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Vol. 1, Issue 9, September 2013



Mercer & Ocean In Motion

Getting You from Here to There

Apply Today to Be a New Jersey Smart Workplace!

The New Jersey Smart Workplaces program (NJSW) recognizes employers who demonstrate leadership by providing and promoting quality commuter benefits to their employees, therefore reducing congestion and improving air quality.

Employers are recognized at one of four levels of achievement: bronze, silver, gold or platinum based upon the programs offered at the worksite. Employer benefits may include providing employees with telecommute options and flextime work schedules and providing carpool and vanpool information, last mile shuttles and facilities for bicycle commuters.

NJSW is a partnership of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Association and the state's Transportation Management Associations.

How Smart is Your Workplace?

Nominations for the 2013 NJSW awards are now being accepted. NJSW awardees will be recognized at Greater Mercer TMA's Annual Meeting in October. For more information on the program contact Aly Dyson at adyson@gmtma.org, or visit our website at www.gmtma.org to register online and see a list of last year's awardees.



What GMTMA Did At Camp This Summer

In July and August, Greater Mercer TMA partnered with the Mercer County Public Health department to make a series of presentations at six different summer camps throughout the county. We gave presentations to children in grades K-8 on air quality and anti-idling, and bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Through fun, interactive presentations, the campers learned about how taking the bus, carpooling, biking or walking to school and other activities, instead of having a parent drive them alone, can be great for air quality. The campers all enjoyed an experiment where they add “air pollution” food coloring to their “air-shed” cup of water to show how their daily activities can create air pollution. The simple and fun experiment helped them understand that seemingly small actions like getting a ride in a car instead of taking the bus can create more air pollution in their town. They also learned about the air quality impacts of vehicle idling, and we are sure that these campers will be nagging their parents to turn off their car engines from now on.

Campers also enjoyed the bicycle and pedestrian safety portion of the presentation, where they learned tips on how to be safe when walking and biking, including how to safely cross streets, where to ride or walk on the road, how to navigate parking lots, how to be seen by drivers, and why walking and biking are important for our health and our environment! The smashed watermelon experiment will definitely help the campers to remember to always wear a helmet while riding their bikes.

Greater Mercer TMA is available to make similar presentations to scout troops, classrooms, camps, and after school programs in order to educate children about air pollution and transportation issues and how each person, no matter how young, can make a difference. For more information contact Aly Dyson at adyson@gmtma.org.

October 9 is National Walk to School Day. Is Your School Registered?



On October 9, thousands of students, parents and volunteers will walk or bicycle to school to celebrate Walk to School Day 2013 and registration is now officially open for the 17th annual event. Walk to School Day event registration is free and available to individuals and organizations holding an October event in the United States. Events that register on the

Walk to School website, www.walkbiketoschool.org, will be displayed on an interactive U.S. map on the website, where neighboring communities, media and other organizations can identify who is walking in their area.

Kickstart Your Safe Routes to School Program With GMTMA

Walk to School Day is one way to get involved in New Jersey's Safe Routes to School program — a nationwide effort to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing.

Greater Mercer TMA is working with schools and communities in Ocean and Mercer counties to help kids get fit, get healthy, and protect the planet. One way we're doing this is through our involvement in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. SRTS is a federal, state, and local program to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. Programs examine conditions around schools and create activities to improve safety and accessibility, reduce traffic and air pollution around schools, and make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing, thus encouraging a healthy active lifestyle for kids. SRTS programs bring a wide range of benefits to students and the community, including:

- increasing the health, mobility, and independence of school-age children
- reducing congestion, air pollution and traffic conflicts around schools
- helping students arrive at school ready to learn
- teaching safe pedestrian and bicyclist skills

GMTMA is the New Jersey Department of Transportation's designated SRTS coordinator for Mercer and Ocean counties. At no cost, GMTMA can help your school and community implement a SRTS program! Want to learn more? Visit GMTMA's website at www.gmtma.org for information on how to get started.

Back to School Road Safety Tips

Kids can and should bike and walk to school – and now that school is back in session, drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike must be smart and patient and remember a few simple rules to keep the roads safe for everyone.

Sharing the road with school buses

If you are a driver, take a few moments to review some common safety tips:



- All 50 states have a law making it illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.
- School buses use yellow flashing lights to alert motorists that they are preparing to stop to load or unload children. Red flashing lights and an extended stop sign arm signals to motorists that the bus is stopped and children are getting on or off the bus.
- All 50 states require that traffic in both directions stop on undivided roadways when students are entering or exiting a school bus.
- Never pass a school bus on the right. It is illegal.

Sharing the road with child pedestrians

All drivers need to recognize the special safety needs of pedestrians, especially children. Generally, pedestrians have the right-of-way at all intersections; however, regardless of the rules of the road or right-of-way, drivers are obligated to exercise extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians.

- The driver of a vehicle must stop and stay stopped for a pedestrian crossing the roadway within any marked crosswalk.
- Drivers must yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within an unmarked crosswalk.
- Drivers should not block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn.
- Always stop when directed to do so by a school patrol sign, school patrol officer or designated crossing guard.
- Children are the least predictable pedestrians and the most difficult to see. Take extra care to look out for children not only in school zones, but also in residential areas, playgrounds and parks.

Sharing the road with child bicyclists

On most roadways, bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other roadway users and often share the same lane.

- When passing a bicyclist proceeding in the same direction, do so slowly and leave at least a distance between you and the bicycle of no less than 3 feet.
- The most common causes of collisions are drivers turning left in front of an oncoming bicycle or turning right, across the path of the bicycle.
- Take extra precautions in school zones and neighborhood areas where children and teenagers might be riding.

- Watch out for bikes coming out of driveways or from behind parked cars or other obstructions.
- Check side mirrors for bicyclists before opening the door.

Teaching kids to walk safely

Be sure to take time to review road safety tips with kids, including:

- Whenever possible, cross streets at corners with crosswalks, school zones, or traffic signals.
- Never run when crossing a street or getting to a bus stop.
- Stay on the sidewalk away from the curb while waiting for the school bus. Do not approach the bus until it has stopped completely and the driver has opened the door.
- Always wear a helmet when riding a bike and take extra caution around roads. Get off your bike and walk with it while crossing the street.
- While walking to or from school, don't read, text or play any games that could distract from paying attention to traffic.

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