



EConnections - A Greener Way To *Communicate*

Greater Mercer TMA's 2011 Annual Meeting



On Friday, October 28th, over 70 business and government leaders attended the TMA's annual meeting held at the Nassau Inn in Princeton NJ. After a short business meeting that included the election of Trustees to the Board, and opening remarks by TMA President Christine Cox and Executive Director Cheryl Kastrenakes, the keynote guest speaker Professor Joseph Seneca of the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University addressed the group by providing the "Economic Review and Outlook for New Jersey", highlighting Mercer County.

Professor Seneca offered those in attendance some positive news that the economic downturn is showing signs of recovery. Also during the meeting, Greater Mercer TMA's President and Executive Director presented the Smart Workplace awards to 17 employers in the Mercer County area.

Winners of this year's awards include:

A-1 Limousine	NJ DEP
Albridge, an Affiliate of Pershing, LLC	NJ DOT
Bank of America	NJM Insurance Group
Bloomberg LP	Novo-Nordisk Inc.
Educational Testing Services	Princeton Health Care System
Greater Mercer TMA	Princeton Insurance
Horizon BCBSNJ, Trenton Office	Princeton University
Janssen	TYCO International
Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Company	

The NJSW awards recognize the efforts of local businesses working to make our communities cleaner, greener and more sustainable. These companies have chosen to provide commuter benefits to their employees that help to reduce congestion and improve air quality by providing benefits such as train station shuttles, flextime programs, telecommuting programs, bike racks and shower facilities, and pre-tax payroll deductions for commuting costs.

To see more photos of the Annual Meeting, [click here](#) or visit us on [facebook](#).

Transit Benefit Parity Update: Call to Action

The transit portion of the Commuter Benefit is set to be reduced nearly in half at the end of 2011, if action is not taken. This will effectively create a tax increase for the over 2.7 million public transit and vanpool commuters that currently use this benefit. You can make a difference to ensure that the \$230/month is made permanent or extended. [Click here](#) to let your representative in congress know that you support the passage of legislation this year to permanently establish parity between the parking and transit portions of the transportation fringe benefit.

Why Support The Commuter Benefit?

The Commuter Benefit is an employer provided federal tax benefit that allows working families to save money on their daily commute, saves businesses of all sizes critical dollars that can be reinvested to create new jobs, and helps reduce traffic congestion which improves air quality, saves energy and enhances our national security.

New Jersey Schools to Fly Air Quality Flags

Eleven schools in New Jersey will be flying air quality index flags on their flagpoles, thanks to a new DVRPC pilot program. The Air Quality Awareness Flag Program encourages schools to fly a colored flag that corresponds with the daily air quality forecast.

The schools participating in Mercer County are Incarnation School and International Charter School of Trenton. Each school receives the daily AQ forecast via email by signing up with the Enviroflash email system. They have agreed to fly the appropriately colored flag to correspond to the forecast and have a number of recommendations to help protect their students' health on poor air quality days. Both of these schools are designated as "asthma friendly" by the Pediatric / Adult Asthma Coalition of NJ so they are already taking positive steps to protect the health of their students.

The pilot program began in September at eleven schools in Burlington, Camden, Mercer, and Monmouth counties. It will raise awareness of the daily air quality and also will encourage teachers, parents, coaches and students to protect their health on days when air quality is forecast to be poor by managing activities and reducing their exposure to harmful air pollutants.

For more information about the DVRPC's program, [click](#) to contact Greater Mercer TMA .

Online Polls

This Month's Poll Question

Do you think the Commuter Benefit is important to encourage use of transportation options?

[Vote On Line](#)



Last month, we asked:

What do you think of making public transportation mandatory for employees?

- 54 % - Great idea, all should do it!
- 15% - Good idea for some employees
- 23% - Should be a suggested option only
- 8% - It will never work

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