and there's even a bathroom on the bus. "It's just more comfortable."

"I don't have the stress of driving," she added, "and with today's gas prices and parking, there's just no comparison."

Rose Rizza has been working downtown for about 20 years, and used to wish she could ride the bus, but with



John A. Rizzo/Photodisc/Getty Images

young children at home, she felt she needed to have her car available for emergencies. Now the children are older, and when gas prices spiked after Hurricane Katrina, Rose was ready to make the change.

“I was commuting about 1,400 miles a month. I was paying \$80 a month to park, \$20 in tunnel tolls, and more than \$200 for gas,” Rose said. “Now I’m driving 40 miles a month, and I’m only paying \$126 for the bus. There’s no way I’d go back to what I used to do.”

Not only is Rose saving several hundred dollars a month, but she’s enjoying her new-found leisure time. “This is quality time for me,” Rose said. “You just don’t get this kind of time to yourself when you drive home to a house full of kids. Plus, I’m much more relaxed when I get home.”

So far, Rose has finished crocheting an afghan and has started working on some cross-stitch projects during her commutes. “It used to be 11 o’clock at night before I could slow down and work on some of these things.”

Rose has also found another benefit of riding the bus. Sometimes she gets off the bus at a stop about six blocks from her office and walks the rest of the way. “It’s nice being out,” she added. “This is something I didn’t do normally. Now I get to have some exercise I didn’t have before.”

Rose and Gloria both ride on the same bus, and talked about their “bus family.”

“We’re all on a first name basis,” Gloria said. “I love it.”

Beth Ireland-Brady rides an earlier bus, but she also talked about her bus family. “I’m usually one of the last ones to arrive in the morning,” Beth said. “If I get here earlier, somebody says, ‘Oh-oh, the bus must be late today.’”

Beth has been riding the bus for a total of six years, with a break when she was working irregular hours. She, too, is saving money by riding the bus. “I used to go through two tanks of gas a week.



Rose Rizza and Gloria Siekierski wait for the 411 commuter bus at the Fallston Park and Ride.

Now I can go almost two weeks before filling up.”

But even before the price of gas went up, Beth considered riding the bus a luxury. “I love riding the bus,” she said. “I read.”

She also appreciates leaving the driving to someone else. “On bad days, or when there are traffic incidents, the bus

until 7:10. The afternoon buses leave Hopkins at 3:30, 4:00, 4:30, 5:00 and 5:30, and take an average of an hour and twenty minutes to return to Hickory, again making stops in downtown Baltimore, Cheyenne and Fallston.

The MTA also offers commuter bus service to Baltimore from Columbia,

“I don’t have the stress of driving, and with today’s gas prices and parking, there’s just no comparison.”

drivers are highly creative about finding alternate routes,” she said. “They’re very good drivers, always on time, and apologize for delays. But I don’t think we’ve ever been more than 10 minutes late.”

The first of five morning buses on the 411 route leaves Hickory at 5:27, stops at the Fallston and Cheyenne Park and Ride lots, and arrives at Wolfe and Madison Streets at 6:46, with a number of intermediate stops in downtown Baltimore. There are four more morning buses, one leaving approximately every half hour

Laurel, Churchville/Bel Air, Forest Hill/Bel Air and Havre de Grace. In addition, there are commuter buses from Columbia, Annapolis, Kent Island and Clarksville/Ellicott City to downtown Washington. Most buses make intermediate stops. Visit www.mtmaryland.com and click on “Commuter Bus” for maps and schedules.

No eating, drinking or smoking is allowed on commuter buses. Passengers may listen to music, but must use earphones. Some, but not all, buses are equipped with rest rooms.

Save Time. Save Money. Save Your Sanity!

