

'Green' programs abound at University Park

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University Park, Pa. — Penn State Transportation Services is taking part in many initiatives this semester to promote environmentally friendly practices and lifestyles. Some of the programs can help save individual's money, some of them can help make life easier — and all of them are easy to do.

One of the initiatives organized by the University is promoting mass transit through Transportation Services' "Ride for Five" program. The program is for full-time Penn State employees. For \$5 a month, employees can trade in their parking pass for a bus pass that includes all regular CATA Centre Line bus routes. Find more information at <http://www.catabus.com/spridefive.htm>.

A similar program for student commuters is RideShare, which is a ride-matching program that helps commuters find easy ways to get to campus via carpools and vanpools. AlternetRides.com has partnered with Transportation Services to offer students this alternative to driving cars. It's a great way to save money and avoid commuting alone.

"We're trying to promote a change. A lot of people have been working very hard to provide green options for our students and employees," Senior Vice President of Finance and Business/Treasurer Gary Schultz said. "It's something very important that we do here and it will continue to be important to us for a long time."

A huge addition to the "green" arsenal is the University's new Bicycle Master Plan. The University worked closely with the borough, county, and several bicycle groups in developing this ongoing initiative.

Aspects of the plan include widening streets, expanding bike access on campus, and placing bicycle registration online. Future additions include adding bike-climbing lanes — which are designated uphill lanes that keep bikers a safe distance away from traffic — and building more covered bike parking, air pumping stations, and additional bike plazas like the one at the Willard Building.

"We want to provide a strategy that will improve bicycle circulation on campus," Director of Transportation Services Teresa Davis said. "We kept safety, convenience, and wellness in mind when developing the new plan." Read more about the bike plan at www.transportation.psu.edu/bicycles.

Other initiatives from Transportation Services include the Penn State Football Express. Football fans can even stay "green" on the way to the game. New this year, the Express runs from four different locations and includes game day travel to and from all home football games. Locations include Altoona, Centre Hall, North Atherton Street, and Benner Pike. Visit www.fullingtontours.com for more information.

Also, the Big Apple Express is back for its sophomore year. The service offers weekend express trips to New York City with trips on Thursday, Friday and Sunday. New routes have also been added to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Visit www.transportation.psu.edu/psu2nyc for more information.

As a part of Earth Week and the My20 Campaign, the University encouraged Penn Staters to try thinking and acting "green" by participating in activities like carpooling and recycling. Through www.my20.psu.edu

people learned how they could reduce their energy by 20 percent.

Promotional videos for the campaign were featured on Penn State Live and many employees and students changed their daily routines to be more “green.” The goal was to show people that it is not difficult to make a difference. For example, Andy Heckathorne and Monica Kling of the Auxiliary and Business Services Marketing Office began carpooling to work during Earth Week and have been sharing rides twice a week ever since.

“Trying it out a few times teaches you that it’s easy (to be environmentally friendly),” Heckathorne said. “It has become a part of my daily routine and it encourages me to learn more about what I can do.”

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