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**MAKE THE CHANGE. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
RIDESHARE WEEK SUPPORTS LOCAL FOOD BANK**

San Luis Obispo Regional Rideshare is offering new services and resources in advance of Rideshare Week, which takes place October 15-19.

Rideshare Week is one way to encourage people to try vanpooling, carpooling, bicycling, walking or taking the bus to work, as well as developing flexible schedules including working from home and reducing a trip all together. "What we want is a reduction in the number of cars on the road," stated Lisa Quinn, Program Coordinator for SLO Regional Rideshare.

To help people think about the cost of commuting, Rideshare's website features a 'commute calculator', which breaks down the cost of driving alone. The organization has also launched the region's first online commuter match database—**TripLink**, to encourage people to try a different type of commute. The easy to use system allows commuters to quickly match up with others looking for a carpool, vanpool or bike buddy to work. As a way to build up to **Rideshare Week**, employees will be encouraged to register with TripLink making them eligible for weekly drawing packages presented by commute mode. Prizes include a Jiffy Lube Certificate, Car Wash Voucher (carpooler), iPod (transit rider), bicycle gear (bicyclist), walking shoes (walker). The Grand Prize is a **Channel Island Trip** (Amtrak tickets, ferry ride, hotel stay and a meal for two). **Rideshare Week** encourages vanpool groups to decorate their vehicles with the theme. The rolling reminders will be judged and the winning display will receive a catered breakfast.

"Through the campaign people will have plenty of opportunities to stop and say, 'Isn't it time for a change?'" , Quinn stated. Rideshare Week generates pledges – often leading to inter-office competition – from commuters to try, at least for one day, another way to get to and from work. Last year, over 1,100 commuters took the Rideshare Week pledge, the most in the history of the campaign.

This year campaign partners representing Cal Poly, Air Pollution Control District, SLO Transit and Ride-On Transportation are committed to gather 1,500 pledges.

Also new this year, SLO Regional Rideshare has partnered with the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County to encourage Rideshare Week participants to transfer their commute savings into food for people.

“The relationship SLO Regional Rideshare has made with the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County is important when you consider individuals pay nearly \$2,500 more annually for transportation than we do for food. During this week, each person can choose to support the Food Bank and our county’s hungry with what they have saved in transportation costs,” said Jim Patterson, District 5 Supervisor and President of San Luis Obispo Council of Governments.

SLO Regional Rideshare is providing a unique connection between the Rideshare Week pledge form and the direct link to the Food Bank. “SLO Regional Rideshare is about moving people not cars. The relationship between Rideshare and the Food Bank highlights that a gallon of milk is more humanly essential than a gallon of gasoline. There are alternatives to gasoline, but milk is invaluable,” added Patterson.

Participants will also be provided a link back to the food bank, should they want to put the money they saved on their commute towards a worthy cause. “We appreciate what Rideshare is doing this year because it helps us all re-direct our limited resources in ways that help others. For each dollar the Food Bank receives, up to 15 lbs. of food can be obtained through the Food Bank to help those who are hungry,” said Carl Hansen, Executive Director of the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County.

A recent Commute Profile Survey of the Tri-Counties indicated San Luis Obispo has the highest drive alone rate compared to Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Findings also revealed that in order to change commuter behavior, public transit must provide a maximum of flexibility for people's schedules, and potential carpools must have an easy way to make a commute match. TripLink enables drivers to determine the most convenient alternative transport method for them. Just recently launched there are over 600 people registered with TripLink.

As a way to build up to Rideshare Week October 15-19, employees will be encouraged to register their online pledge form making them eligible for weekly drawing packages represented by mode. For instance a lucky bus commuter will walk away with an IPOD Shuffle and monthly bus pass. Staffed by experts on commuting choices, SLO Regional Rideshare is offering to employers, free rideshare fairs providing information on the transportation choices available throughout the region including online TripLink presentations to highlight the ease of the new commute matching system.

For more information about Rideshare Week in San Luis Obispo County visit www.rideshare.org or call 541-2277.