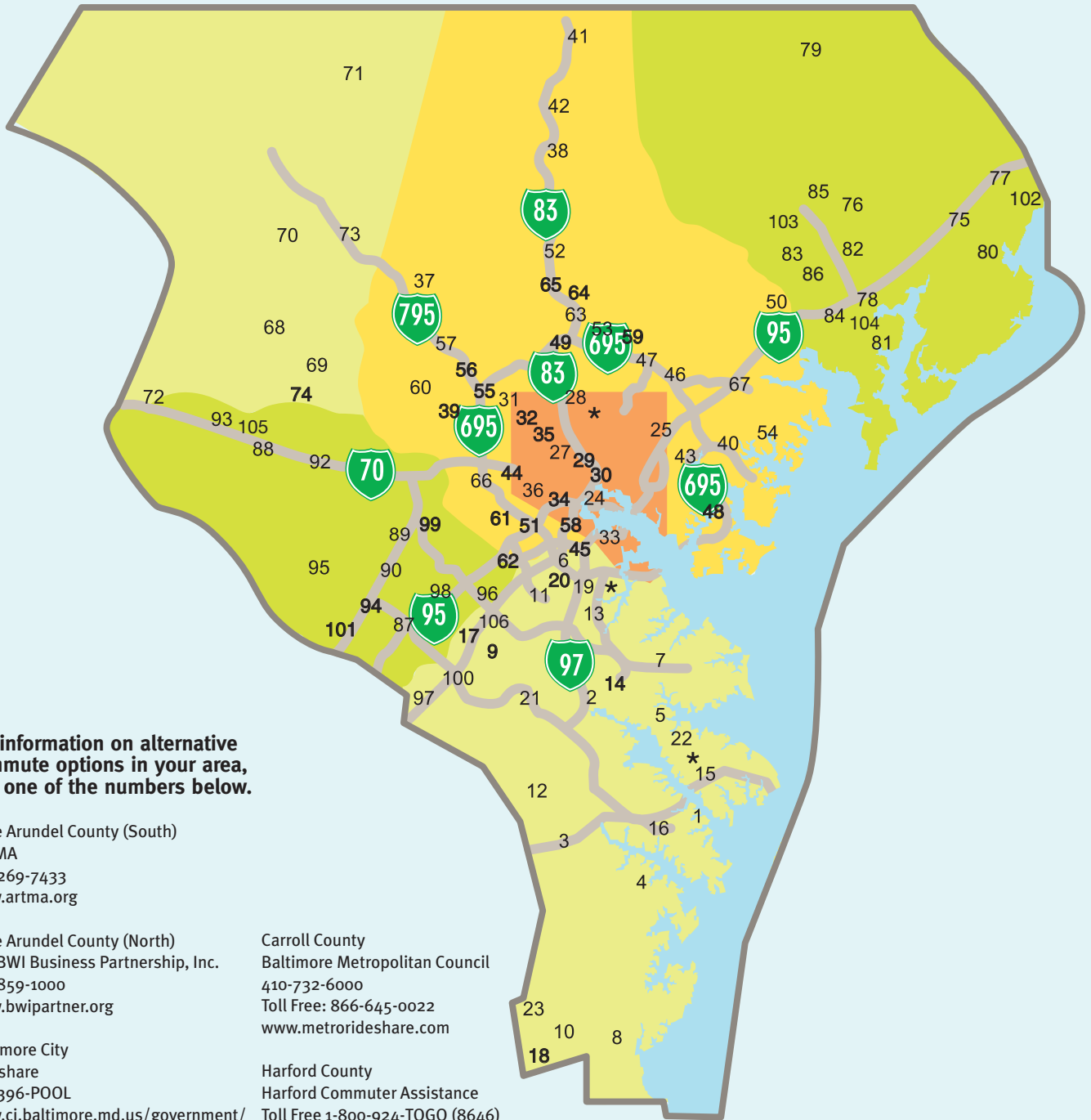
The Baltimore region is served by 106 park and ride facilities with more than 28,000 parking spaces. Park and Ride lots can save money and a lot of aggravation.

Meet a carpool and split the costs of gas and parking at your destination. Park for FREE at a Metro or light rail lot and take the train to work. Avoid DC traffic and parking by taking the MARC train to Union Station and connecting with Metro to reach your destination. RideShare offers free matching services for commuters who need help finding a carpool partner or vanpool. Each jurisdiction has a RideShare coordinator who enters applicant information into a database that encompasses both the Baltimore and Washington regions. The coordinator forwards a list of matches to the applicant, who may then contact potential ride-sharers and make commuting arrangements.

