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NEWS RELEASE

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RIDESHARING EMERGES AS A COMMUTING ALTERNATIVE OF CHOICE FOR RECORD NUMBER OF REGION'S COMMUTERS

I-64 closure and record high gas prices drive RideFinders to nearly 4 million passenger trips in Fiscal Year 2008, a 32% increase over the prior year

GRANITE CITY, IL, JULY 28, 2008 . . . While commuters across the country were frustrated by sky-high gas prices, a record number of commuters in the St. Louis region discovered relief at the pump by sharing the ride to work with other commuters through RideFinders, the regional rideshare program created and operated since 1994 by Madison County Transit.

During Fiscal Year 2008 (July 2007-June 2008), RideFinders topped 9,000 carpoolers and vanpoolers— a net increase of nearly 3,000 commuters or 43 percent compared to its prior fiscal year. In turn, these commuters shared the ride to and from work for almost 4 million passenger trips – an increase of 1 million trips or 32 percent compared to the prior fiscal year.

“RideFinders growth in Fiscal Year 2008 was three times greater than in any previous year,” notes Joe Wright, director of RideFinders. “This indicates that ridesharing is quickly emerging as a commuting alternative of choice that complements the region’s public transit system. Ridesharing is a particularly viable alternative for the more than 40 percent of our carpoolers who live in outlying communities not currently served by public transit.”

By sharing the ride to work, commuters save over \$25 million annually in gas and other commuting costs, while enjoying the many other benefits of ridesharing, such as control of their partners, schedule and route, and a more relaxing commute with free time to read, work or sleep when not driving. The entire region also benefits from ridesharing as 60 million driving miles and 2 million pounds of air pollution are eliminated.

Concerns about the effect of rising gas prices on their employees also drove over 400 employers to join RideFinders in Fiscal Year 2008 to help their employees rideshare through on-site events and information provided by RideFinders. Ridesharing employees of RideFinders nearly 1,500 participating employers also receive free taxi rides home with RideFinders exclusive Guaranteed Ride Home program.

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**RIDEFINDERS GROWTH ACCELERATES
FIRST AND FINAL ADD**

RideFinders makes it easy for commuters to carpool using their personal vehicles or vanpool using vans provided by RideFinders for a monthly fare. Commuters first register with RideFinders free ridematching service at www.ridefinders.org or (800) 847-7433 with their home and work addresses, work hours and preferences. Next, commuters receive a list of other commuters or vanpools with similar commutes to contact and, once they decide to carpool or vanpool, to register with RideFinders for free to receive the free Guaranteed Ride Home.

Employers interested in joining RideFinders at no cost to help their employees combat record high gas prices can call (800) 847-7433 or E-mail ridefinders@mct.org.

Created and operated by Madison County Transit since 1994, RideFinders improves the quality of life and work in the St. Louis by providing a free ridematching service to help over 9,000 commuters carpool or vanpool to work, and by partnering with almost 1,500 employers to provide free ridesharing information and incentives to commuters at work. RideFinders is operated as a free public service by Madison County Transit for commuters who work in St. Louis City and St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson and Franklin Counties in Missouri; and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois through federal grant funding from the United States Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. For more information, visit www.ridefinders.org or call (800) 847-7433.

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