

# Inside Lane

November 2013

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→ FORWARD TO A FRIEND



## Congratulations to the 2013 Commuter Choice Award winners!



Employers, organizations and individuals who have actively adopted and promoted innovative commuting strategies throughout the Twin Cities were recognized earlier this month with Commuter Choice Awards.



Awards were presented at a ceremony in Minneapolis that included a congratulatory video address by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, an introduction by Hennepin County Commissioner Linda Higgins and remarks by KARE 11 meteorologist Sven Sundgaard, who also emceed the event.

We salute these creative commuting champions!

- Building Owner/Management Company of the Year: Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq
- Employer of the Year: Quality Bicycle Products
- Government Entity of the Year (two winners): The City of Edina and the National Park Service-Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
- Commuter of the Year: Shawn Carriere of Target Corp.
- Organization of the Year: Transit for Livable Communities

[Learn more about the work of this year's winners.](#)

**Vanpool Legacy Awards**

Six individuals who have been driving and coordinating a Met Council vanpool for 10 or more years received special recognition at the Commuter Choice Awards event.

The six received Vanpool Legacy Awards for taking on the responsibilities of driving and maintaining records for reporting purposes, plus their work to recruit new riders.

These commuters were recognized:

- Steve Dzurek of Eden Prairie
- Linda Habel of Lindstrom
- Michelle Rosinger of St. Cloud
- Jane Snyder of Hastings
- Chad Van Dyke of North Branch
- Kathy Voeltz of Spring Valley, Wis.

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## Cap on transit commuter benefit will change in 2014

The transit commuter benefit is an employer-provided federal tax benefit that allows commuters to save money by paying for their transit expenses with pre-tax dollars.

When the American Taxpayer Relief Act was signed into law on Jan. 1 of this year, the maximum monthly cap of the transit portion of the commuter benefit was restored to the same level as the benefit for parking, to \$245 per month.

Unfortunately, the increase in the transit portion of the commuter benefit was temporary; it reverts back to \$125 at the end of the year, unless Congress enacts new legislation to make the increase permanent or extend it.

Meantime, the IRS recently announced cost of living adjustments to the transportation fringe benefit. Unless Congress were to act by the end of this year, the monthly cap on the transportation fringe benefit starting on Jan. 1, 2014, will be \$250 a month for parking and \$130 a month for transit/vanpool.

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## Bring a friend free with your Metropass Dec. 26-31

If you carry a Metropass, you already know that it's the best way to get to work.



In late December, we'll help you introduce a friend to Metropass, with our Bring a Friend promotion. From Dec. 26-31, you can bring a friend free when you ride with your Metropass on regional buses, METRO lines and Northstar.

Show your Metropass to your bus driver or Transit Police Officer and say you're participating in the Bring a Friend promotion. You and your friend must travel together to be eligible for the offer.

If Metropass isn't an option where your friend works, tell him or her to contact the company's Human Resources office. Metropass is available only to employees at participating companies and requires a minimum of 10 active Metropass cardholders each month.

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## **Transit pass program provides solution for Medica**

Metro Transit has expanded a partnership with health-insurance provider Medica, making it easier for its members to take transit to and from their medical appointments.

Medica previously purchased one-ride coupons from Metro Transit to give to certain members who qualified for assistance with their transportation needs. Medica also covered taxicab rides for some of its members.

As Medica's transportation program grew, so did the administrative work associated with handling a large volume of coupons, plus the cost of covering cab rides.

Metro Transit's Revenue Operations division worked with Medica to find a solution using Go-To Cards. Medica has been set up with equipment similar to other Go-To Card retailers in the Twin Cities.

"Medica now can create the Go-To Card that best suits the needs of its client," said Metro Transit's Retail Sales Supervisor Mary Capistrant. "Medica won't have to handle one-ride coupons anymore, plus Medica's clients can get their Go-To Card refilled by Medica, if the need arises."

In addition, Medica members can use their Go-To Cards for trips to other destinations beyond their medical appointments.

Medica uses the My Fare Card List tool, which is a convenient way to manage Go-To Cards and allows organizations to refill members' cards

To explore transit pass options for your organization, contact your [employer outreach specialist](#) today!

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