NAME	LOCATION	LOT #	NAME	LOCATION	LOT #
Navy Stadium	Rowe Blvd MD 70 & Taylor Ave	1	Hunt Valley Light Rail	Shawan Rd E of McCormick Rd	52
Benfield	I 97 & Benfield Blvd	2	Lutherville Light Rail	Ridgely Rd W of MD 45	53
Davidsonville	John Hanson Hwy & Davidsonville	3	Martin State Airport	2600 Eastern Blvd	54
Hahn Dr	MD 2 & Hahn Dr	5	Milford Mill METRO	Mill Rd W of MD 140	55
Hammonds Ferry Rd	Hammonds Ferry Rd & Baltimore	6	Old Court METRO	Old Court Rd & Reisterstown Rd	56
Mountain Rd	MD 177 & Catherine Ave	7	Owings Mills METRO	Painters Mill Rd & Nwstern Expwy	57
Tracy's Landing	MD 2 & MD 258	8	Patapsco Ave Light Rail	Patapsco Ave & Baltimore St	58
Wigley Ave	MD 175 & Wigley Ave	9	Providence Rd	Providence Rd N of I 695	59
Bristol	MD 4 & MD 258	10	Randallstown	MD 26 & Chapman Rd 50	60
BWI MARC Station	MD 170 & Amtrak Way	11	Southwest/Univ of MD/Catonsville CC	Metropolitan Blvd & MD 166	61
Crofton	MD 3 & Crofton Country Club	12	St Denis	Arlington Ave Near US 1	62
Cromwell Station Light Rail	MD 648 & Dorsey Rd	13	Timonium Fairgrounds	Deereco Rd & Padonia Rd	63
Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Dept	MD 2 & Earleigh Heights Rd	14	Timonium Bus. Park (Drop Off Only)	Business Park Dr & Aylesbury Rd	64
Glen Burnie County Government	MD 648 & MD 2 & MD 3	15	Cockeysville/Warren Rd Light Rail	Warren Rd W of Beaverdam Rd	65
Harry S Truman	Harry S Truman Pkwy & Riva Rd	16	White Marsh	Honeygo Blvd & White Marsh Bl	67
Jessup MARC Station	MD 175 & Old Jessup Rd	17	Dorsey CrossRds	MD 97 & MD 26	68
Lower Pindell Rd	MD 4 & MD 980	18	Eldersburg	MD 32 & Circle Drive S of MD 26	69
N Linthicum Light Rail	MD 170 S of MD 648	19	Fenby	MD 97 & MD 32	70
Nursery Rd Light Rail	MD 648 & MD 168	20	Manchester	MD 27 & MD 30	71
Odenton MARC Station	MD 175 & MD 170	21	Mount Air	MD 27 N of I 70	72
Severna Park	MD 2 & Jones Station Rd	22	Sandymount	MD 140 & Green Mill Rd	73
Wayson's Corner	MD 4 & MD 408	23	Sykesville	MD 851 & MD 32 & 3rd Ave	74
Anne Arundel Community College	SPECIAL EVENT PARKING ONLY	*	Aberdeen	MD 22 N of I 95	75
MVA Glen Burnie	SPECIAL EVENT PARKING ONLY	*	Bynum Run	MD 22 & Jackson Blvd	76
Camden Station MARC	Howard St & Camden St	24	Havre de Grace	MD 155 & I 95	77
Gardenville	US 1 & Arizona Ave	25	MD 924 Intersection	I 95 & MD 24 & Edgewood Rd	78
Memorial Stadium	33rd St & Ednor Rd	26	Pylesville	MD 165 & MD 543	79
Mondawmin METRO	Reisterstown Rd & Liberty Heights Ave	27	Aberdeen MARC	US 40 & MD 132	80
Mount Washington Light Rail	Smith Ave & Newberry St	28	Edgewood MARC	MD 755 & Old Edgewood Rd	81
N Ave Light Rail	N Ave E of I 83	29	Fallston	MD 152 & MD 147	83
Penn Station Amtrak/LR/MARC	1500 Charles St	30	Joppa	MD 152 & I 95	84
Reisterstown Plaza METRO	Wabash Ave & Patterson Ave	31	Marywood	MD 24 & US 1	85
Rogers Ave METRO	Wabash Ave & Rogers Ave	32	Mountain Rd	MD 152 S of US 1 & Cheyenne Ave	86
S Baltimore/Brooklyn	Hanover St & Frankfurst Ave	33	Broken Land Parkway	MD 32 & Broken Land Pkwy	87
W Baltimore MARC	Smallwood St & Franklin St	34	Cooksville	MD 97 & MD 144	88
W Cold Spring METRO	Wabash Ave & Cold Spring Ln	35	Oakland	MD 108 E of US 29	89
Westside Skills Center	Edmondson Ave & Athol Ave	36	Ice Rink	Thunder Hill Rd & Santiago Rd	90
Poly Western High School	SPECIAL EVENT PARKING ONLY	*	W Friendship	MD 32 N of I 70	92
Glyndon	Sacred Heart Lane S of MD 128	37	Woodbine	MD 94 & Old Frederick Rd	93
Hereford	MD 137 & I 83	38	Broken Land Pkwy West	MD 32 & Broken Land Pkwy	94
Liberty	MD 26 & Brenbrook Dr	39	Clarksville	MD 32 & MD 108	95
Mace Mini	Rossville Blvd & Mace Ave	40	Dorsey MARC	MD 100 Between US 1 & MD 295	96
Maryland Line	MD 439 & I 83	41	Laurel Racecourse MARC	US 1 via Laurel Racecourse entrance	97
Parkton	Middletown Rd & I 83	42	Snowden River	MD 175 & Snowden River Pkwy	98
Rosedale	US 40 & Rosedale Ave	43	Long Gate Parkway	MD 100 & Long Gate Pkwy	99
Security/Franklintown	MD 122 near Ingleside Ave	44	Savage MARC	MD 32 & Dorsey Run Rd	100
Baltimore Highlands	Baltimore St & Georgia Ave	45	Scaggsville West	MD 216 W of US 29	101
Carney	Jomat Ave & MD 147	46	Juniata	Juniata St & Otsego St	102
Cromwell Bridge	Cromwell Bridge Rd S of I-695	47	Hickory	US 1 & MD 23	103
Essex	MD 150 & Back River Bridge	48	MVA	MD 24 S of US 1	104
Falls Rd Light Rail	MD 25 N of Lake Ave	49	Woodbine	170 & MD 94	105
Gunpowder Falls	Belair Rd S of Little Gunpowder	50	Jessup	MD 175 & Old Jessup Rd	106
Halethorpe MARC	US 1 & Ridge Ave	51			

