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High Occupancy Vehicle REPORT



A NEWSLETTER FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BRENDAN BYRNE, Governor

SPRING 1981

LOUIS J. GAMBACCINI, Commissioner

Many Take Advantage of "Easy Street"

The opening of "Easy Street," the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on the Garden State Parkway, in November 1980 signaled a new era in driving for the daily commuter on the Parkway.

The new HOV lanes, the first of their kind in New Jersey, extend from the New Jersey Turnpike in Woodbridge to Route 22 in Union, a 12-mile stretch of roadway owned by the State. During rush hours — 7 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays — the lanes are reserved for the exclusive use of HOVs carrying three or more people.

More than 3,000 HOVs are now using the "Easy Street" HOV lanes everyday. Nearly 13% of the people using the Parkway during peak hours are riding in HOVs and using the lanes.

"Current projections indicate that the portion of the Parkway served by "Easy Street" will reach maximum capacity by the mid-80s if there were no HOV effort," according to DOT Commissioner Louis J. Gambaccini.

"HOV programs ease traffic congestion for all drivers, including those who cannot carpool, by reducing the number of vehicles on a roadway," Gambaccini said. "We have an active ride-sharing program and we expect that the incentive of these new Parkway lanes during rush hours will provide additional incentive for forming more car and van pools."

According to the NJDOT's Office of Ridesharing, a four-person carpool saves nearly \$2,000 annually over the cost of driving to work alone and the savings will increase for carpoolers as

the price of gasoline continues to rise. In addition, every three-person carpool formed removes two vehicles from the other lanes.

Like any change of habit, it may take time to get used to, but most carpoolers find that sharing the expenses and driving and the company during the commute are their own reward.

For more information on the HOV lanes and the ridesharing program, call 800-242-0855, tollfree, during regular business hours.

HOV Lane Speaker and Film Available from DOT.

If you are a member of a civic, social or employee group that would like a presentation on the HOV lanes on the Garden State Parkway, and on ridesharing in general, call the DOT Office of Ridesharing at 609-292-4934.

In addition to showing a short color/sound film on the HOV lanes, Ridesharing staff will explain the free services available to assist in creating car or van pooling arrangements.



The carpoolers from Schering-Plough in Kenilworth prepare for their commute home (left to right) Dean Rock, Carl Gonzalez, Walt Anderson and Allan Kaplan.

Pooling Together

Dean Rock, Walt Anderson, Carl Gonzalez and Allan Kaplan see each other twice a day five days a week for most of the year and save about \$2,000 apiece as a result.

All four work at Schering-Plough in Kenilworth, a solid fifty-mile trip, one way, from their homes in eastern Pennsylvania and central Mercer County. Because they carpool to work, they can use "Easy Street," the 12-mile-long High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on the State-owned portion of the Garden State Parkway.

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Claire Giovannetti, Ellen Diehl-Meyer and Mike Fitzpatrick from the Office of Ridesharing check a computer printout of employees wanting to form carpools as part of the Office's free matching service to New Jersey companies.

Office of Ridesharing Works with Companies on Carpooling

The Office of Ridesharing in the New Jersey Department of Transportation works to increase ridesharing by the citizens of the state. The Office, headed by Robert Atkins, was established in 1973 after the first oil embargo, with a goal of having 50 percent of New Jersey's commuters participating in some form of ridesharing program. The Office works to achieve this goal by providing free computer matching for individuals, agencies and private companies of all sizes.

Because employer-based ridesharing programs have proven most successful, the Office of Ridesharing has been working with 17,000 major employers in the state to encourage car and van pooling. Each company is asked to designate a ridesharing coordinator who aids interested employees with the preparation of special questionnaires. Information is gathered about points of origin and destination and work schedules. Using a method developed by the Federal Highway Administration, employees who live near each other and have similar work schedules are computer-matched to form potential van or car pools.

Employers that have in-house ridesharing coordinators indicate the response by employees to ridesharing has been very favorable, citing it as a means to save money and reduce the tension experienced in a daily commute.

The Central Jersey Ridesharing Demonstration Project, which is part of the Office of Ridesharing, is working with employers in Middlesex, Un-

ion, Morris and Somerset Counties to encourage ridesharing in that target area. With project headquarters in Piscataway, the office works with employers in the four-county area not only to match up co-workers but also to intermatch employees from different companies.

