



800-VIP-RIDE (847-7433)
ridefinders@mct.org
www.ridefinders.org

NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Joe Wright, Director of RideFinders
(800) 847-7433 / (618) 593-4634

Julie Hauser, The Hauser Group
(314) 436-9090 / (314) 629-3887

RIDEFINDERS LAUNCHES *SCHOOL POOL* PROGRAM

Regional rideshare program responds with timely new initiative to help area school districts meet students' transportation needs by helping families who lose bus service to form carpools

GRANITE CITY, IL, OCTOBER 5, 2010 . . . As school districts across the region struggle with reductions in state transportation funding, many are being forced to cut back on school bus service for their students. To help area schools offer their students another safe and convenient transportation option in the face of these funding constraints, RideFinders is launching its new *School Pool* initiative. This unique program provides a free, ridematching service to help parents form carpools to transport their children to and from school, and RideFinders is encouraging school districts region-wide to enroll at no cost so their students can participate.

"It was clear to us earlier this year that evolving state funding issues could have a serious negative impact on school transportation across the region and on parents who rely on school bus service, so we began looking at how we could respond to this need with our expertise as the regional rideshare program," said Joe Wright, director of RideFinders. "The result was the creation of the *School Pool* program, a customized ridematching service to help parents get their children to and from school safely and reliably in carpools while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution at area schools."

The *School Pool* program is available for elementary, middle and high schools in St. Louis City; St. Louis, Jefferson, Franklin and St. Charles counties in Missouri, and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties in Illinois. However, schools must enroll in the program before RideFinders can provide parents with access the free *School Pool* ridematching service. To enroll, school administrators contact RideFinders at (800) 847-7433 or ridefinders@mct.org to schedule a brief meeting at the school. Following this meeting, the school voluntarily agrees to participate and establishes a unique school code that parents must have to register with the free *School Pool* ridematching service for added security. Finally, RideFinders works with the school to inform parents of the school code and program availability.

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RIDEFINDERS LAUNCHES SCHOOL POOL PROGRAM FIRST AND FINAL ADD

To register with the *School Pool* ridematching service, parents go to www.ridefinders.org and enter their name, home address, contact info and driving interest, and their student's name, grade, school and unique school code. All of the data entered will become part of the unique *School Pool* database, which is completely separate from RideFinders commuter database. Once registered, parents obtain a "matchlist" of parents with similar commutes to theirs to contact to discuss the possibility of carpooling. As an added security measure, student names and related information does not appear on the matchlists, and parent information is shared only with registered parents of the same school.

"As more school districts wrestle with reducing or eliminating bus service, enrolling in the *School Pool* program is free and easy way that they can offer impacted families another option for getting their students to school," notes Wright. "It's one thing to just suggest that parents consider carpooling, but quite another to actually give them access to a service that will quickly match them with other families attending the same school who are interested in carpooling. We really hope area schools will realize how beneficial this could be for their students and families and get in touch with us to enroll."

For more than 15 years, RideFinders free commuter ridematching service has been making it easy for commuters to carpool to and from work using their personal vehicles or to vanpool using RideFinders vans. By ridesharing with RideFinders, over 9,500 commuters enjoy a less stressful drive to and from work and save thousands of dollars annually on gas and other commuting costs compared to driving alone. The entire region also benefits from less traffic congestion as over 65 million driving miles are eliminated, while enjoying better air quality as over two million pounds of air pollution are removed.

For more information on RideFinders and the new *School Pool* initiative, or to make arrangements to enroll a school district in the program, call (800) 847-7433 or Email ridefinders@mct.org.

Created and operated by Madison County Transit (MCT) since 1994, RideFinders improves the quality of life and work in the St. Louis region by providing a free ridematching service to help over 9,500 commuters carpool or vanpool to work, and by partnering with 1,200 employers to provide free ridesharing information and incentives to commuters at work. RideFinders is operated as a free public service by MCT 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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