It's Easy...

Find the Park and Ride lot closest to you.



For information on alternative commute options in your area, call one of the numbers below.

Anne Arundel County (South)
ARTMA
410-269-7433
www.artma.org

Anne Arundel County (North)
The BWI Business Partnership, Inc.
410-859-1000
www.bwipartner.org

Baltimore City
Rideshare
410-396-POOL
www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/transportation/ridesharing.html

Baltimore County
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
410-732-6000
Toll Free: 866-645-0022
www.metrorideshare.com

Carroll County
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
410-732-6000
Toll Free: 866-645-0022
www.metrorideshare.com

Harford County
Harford Commuter Assistance
Toll Free 1-800-924-TOGO (8646)
Local (410) 638-3103
www.harfordcommuter.com

Howard County
Commuter Solutions
410-313-3130
www.howardcommutersolutions.com

For transit schedules, visit www.mtmaryland.com.

Take the Chills out of Winter Driving with These Tips from AAA

Amanda Knittle, AAA Public Affairs Specialist

GET READY

Cold weather takes a toll on your vehicle, and driving during snow and icy conditions can challenge even the most experienced of drivers. However, there are ways to prepare both your vehicle and yourself for these wintertime challenges.

First, because weak or dead batteries are a common cause of wintertime breakdowns, AAA suggests you have your vehicle's battery checked. Three to four years is the normal life of a battery. A load test performed by a qualified technician will help determine if the battery is strong enough for cold weather starts.

Any AAA Approved Auto Repair [AAR] facility can perform a battery check. To locate an AAR shop in your area, go to www.aaamidatlantic.com, and click on the Automotive tab.

To ensure maximum traction during cold weather driving, make sure your tires are in good shape, properly inflated and, last but not least, cut out for the task.

Snow tires have a 30 percent deeper tread than standard tires, and narrow tires are better than wide tires at gripping the roadway. That's because wide tires can 'float' on snow, while narrow tires cut through it.

You also want to make sure that your engine fluids (oil, brake, and windshield wiper fluids) are at proper levels and that you have a 50/50 mixture of antifreeze and water to provide protection to 30 degrees Fahrenheit (-34 degrees Celsius). Keep your gas tank at least half full to minimize condensation and prevent gas lines from freezing. Also, make sure that your front and rear lights are working, and that your vehicle's belts and hoses are in good condition and not cracked or worn.

In addition to carrying a well-charged cellular phone, you can prepare for cold weather driving by including an emergency car care kit in your vehicle. A kit suited for wintertime emergencies should include a flashlight with fresh batteries, a small snow shovel and brush, traction mats, an ice scraper, jumper cables, a warm blanket, flares or triangle warning



devices, heavy gloves, bag of abrasive material (such as sand, salt or kitty litter), window washing solvent and a first aid kit. On longer trips, you may also want to include drinking water, juices, non-perishable foods (such as granola bars) and extra warm clothing.

GET SET

If you have a garage, you can save time on frigid winter mornings by parking your vehicle inside. Each morning, check outside, or the radio or TV for current and expected weather conditions. On days when snow and ice abound, allow additional time.

Before heading for your destination, clean snow and ice from the entire vehicle – hood, roof, trunk, lights and windows. This may seem time consuming, but snow that's on your vehicle's roof could easily fall into the pathway of another motorist and block his or her view. Clear your windows by using an ice scraper and your vehicle's defroster— not your windshield wipers. If your vehicle is surrounded by snow, clear the snow that is immediately around the tires.

