

Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor



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Governor Praises State Employees for Exceeding Commuter Challenge Goal

State employees reduced emissions by more than 593,000 pounds of carbon, saved an estimated \$125,118 in gas money

(Salem) - Governor Ted Kulongoski today congratulated state employees for reducing the state's carbon footprint by more than 593,000 pounds of carbon by carpooling, biking, walking, or using mass transit during the summer months. State employees exceeded the Governor's goal of 500,000 pounds of carbon.

"Changing daily routines isn't easy. But small changes can deliver big results, and we all should feel proud for what we as state government were able to accomplish," Governor Kulongoski said. "Now, the challenge going forward is to continue those smart commuting habits and use them for everyday errands."

The Governor's challenge did not create a new state transportation benefit or program, but rather encouraged employees to use the current options available to them.

The Commuter Challenge shows that through education and outreach Oregonians will carpool or choose to walk, bike or take mass transit when they are provided the information to access and benefits of other transportation options.

The percentage of commuters driving alone dropped by 19%, and consequently, the use of Salem-Keizer Transit, carpooling, walking, bicycling and vanpool services increased.

The success of the challenge supports the state's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and the transportation options component of the Governor's Transportation Initiative for the next legislative session.

Just like the Commuter Challenge, a central focus of the Governor's climate change and transportation agendas is to arm Oregonians with information about ways to reduce carbon emissions, including helping local governments expand transportation options for citizens interested in reducing their drive-alone commutes.

"People want choices. Through education and a statewide commitment to build upon the current alternative transportation options available, we will provide choices that reduce emissions, enhance community livability and save Oregonians some money on gas," said Governor Kulongoski.

In addition to education and outreach, the Governor's transportation options program looks to expand pedestrian and bicycle programs, increase use of vanpools, implement a statewide rideshare program and create an incentive program designed to reduce vehicle-miles-traveled.

The Commuter Challenge was specific to the 8500 state employees who work on the Capital Mall in Salem. It ran from June through August, ending just before Labor Day.