Even companies with as few as 10 employees have been able to set up ridesharing programs for their employees thanks to the intermatching system that has been set up. For small companies, the Office of Ridesharing takes the place of a full-time in-house coordinator. The Office provides the match-ups that otherwise might be impossible because of lack of program personnel, employees with dissimilar origin locations or insufficient resources to develop the program.

The Office of Ridesharing also works with communities to develop ridesharing programs at the local level. Coordinators work with employers, civic groups, church organizations and other groups to match up the residents who may be able to share the ride not just to work but to social events as well.

The 13-member staff of the Office of Ridesharing will continue to expand the target areas in which it is working to achieve its goal of 50 percent ridesharing for the state's daily commuters in an effort to conserve our dwindling gasoline supply.

For further information on ridesharing, call 800-242-0855, toll-free, during regular weekday business hours.

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Pooling Together

The HOV lanes, located between Exits 129 and 140, are reserved from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m. for vehicles carrying three or more people.

"The HOV lanes make the trip a lot faster," says Rock, manager of business development, U.S. Animal Health Products Division of Schering-Plough. He estimates that his group saves about 30 minutes a day by using the HOV lanes.

Each of the poolers takes his turn driving, and each has his own ideas of why carpooling is the best way to commute. For Gonzalez, "The best part is that we can maintain a constant rate of speed and avoid the congestion on the Parkway."

Walt Anderson thinks the camaraderie is carpooling's biggest plus. "It's much nicer to share the ride than to be alone in a car for that distance," he says.

Commenting on travel on the HOV lanes, Rock says, "The stress and tension of driving in bumper-to-bumper, stop-and-go traffic everyday is gone. After a while, you wonder why you ever drove to work by yourself."

Rock, who lives in Mercerville, meets Anderson of Princeton at the Quakerbridge Mall on Route 1 in Lawrence Township. At the Mall they also connect with Gonzalez of Newtown, Pa., and Kaplan of Richboro, Pa., who together travel 20 miles to meet Rock and Anderson.

The HOV program is designed to encourage more arrangements like the Rock/Anderson/Gonzalez/Kaplan carpool. With gasoline prices averaging \$1.40 a gallon, the average four-person carpool saves each person about \$2,000 a year in commuting-related expenses such as gas maintenance and insurance.*

More than 3,000 HOVs currently

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HOV Lanes, Ridesharing Information

For further information about the HOV lanes or ridesharing, or for assistance in starting or adding to your carpool, call any of the following numbers during regular weekday business hours.

Hotline — 800-242-0855

Trenton — 609-292-4934

Piscataway — 201-287-6580

Carpool Tips

If you would like to take advantage of the economies of carpooling, but you're not quite sure how to go about it, the DOT's Office of Ridesharing has some tips for you.

Check with the Personnel Office where you work to see if there is a ridesharing program already set up where you can register for a pool match-up. If there isn't one, ask your Personnel Director to call the Office of Ridesharing for free computer matching carpool assistance.

In addition, post a notice in the employee cafeteria or lounge areas, listing your point of origin and your working hours and a phone number where co-workers from your neighborhood can reach you.

When you go home, make it a point to talk to your neighbors or to friends you see frequently. Maybe you work at locations fairly close to one another and you don't even know it.

Even when you're not working, there are still many ways to find ridesharers for common errands — shopping, doctor's appointments, evening classes, club meetings. Post notices at the laundromat, the grocery store, the beauty parlor, the post office or anywhere else where public notices are welcomed. Talk to your friends, to the people in your evening class or your club meetings. If you find yourself in the same place with someone you know, the chances are good that you could have shared the ride.

If you find it necessary to do the same kinds of errands your friends

are discussing, do some advance planning and share the ride. In addition to saving in the cost of the trip, the company will brighten up an otherwise routine trip.

You can use almost any group you find yourself in as a possible source for ridesharing. All you have to do is speak up and plan ahead. And remember, carpooling is not just for commuting to and from work — it's for shopping, bowling, picking up the kids, going to church, seeing a movie

or any other activity where saving a gallon of gas puts \$1.40 in your pocket.

For additional information on ridesharing, call or write the Office of Ridesharing at:

**New Jersey
Department of Transportation
Office of Ridesharing
1035 Parkway Avenue
Box 101
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 292-4934**

BOARD
THE BULLETIN

Student needs ride to campus daily. Will share expenses. Call Rich at 555-8702.

Want to form carpool for daily commute to work in Westfield area. Call Dave at 555-8404.

Ride needed to supermarket every Tuesday and Friday. Time flexible call Joan at 555-9472.

Want to form carpool for daily commute to work in Westfield area. Call Dave at 555-8404.