GO

Once your vehicle is ready, you want to ensure that you can get to your destination safely. Dress in winter clothing and wear comfortable, dry shoes that will not slip on the pedals. Keep abreast of weather and

road conditions before you head out. Always wear your seatbelt and make sure that your passengers are safely secured. Drive on major routes whenever necessary, as these are usually the first to be salted or plowed. Don't pass snowplows or salt spreaders unless necessary.

Drive defensively, stay alert and take your time— maintain a steady speed and don't hurry. When starting, press gently on the accelerator to avoid skidding and retain traction.

Try to avoid driving when visibility is poor. In snow and fog, use your low beam headlights or fog lights to see clearly. When driving during slippery and icy conditions, slow down and keep a safe distance from other vehicles, minimize brake use and bear in mind that traction is greatest just before the wheels spin.

The most effective way to stop on ice and snow is to apply your brakes gently well in advance of the point where you intend to stop. If your car has an Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), brake and hold. If you don't have ABS brakes, pump the brakes gently but rapidly. If your vehicle starts to skid, steer into the direction of the skid to regain control.

When you arrive at your destination, avoid parking on streets, especially snow emergency routes. Snowplows and salt spreaders can't clear the streets if your vehicle is in the way.



American Idle

(Continued from page 5)

“There are 152 little girls in the lower school,” Julie added, “so there may be 100 or 120 cars in the lower school line. I get in and out of the middle and upper schools faster,” she continued, “because the girls can look for the car.”

Even with carpooling, Julie drives about 100 miles a week just for school trips. “I drive an SUV,” Julie said. “I have to have that third seat.”

Of the recent spike in gasoline prices, she said, “It’s horrible, but what can you do? You’re aware, you’re more careful, but that’s all you can do.”

Lisa Brocato, a single mom who lives and works in Timonium, needed to do more to control the cost of the 600 or so miles she drives every week, so she traded her Yukon XL for a Saab. “I was spending \$150-170 week just on gas,” Lisa said. “Now I’m getting double the gas mileage — 24 or 25 miles per gallon instead of 10 or 11.”

That helped her budget, but with three children attending different schools, time management is still a challenge. Lisa gets up at 5:30 and leaves the house by 7. She usually drives carpool to Bryn Mawr one morning a week, pays someone to drive another child to St. Paul’s, and takes the third child to a friend’s house to go to Pot Spring Elementary School.

One afternoon a week, usually on Monday, she picks up the carpool at Bryn Mawr around 3:30, then picks up her child at St. Paul’s and finally picks up the other child at her friend’s house. Then she may take children to soccer games, and she often goes back to her office before going home and fixing dinner. “We have spaghetti about twice a week, and we grill and fix a lot of salads.”

“There’s a lot of carpooling at Bryn Mawr,” Lisa said. “It moves pretty quickly in the morning. In the afternoon, if I pull in at 3:30, I’m out by 3:45.”

That’s not the case at St. Paul’s. “Other mothers begin arriving between 2 and 2:30 for the 3:30 pick-up and at 3:45, they’re still in line,” Lisa observed. “I don’t have that kind of time.”

As it is, she spends a lot of time in her car. On a recent Friday evening, she was in the car for 3 hours straight, driving between the three schools.

Her best advice to other moms is to write everything down. “I have a book that’s strictly for school and carpool,” Lisa said.

Whitney Lull also keeps her school directory on the front seat of her station wagon, complete with the cell phone numbers of other mothers in her pool. With daughters attending St. Paul’s middle school and Dulaney High School, Whitney says she just has to take each day as it comes.

“Their schedules change from day to day,” she said. Usually her husband takes one daughter to school and she drives the other, but when her husband is traveling on business, she has to leave earlier to drive both girls to school.

The daughter at Dulaney has a part-time job several afternoons a week, and also has school activities on other afternoons. She often ends up driving her children’s friends home from school, or to after-school jobs, too.

“I have a good network of moms who don’t work,” Whitney said, “and I can call on them when I need to. I’m the weekend driver for dances and other activities to pay back those other moms,” she added.

What with sports, jobs and other activities, Whitney feeds her daughters separately during the week. She keeps a supply of snack in the car. “You don’t want hungry kids,” she said. “And we make a point of eating together as a family on Sunday night.”

Perhaps the most significant thing Whitney has done to simplify life is change jobs. After years of living in the county, working downtown and having children in county schools, Whitney accepted a position that allows her to work from an office in her Hunt Valley home. “As the children get older, you have to be around more,” she said. She doesn’t miss the daily commute into the city, either. “Now I have the best of both worlds and I’m loving life.”



Air Pollution –

It's Not Just a Summertime Problem Any More

It's no secret that the Baltimore region, like every other large metropolitan area, has air quality concerns. Some of it comes from lots of people engaging in emission-causing activities. Toss in windborne pollutants that make their way here from many miles hence, and you have a perfect recipe for endless Air Quality Code Red warnings.

