

## Introducing...*In the Air Out There*

*Candace C. Baker, CAP Program Manager*

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Welcome to the official newsletter for the Clean Air Partners Program! The purpose of this newsletter is to keep Partners abreast of ongoing events and activities relevant to the program and its member employers. The plan is to send out this digest monthly or bimonthly, depending on the amount of current events and information relevant to the program.

We hope that you benefit from this newsletter by receiving pertinent information and resources helpful in your clean air efforts. Partners are also encouraged to pass along any news, events or resources that may be beneficial or applicable to the program or Partners to be included in upcoming editions.

I hope that through this digest, Partners gain information on what's happening "In the air out there" in Central Texas and beyond!

## Welcome New Partners!

*Candace C. Baker*

Please join me in welcoming them our newest Clean Air Partners! These Partners have each submitted an emissions baseline that they pledge to reduce from, joining you in the mission to improve air quality in Central Texas!

[Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority](#)

[Cielo Wind Power, LLP](#)

[Clean Air Lawn Care](#)

[Clean Air Limo](#)

[Hays County](#)

[HelioVolt Corporation](#)

[HNTB Corporation](#)

[Noelke, English, Maples, St. Leger, LLP](#)

[St. David's HealthCare Partnership](#)



## 2009 Annual Reporting

*Candace C. Baker*

Another big THANK YOU to all Partners who submitted 2008 annual reduction reports or new baselines last year! The total reductions were over 55,000 lbs of VOC and NOx!

25% of Partners submitted new '08 baselines. A few others had increases in employee total and fuel/energy usage which accounted for a lower total than usual, but emission reductions are expected to be greater in 2009 and beyond.

We look forward to reporting and recognizing Partners in 2010 for their new emission reduction successes! As a reminder, Partners can submit their 2009 data at any time between January 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. Submitting data early may be helpful since many of you may be busy with ozone season efforts.

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*"...emissions reductions are expected to be greater...in 2009 and beyond."*

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## What's up in 2010?

*Candace C. Baker*



**Recruiting:** As we aim to grow our Partner base, recruiting will be the main focus in 2010. More employers reducing their emissions make for greater regional air quality improvement for Central Texas. If you have any connections with employers that may be interested in joining, please contact me with their information. Any employer of any size in Central Texas is eligible!

**Partner Luncheon:** Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Partners luncheon will be coming up in March - the date and host/location are almost set! Any Partners able to help sponsor the catering are asked please contact me ASAP in order get that process started as soon as possible. Multiple Partners can also sponsor this.

**CAF Fundraiser:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual CLEAN AIR Force fundraiser will be held in May this year (date and location TBD). Any Partners wanting to sponsor this event can contact CAF staff for details. This party on behalf of clean air gets bigger and better every year!

**Annual Reporting:** July and August is annual Partner reporting time, so unless you plan to submit your '09 data early, please mark your calendars to have your 2009 data submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Ozone Season:** Stay tuned for information on other events and activities during Ozone Season and Commute Solution Month (September).

## Partner Reminder!!

**Don't forget to place your order for an Ozone Alert Flag ASAP!** Help notify employees and passersby of Ozone Days with your flag masts! Sizes are 3'x5' or 4'x6' and priced at \$60 to \$90, depending on the order size. Simply email your purchase request to myself and Sarah Holland (CAF) at [sarah@cleanairforce.org](mailto:sarah@cleanairforce.org).



Mayor Leffingwell unveils Ozone Flag

## EPA to Strengthen Ozone Standard

*CLEAN AIR Force/Clean Air Partners Staff, 1/7/10*

On January 7<sup>th</sup> EPA announced a range for the proposed new ozone standard. The current standard is 0.075 parts per million (ppm) and EPA is proposing to set the “primary” standard protecting public health at a level between 0.060 and 0.070ppm measured over eight hours. The final standard will be issued on August 31, 2010. Details are linked below.

Central Texas measured 0.075ppm in 2009, just in attainment of the current standard. In light of the future standard, larger reduction efforts by Partners are highly encouraged this Ozone Season (April 1<sup>st</sup> - October 31<sup>st</sup>). Partners can play a critical part in helping to protect Central Texas’ public health by keeping ozone levels at a minimum.

