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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES DRIVING MORE COMMUTERS INTO CARPOOLS AND VANPOOLS WITH RIDEFINDERS**

***St. Louis regional rideshare program tops 8,000 combined carpoolers and vanpoolers***

**GRANITE CITY, IL, May 12, 2008 . . .** Record high gas prices are fueling record participation in RideFinders, the regional rideshare program created and operated by Madison County Transit, as the number of commuters sharing the ride to work in a RideFinders carpool or vanpool soared to over 8,000. This surge in popularity that began with the initial spike in gas prices in April is accelerating in May as gas prices inch closer to \$4 per gallon, based on RideFinders activity level:

- April: 640 new commuters registered with RideFinders free ridematching service to find carpool or vanpool partners in April; May 1 - 9: 405 new commuters registered.
- April: 168 new carpools, 2 new vanpools and 424 new carpoolers and vanpoolers registered; May 1 - 9: 90 new carpools, 2 vanpools and 244 new carpoolers and vanpoolers registered.
- April: 108 promotional events and activities implemented with participating employers to share ridesharing information with their employees; May 1 - 9: 50 events and activities.

When comparing RideFinders rideshare participation today to May 2007, the number of new and existing carpoolers and vanpoolers has soared to 8,030 from 6,025, an increase of more than 2,000 commuters or 35 percent. The number of employers participating in RideFinders to promote ridesharing at their worksites rose 25 percent during the same time period, climbing to 1,425 from 1,056, an increase of 369 employers.

“The recent growth is an acceleration of a trend that began last year when people started seeking alternatives to the anticipated I-64 shutdown,” notes Joe Wright, director of RideFinders. “While the anticipated gridlock never materialized, record gas prices have given commuters an even more compelling reason to consider ridesharing now.”

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## RIDEFINDERS SEES RECORD GROWTH

## FIRST AND FINAL ADD

By carpooling in their personal vehicles or vanpooling in vans provided by RideFinders for a monthly fare, these 8,030 rideshare participants each save an average of \$3,500 annually on gas and other costs – while removing 50 million potential driving miles and 2 million pounds of air pollution for the region. The 1,425 employers participating with RideFinders not only help their employees and region; they also boost employee productivity, retention, recruitment and more for their company.

RideFinders makes it easy for commuters to rideshare with its free ridematching service available at (800) VIP-RIDE (800-847-7433) or [www.ridefinders.org](http://www.ridefinders.org). Commuters provide their home and work locations; work hours; and commute preferences, then receive a list of commuters with matching commutes to contact regarding carpooling or vanpooling. Once commuters agree to rideshare, they register their carpool for free or contact RideFinders to form a new or expanded vanpool.

Employers can help their employees get relief at the pump by joining RideFinders at (800) VIP-RIDE (800-847-7433) or [ridefinders@mct.org](mailto:ridefinders@mct.org). In return for their free participation in the regional rideshare program, RideFinders provides free information and incentives to drive their employees to rideshare, such as a \$10 free gas card to try ridesharing for 30 days and up to 6 free taxi rides home for employees who have to work late or leave work early.

“With no relief in sight at the pump, I urge commuters to utilize RideFinders free ridematching service to find another commuters to carpool or vanpool with to work, and employers to join the program to provide their employees with the information and incentives to help them try this great alternative,” notes Wright.

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*RideFinders is the St. Louis regional rideshare program created and operated by Madison County Transit since 1994 to improve the quality of life and work in the region by providing a free ridematching service to help over 8,000 commuters carpool or vanpool to work, and by partnering with over 1,400 employers to provide free ridesharing information and incentives to commuters at work. RideFinders operates as a free public service for commuters working in St. Louis City and St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson and Franklin Counties in Mo.; and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Ill. through Federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. For more information, visit [www.ridefinders.org](http://www.ridefinders.org) or call (800) VIP-RIDE (800-847-7433).*

**Editors’ Note:** We have contact information available for new carpoolers from various communities in the St. Louis region. Please contact The Hauser Group if you’d like to arrange a commuter interview.