In spite of this, our air has not only gotten better over the past two decades, it continues to improve, according to both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Advancements in technology have given us cleaner factories, power plants, and motor vehicles, all major sources of pollutants. And we've learned to do our part. We've become smart drivers, who combine trips and refuel after dark during those times when the threat of air pollution is greatest. We keep our vehicles well maintained, so they pollute less. We're learning to carpool or ride mass transit whenever possible. We've also become much more aware of the importance of air quality and its impact on our everyday lives.

Unfortunately, this good news doesn't mean that we can just continue doing what we're doing and watch our skies get even bluer. Our challenges become greater as the region grows. More and more people going to more and more jobs, running more and more errands, and needing more and more power add up to more and more emissions. On top of that, improvements in air quality monitoring and health research have raised new concerns about an old pollutant, *particle pollution*, also called *fine particulates*, *PM fine*, or *PM 2.5*.

Fine particulates are just what their name implies, microscopic bits of solid materials or droplets of liquids in the air. They are dangerous because they can get deep into our lungs and even our bloodstreams, causing serious health problems. Medical researchers have linked a number of chronic conditions, including asthma and heart disease, to particle pollution. There is even research that shows particle pollution as a factor in many sudden deaths.

Particle pollution can come from a variety of sources, including motor vehicles, power plants, factories, furnaces, and residential wood burning. Unlike ground-level ozone, which occurs during the summer, fine particulates pollute our air throughout the year. They may actually spike during the colder months, when furnaces and fireplaces are heavily used.

The good news is that, just as with ground-level ozone, we all can help put particle

pollution in its place, which is out of our air and – ultimately – out of our lungs. You know most of the drill by now:

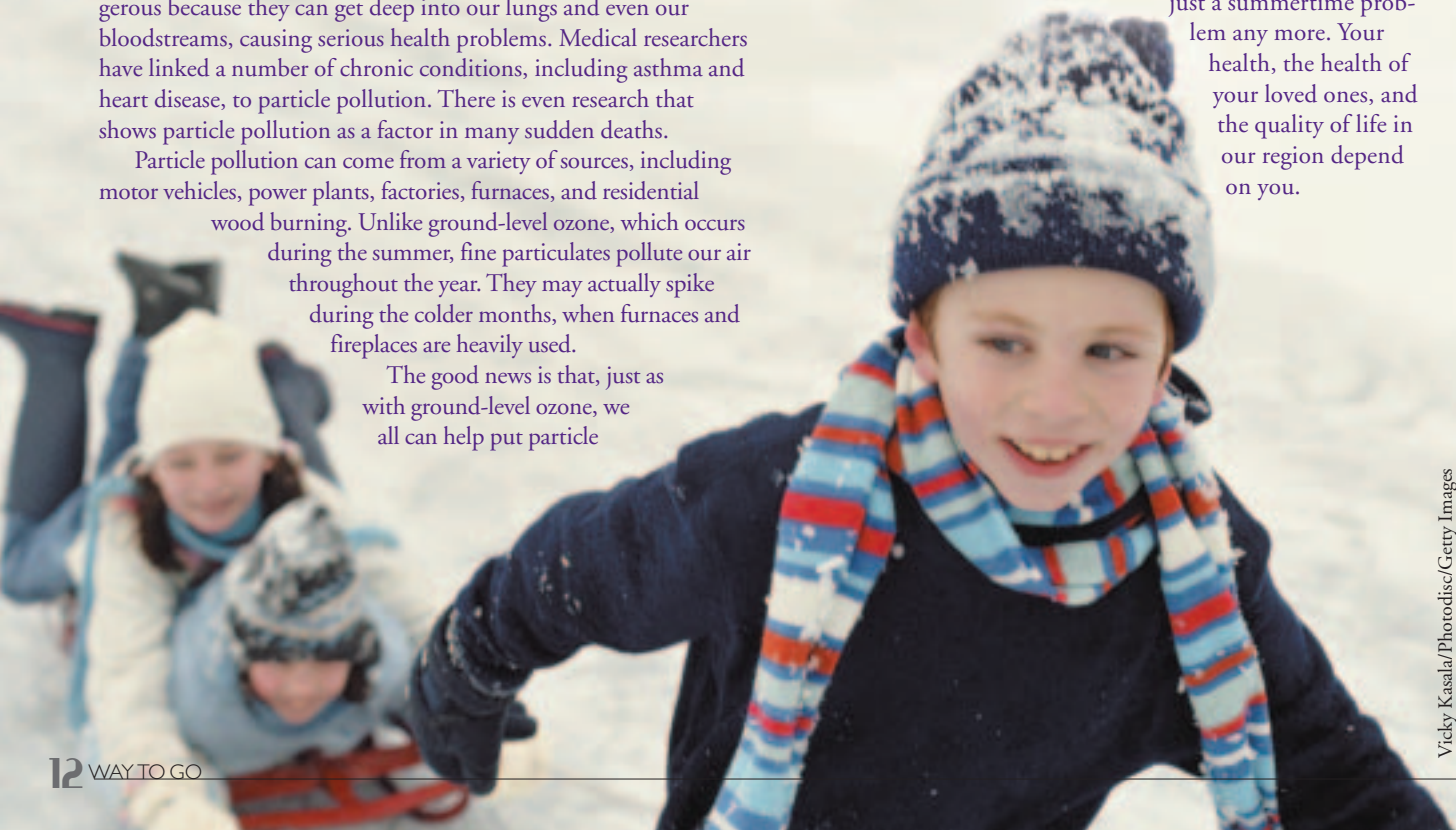
- Keep driving to a minimum.
- Avoid spilling gas when refueling and replace the gas tank cap tightly.
- Make sure your vehicle is properly maintained.
- Combine trips.
- Avoid revving or idling your engine.
- Carpool or use public transportation whenever possible.

