Today, a confluence of events is prompting Americans to change the way they think about transportation. Fluctuating gasoline prices, heightened environmental awareness, and the economic downturn have all triggered an increased interest in alternatives to reliance on single-occupancy vehicles for daily transportation needs. Last summer, ridership on transportation systems of all sizes dramatically increased as fuel prices topped $4-per-gallon. Since then — even as fuel prices have decreased, ridership has retained much of last summer’s demand.

Employment transportation — commuting — is a critical component in this growth. First and foremost among many Americans’ daily transportation needs is getting to and from work. Accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation is key to maintaining employment and thus a critical component of America’s economic recovery. Furthermore, for members of the community with specialized transit needs, such as people with disabilities, older workers, youth, and low-income earners, such transportation is the link that actually makes employment possible.

America’s employers have the power to play an important role in further advancing support for alternative transportation options. By implementing job-related transportation benefits and services, they can help their employees, community and environment. What’s more, they can realize bottom-line benefits through direct cost savings and an improved public image — all while opening doors to employment for a wider segment of their communities.
For all these reasons, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) charged the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) with developing and disseminating the Transportation Toolkit for the Business Community, a collection of informational resources designed to help employers understand the benefits of job-related transportation benefits and services as well as sources of assistance for implementing them.

“What we’ve developed is a practical set of materials that can help transit systems of all sizes and serving all areas of the country to work directly with local employers to help them develop commuting services for their employees,” says CTAA’s Joblinks Director Carolyn Jeskey. “And all of these resources are conveniently housed at our new web address: www.ctaa.org/transportation_to_work.

Among the topics covered by the new employer transportation toolkit are:

- How transportation programs and benefits can boost a business’s bottom line
- Powerful transit-business partnerships
- Employment transportation strategies for people with disabilities
- Employee transportation program coordinators
- Transportation Management Associations
- Transportation tax incentives for business
- Ridesharing strategies and best practices for employers
- How to launch vanpool programs
- Transportation passes and voucher programs
- Effective employment transportation strategies for rural and smaller communities
- Urban employment transportation innovations
- Employer transportation consortiums and partnerships
- Guaranteed Ride Home programs
- How employment transportation programs can help companies with “green” commitments

The employer transportation toolkit, and all of its resources, will be shared with employers and human resource organizations around the nation in the coming...
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service is expected to be underway by late 2009. An additional expansion is under consideration to reach the state’s border at Westerly, with additional stops in Cranston, East Greenwich, Kingston and Pawtucket.

“We continue to seek out new ways to expand service while also improving our current operations,” says Moscola. “It’s a process that we see as unending.”

A Sense of Ownership

After salvaging the remanents of Rhode Island’s transit history more than four decades ago, RIPTA and its menu of mobility options is now seamlessly interwoven in the state’s identity. As it strives towards its goal of serving every Rhode Island resident with constantly-improving transit service, RIPTA has established a proven and responsive blueprint for its own future.

“Our citizens have a sense of ownership in this system,” Moscola says proudly. “It’s truly Rhode Island’s transit system.”

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months as the Community Transportation Association and its partners undertake a strategic marketing effort to ensure this vital information in shared nationwide.

“We encourage all transit systems to take and use what they need in the toolkit and to let us know what they’re hearing in response from their local business community,” says Jeskey. “The Toolkit is not a static resource, but a dynamic one that we hope we can tailor to best meet the needs of employers nationwide.”

All attendees at the 2009 Community Transportation EXPO in Providence, Rhode Island have the complete set of employer transportation toolkit documents on their conference information memory sticks.

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