Jan 7<sup>th</sup> Announcement: [EPA Strengthens Smog Standard, 1/7/09](#)

More information: [www.epa.gov/groundlevelozone](http://www.epa.gov/groundlevelozone)

## City of Austin Environmental Awareness Awards

*Pharr Andrews, City of Austin-Austin Energy*

Do you know a person or group making outstanding contributions toward the protection, conservation and improvement of Austin’s environment?

Nominate them or yourself for the City of Austin Environmental Awareness Awards at [www.coolaustin.org/awards](http://www.coolaustin.org/awards). The City will honor each of the following:



School or educational program  
 Individual  
 Large business  
 Small business  
 Community organization/nonprofit  
 City department  
 Governmental agency

**Nomination deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>**

## Commute Greener with mobile phones!

*Courtesy of Soll Sussman, Texas General Land Office*

The Volvo Group has unveiled *Commute Greener!*, a new service that assists individuals in reducing their Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions impact by turning their mobile phones into personal CO<sub>2</sub> calculators with social networking capabilities. With this service users can:

- Set a target for reducing their personal CO<sub>2</sub> footprint
- See their progress against personal CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets
- Share experiences in a trusted, online community

Individuals can calculate their own CO<sub>2</sub> reductions through the use of different means of transportation (bus, car, carpool, bicycle etc).

Partners may also benefit from a *Commute Greener!* online community to gauge employee efforts while challenging and encouraging participation to create a greater employer impact.

For more information visit: [www.commutegreener.com](http://www.commutegreener.com)

Information was provided by the above website, produced by [The Volvo Group](#)

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*Turn your mobile phone  
 into a personal CO<sub>2</sub>  
 calculator!*

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## Incentive to kick driving habit in Austin

*Editorial Board, Austin American Statesman, 1/14/10*



Tired of driving Austin's congested roads during morning or evening rush hour? Want a more enjoyable ride to work with coffee and breakfast tacos? How about a program that permits employees to use their own pretax dollars to commute in plush, private vans fitted with flat screens and Wi-Fi or ride on Capital Metro's Red Line when it opens?

The so-called commuter tax benefit is getting a lot of attention since Congress raised the amount of pretax money employees can use to pay for mass transit and van pools. Under the economic stimulus package that President Barack Obama signed into law a year ago, employees enrolled in the system can use up to \$230 a month in pretax dollars to pay for mass transit – up from \$120. (There is a \$20 per month allowance for bicycles.)

That is a big incentive for Austin residents to shed their vehicles and reduce pollution. The program is popular with California-based Google, Washington-based Microsoft and Yale University in Connecticut. And Austin groups are starting up an innovative transportation pilot that could change the way employees commute.

The big question is whether Central Texans will park their vehicles to ride in customized vans while someone else does the driving. Robin Rather, CEO for Collective Strength, a company that focuses on sustainability projects, believes they will, given the right circumstances. We agree.

"The reason people don't use public transportation is convenience and accessibility," she said. "There isn't a convenient way to get to the job or downtown."

So Rather's company is working with the Environmental Defense Fund and the Clean Air Force of Central Texas to run customized shuttles along routes that make it super convenient for commuters to jump on and ride to job locations.

Veolia Transportation has agreed to run the shuttles. The company recently was released from its contract to run Capital Metro's Red Line rail service but still works with the transit agency's bus system.

Rather and company envision an express shuttle system that would be available to Travis County and City of Austin workers and a few private companies in the beginning. To be successful, Rather said shuttle vans would make one to three stops on each trip (including drop-offs at work sites). Transportation for commuters who need to keep appointments after they've arrived at work also would be available using e-mail or texting to summon shuttles.

Employees would be able to eat food, drink beverages, watch satellite television, check e-mail or relax on the shuttle buses that would cost between \$6 and \$12 a day per person. And commuters could use tax-free money to pay for that convenience. The program is similar to federal flexible spending accounts that permit employees to pay for qualified health expenses with pretax dollars. Like that program, the commuter tax benefit must be set up by employers.

If used for public transportation, it could help reduce transportation costs and air pollution, said Jim Marston, regional director of the Texas Office for the Environmental Defense Fund and chairman of the Clean Air Force board. In the past few years, Austin has come close to violating federal clean air standards, Marston said.

Because the commuter tax program is aimed at getting more vehicles off the road, it could help reduce pollutants caused by cars and trucks, the largest single source of ozone pollutants in Travis County.

If convenience is keeping Central Texans in their cars and trucks, then this is a transportation system that could break that habit.

[Statesman.com link to this article](#)



### Clean Air Partners Program

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