To those tips, add the following:

- Cut back on heating and air conditioning when you can.
- Have your furnace and chimney serviced regularly.
- Clean heating filters each month.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Follow directions for the use of chemical solvents carefully and use such chemicals sparingly.
- Pay attention to each day's air quality forecast.

You can get the air quality forecast by visiting www.cleanairpartners.net. Clean Air Partners is a public-private coalition working to raise awareness of air quality issues in the combined Baltimore/Washington region.

Now is the time for you to know why air quality is important and how you can make a difference. Remember, air pollution isn't just a summertime problem any more. Your health, the health of your loved ones, and the quality of life in our region depend on you.



COMMUTE SMART



Q: Four-way stops drive me crazy. I know the first person to arrive at the intersection goes first, but who goes next? Every passenger I've had has a different theory, from first-come first-serve to non-turning precede turning cars.

A: There is actually a simple rule. The first car to arrive at an intersection with a three or four-way stop sign has the right of way. Each car in turn, beginning on the right of the first car through the intersection, has the right of way. The problem is that cars may not arrive at the intersection in the same order in which their turn comes up.

Q: I know that the small, vertical green and white numbered signs along the side of the I-95 are mile markers, but where do the miles start and end?

These signs are called mileposts, and are placed every mile along the freeway from one end of the state to the other. Zero usually starts at the southern and western borders of the state. Mileposts can be used to determine the distance to exits, cities or state lines. By using the milepost number and the exit number, you may compute how far you are from the exit you want to use.

Freeway exit numbers are determined by rounding up to the next closest mile marker. For example, if an exit is

located between mile 23 and mile 24, the exit will be marked 24. The state of Maryland converted its freeway exit numbering system from a sequential to mileage-based system in the mid-1980s.

One freeway to escape the renumbering process was the Baltimore Beltway, which retains the sequential numbering system. That means subtracting a milepost number from an exit number won't give you the distance in between.

Mileposts for Baltimore Beltway (Interstate 695) count upwards as the Beltway travels clockwise from the Key Bridge.

Q: Settle an argument on who has the right of way. I'm on the entrance ramp to a freeway, which also turns out to be the exit lane. Someone wants to get over into my lane to exit and is going to box me in or cut me off. Am I supposed to wait for him, or is he supposed to let me move over into the traffic lane?

A: I wish there was a clear-cut answer to this but it really is a question of etiquette, not law. If the

acceleration lane off of the ramp becomes a deceleration lane onto the next exit, each person has to use common sense to merge. Our best advice, put on your turn signal and merge safely, taking into account the person next to you may want to exit or merge into your lane. The same principle applies to surface streets with right-turn merge lanes.

Q: Yield means slow down, right?

A: The red color of the yield sign serves as a clue that "yield" might also mean "stop".

According to the Maryland Driver's Handbook, a triangular sign means "slow down, or stop if necessary, and give the right of way to vehicles crossing your path."

If there are no cars approaching, slowing down is just fine.

Until 1971 yield signs were yellow in color. Because yellow highway signs are a general warning of what to expect ahead, the yield sign was changed to red to indicate that the driver is required to yield, and can be ticketed for not doing so.

Did you know?

If a police officer is in the middle of an intersection directing traffic and has his back to you, you must STOP.

Body Mechanics for Commuting

You've made a decision. You're going to incorporate walking into your daily commute, either by walking to a transit stop, to meet your carpool or all the way to the office. It's time to think about some pesky details that will determine your comfort with your new commute, and contribute to its ongoing success.