Want to form carpool for daily commute to work in Westfield area. Call Dave at 555-8404.

Carpoolers wanted for daily trips to YWCA 10 a.m. Call Joan at 555-1739.

HOVs Work Nationwide

One of the most successful HOV lane programs in on the San Bernardino Freeway in California. The 11-mile-long lanes are reserved for carpools and buses during morning and evening rush hours. Carpooling has more than doubled since the HOV lanes were added, with more carpools forming all the time.

Economy, convenience and time savings are the reasons cited most often by carpools and bus riders for their use of the HOV lanes. Even nonpoolers view the lanes as a good investment of the taxpayers' dollars.

Studies have shown that the addition of a reserved lane for HOV use compared to the addition of another lane open to all motorists has resulted in reduced user costs, lower pollution and increased future capacity on the

Freeway.

In Florida, Miami's HOV lanes on Interstate 95 have been very successful. The HOV lanes are 7.5 miles long. In addition to reducing travel time and increasing the numbers of carpools and bus riders as a result, the HOV lane actually lowered the accident rate on that portion of the Interstate. Again, users cite cost savings and reduced travel time as the primary incentives for using the HOV lanes.

Banfield Freeway in Portland, Oregon, is another positive HOV lane example. With the increased use of carpools along the Freeway, air pollution has been significantly reduced and an estimated 230,000 gallons of gasoline are saved each year.

Identical results — reduced travel time, energy conservation through

increased numbers of carpools, better air quality — occurred when HOV lanes were added to the Moanalua Freeway in Honolulu and on Route 101 in San Francisco, California.

A decade ago, the Port Authority of New York — New Jersey designated one lane of the approach to the Lincoln Tunnel for the exclusive use of the 1100 buses carrying New Jerseyans into Manhattan during the morning rush.

Along Route 9 northbound in Middlesex County the DOT rebuilt $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of road shoulder approaching the entrance to the Garden State Parkway. That lane was also reserved for exclusive use by buses during morning rush hours to speed the trip for 79 buses carrying more than 4000 commuters daily along the Parkway.

More Drivers Find it to Their Advantage to Pool It on the HOV Lanes.

And here's why:

... "At last an activity of state government is working. Ride the Garden State Parkway, as I do daily, and see for yourself. The High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane or 'easy street' is attracting more users each day."

"Some think more and more widening of highways is the answer to better traffic flow. The Garden State has reached saturation. Reduction of volume through incentives like 'Easy Street' is the answer. Seven out of 10 can carpool. Try it — save, enjoy." —

L.E. Schindel, *Maplewood*

... "This is to congratulate you on the new 'Easy Street' stretch on the New Jersey Highway. I've seen it work in other states. Keep up the good work!" —

Juan E. Jauregui

... "We are grateful that the government is finally doing something for

the energy-minded — providing an easy commute to work and home. The hour trip now takes 40 minutes on 'Easy Street.'

"Most individuals driving alone can pool it if they want. If they do not, then it is up to them to put up with the traffic congestion." —

A.A. Trenton, *Morganville, N.J.*

... "If we're serious about our energy conservation goals, we need programs like the HOV lane to encourage carpooling and save gasoline." —

Theodore J. Labrecque, *Red Bank, N.J.*

... "I can tell you the new lane works. Traffic during commuting hours generally moves faster. The HOV lane can save us 20 minutes in each direction." —

Edward Thieme, *Brick Township, N.J.*

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Pooling Together

use "Easy Street" and the number is growing. While each carpooler enjoys personal benefits from participating in a carpool, the capacity of this busy stretch of the Parkway is being expanded at the same time. Each carpool removes at least two vehicles from the other three lanes. Without the HOV program to provide an incentive for ridesharing, projections indicate that this section of the road will be over-capacity by 1983-84, with mostly single-occupant vehicles and no feasible means for relief.

The DOT's Office of Ridesharing has been working closely with hundreds of companies like Schering-Plough, to help thousands more employees get into car and vanpools through its free computer-matching service.

Employers seeking ridesharing assistance can call the Ridesharing Office in Piscataway (201) 287-6581 or Trenton (609) 292-4934. Individual motorists seeking HOV lane or ridesharing information can call toll-free (800) 242-0855 during regular business hours.

**Based on 30-mile round-trip, 260 work days per year, in a vehicle averaging 17 miles per gallon.*

The New Jersey
Department of Transportation
1035 Parkway Avenue
Box 101
Trenton, NJ 08625



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