Dress for commuting success

It is nice to be fashionable. However, outerwear should be for protection, and it should be something you wouldn't mind wearing for a few hours.

Dressing for the winter months is always a bit of a challenge for me. The thought of leaving a nice warm bed and house to get cold is never appealing.

The first rule of staying warm is **LAYERS**. Layer your clothing and, by all means, keep your hands, head, and neck warm. Ah, what about the feet? Wool socks, either from sheep or alpaca, will breathe and stay warm even when wet. If you have a reaction to wool, wear some nylons or silk socks underneath.

Summer attire should be cool and lend itself to breathing and wicking moisture away. We all sweat, although some of us will only admit to glistening. If you are one who could perspire in a walk-in freezer, it might be a good idea to wear something

other than what you will be spending the day in. Leave deodorant and baby wipes at the office and clean up a little prior to starting work. Always apply sunblock before leaving in the morning, and don't forget sunglasses.

Give your feet a treat

If a shoe is good for running, it is good for walking. Don't get me wrong. A good walking shoe is great, but you just have more variety in fashion and fit with running shoes. Which brings me to the major concern with shoes — fit!! Seek a person qualified to analyze your foot for width, pronation and supination. There are number of places in the Baltimore area that are qualified and eager to provide this service for you. Although good shoes do not have to be costly, don't skimp on footwear. A bad shoe can very easily lead to overwhelming foot and lower back problems.

Stuff your stuff with care

How should you carry your stuff? Ergonomically, bags on casters or wheels are best, followed by good backpacks, bike messenger bags carried across your body, shoulder bags, and brief cases. Wheelie bags put very little stress on your spine or your ability to breath. They are, however, tough to move in the snow. The next best alternative, back packs, stress your spine very little as long as you are carrying no more than 20 percent of your body weight and wear the pack high and tight on both shoulders. Be warned: Backpacks and bags with straps do interfere with your normal breathing, so you might want to switch to a wheeled bag as soon as the snow melts. Brief cases and shoulder bags can alter your posture and add stress to your wrists and hands. This means short-term discomfort and possible long-term pain, so choose wisely.

Take some time and choose good equipment. It's easy to grab a bag or shoes that look good, but look a little further and you'll find a wide range of quality and comfort.

As in every endeavor, the more enjoyable your people-powered commute, you are more likely to repeat it. Much success!

Michael J. Martin, D.C.

ADIO Chiropractic Inc.

Cyclist, runner, and nationally-ranked amateur adventure racer





Roadside Auto Emergency Kit

The Boy Scouts' credo, always "Be Prepared," is a good one to follow when you're frequently on the road. This convenient, comprehensive kit will help. Flat tire? Dead battery? No problem. Tucked away in a durable snap-close case, you'll find a 28-piece first aid kit, digital tire gauge, plug-in air compressor, emergency light, jumper cables, reflector triangle, tools, and insulated slippers. Measuring 19" W x 20" L x 6" H, the case will easily fit in your back seat or a small trunk. \$80 from Brookstone.com
www.brookstone.com

Samsonite® Flat Pack Travel Umbrella

If you've been carrying around a bulky golf umbrella, it's high time to liberate yourself. This compact pocket-size umbrella, featuring aluminum construction, weighs in at just 9 ounces and folds flat to 1" x 1" x 9" inches for easy storage in your purse or coat pocket. When opened, it provides ample covering with a 39-inch diameter. \$11.99 from JCPenney.com
www.jcpenney.com



Memory Foam Seat and Lumbar Cushions

Give your back a break with this orthopedically designed cushion system perfect for the driver's seat or your office chair. Constructed from "memory foam," which uses thermo-sensitive properties to conform to the body's shape, the wedge-shaped seat helps spinal alignment and relieves pressure on the tailbone. The adjustable lumbar back cushion provides support wherever you need it. \$49.95 from AJPrindle
www.ajprindle.com
1-800-780-9356

iPod (With Video)

Missed your favorite show last night? Now you can watch it on the train with the new iPod, released in Fall 2005. This innovative 60GB gadget holds up to 15,000 songs and 150 hours of video, which can be viewed on a 2.5-inch QVGA color display. Simply purchase music videos or T.V. shows – including ABC's "Lost" and "Desperate Housewives" – for \$1.99 from the iTunes Music Store, the same way you purchase songs. Incredibly, the new iPod with its increased functionality is even smaller than the original iPod and offers up to 20 hours of battery life. 60GB \$399 and 30GB \$299 at Apple Stores - Towson, MD
www.apple.com/ipod
1-800-MY-APPLE



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