

Despite Rain, Don't Drive Day Was an Overwhelming Success!

Report prepared by Mecklenburg County Air Quality
August 25, 2008

Although the weather did not cooperate, Don't Drive Day was observed by many in Charlotte region resulting in:

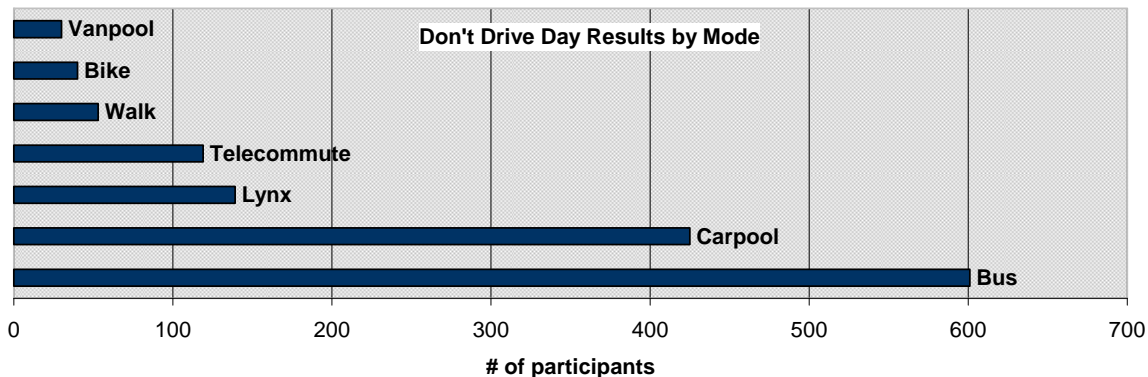
- 1,500 citizens choosing to trade in their solo commute,
- 14 tons of air pollution prevented and
- 30,500 miles of travel avoided!

And if participants continue their clean commuting behavior the region will be saved over 3,300 tons of air pollution each year including 13 tons of ozone-forming emissions!



The Charlotte regional "Don't Drive Day" took place on Wednesday August 13, 2008 and was sponsored by Mecklenburg County Air Quality, N.C. Air Awareness, CATS, and *Clean Air Works!*. Don't Drive Day prizes were offered to motivate citizens who currently commute by driving alone to consider alternatives that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This event was very successful in generating significant participation and press coverage with quantifiable emissions reductions.

Most Commuters Choose Transit



Don't Drive Day commuters tended to choose riding the bus (42%) or carpooling (30%) over other commute options like biking or walking. This is not unexpected given the limiting factor that commute distance plays in either of those commute options.

Media Frenzy Unexpected

Don't Drive Day was covered by television, print and radio news sources, bringing attention not only to the Don't Drive Day actions and prizes, but also to the larger issue of improving regional air quality. In total, Don't Drive Day received over \$100,000 in added value news coverage, including \$74,000 worth of free TV news coverage and 5 articles in the Charlotte Observer.



In order to inform citizens about Don't Drive Day and secure media coverage, MCAQ, CATS and CAW staff took the following actions.

- Issued a press release August 6, 2008
- Participated in 10 interviews covering TV, radio, and print news media.
- Contacted 173 *Clean Air Works!* and NC Air Awareness businesses.
- Purchased drive-time radio advertising.
- Placed notices on community calendars.
- Posted announcement on www.airquality.charmeck.org
- Emailed over 2,700 CATS riders
- Posted announcement on electronic sign on LYNX

Many businesses that were notified went beyond simply publicizing Don't Drive Day by adding their own incentives for employee participation. Duke Energy raffled off a restaurant gift certificate and Rea Contracting

provided lunch to employees who participated. These informal partnerships proved very valuable for increasing participation.

The paid radio ads ran on 10 major stations in the Charlotte-metro area over the five business days leading up to Don't Drive Day. As an added bonus, several Air Awareness public service announcements aired in the days following August 13, 2008.

Winners Work at Companies that Promote Clean Air

From the 1,546 participants, the following three individuals won prizes in the Don't Drive Day drawing.



- Carpooler Sherry Rushing, Charlotte Pipe and Foundry won an iPod® Touch.
- Telecommuter Darlene Auman, Bank of America won a Neuton® Electric Lawnmower.
- Carpooler Hazel Rousey, AbitibiBowater won a Digital Camera.



All three winners work for companies that participate in *Clean Air Works!* a regional project which engages employers in the effort to improve air quality by providing them with tools to help their employees take control of their commutes, and by assisting in retooling operations and maintenance activities to reduce emissions.



Process Proved to be Simple

Don't Drive Day 2008 was a self-reporting contest to promote alternatives to driving alone to work. Participants were asked to email their action to dontdriveday@yahoo.com between 12:00 a.m. Wednesday August 13, 2008 and 12:00 noon on Thursday August 14, 2008 in order to be eligible for the prize drawing. Winners were required to either live or work in the Charlotte non-attainment region which includes Mecklenburg, Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell, Rowan, Cabarrus, Union, and York (SC) counties. Winners were also required to sign a contest eligibility form verifying that they met contest requirements.

Event organizers did not receive a single complaint concerning the entry process which proved to be simple enough to encourage high participation. The electronic entries allowed for an electronic process to be used for randomly selecting winners.

Participants Voice Their Support

On August 13th and even before, the inbox of dontdriveday@yahoo.com was filled with positive comments from Charlotte area citizens that like the idea of leaving their old commuting habits behind. Just read what they had to say!

"Listening to the news this morning on TV 14, I heard that today was a day to get to work without using your car. I thought that was a great idea. It is only one day, but it is a start to conserve energy. I asked a friend, who lives with me, if he would not mind car pooling today. We usually drive the same route to work anyway, so it was not an inconvenience for him to assist me in conserving energy for a day. We enjoyed the drive together. We are now planning to drive together everyday. Thank you for the incentive. One person can make a difference." – R. Story

"Thanks to you, I'm getting a monthly bus pass! I've been meaning to try the bus for months now after having a not so great experience two years ago. Now it seems like there are more stops in my neighborhood and the time puts me to work five minutes early which I never accomplish on my own." - A. Haigler

"I usually drive to a park-and-ride, but I've discovered if I take a different bus, I can walk (great exercise) to the stop and then take the bus. I love the fact that I don't have to drive, I save on gas and I can read a book!" – J. Thirkield

"I hope your campaign encourages a lot more citizens to do this on a daily basis because small things can make a big difference in the air we all breathe." – J. Davidoff

Don't Drive Day 2008 Media Coverage Matrix

Medium	Source	Quantity	Reach	Value
Wednesday, August 7				
Print	Charlotte Observer	900 words		\$2,500.00
Online	Charlotte Observer	900 words		\$1,000.00
Thursday, August 8				
Online	Lake Wylie Pilot	1,200 words		
Monday, August 11				
Print	Charlotte Observer	4000 words		\$6,000.00
Tuesday, August 12				
Television	News 14	30 seconds	3,211	\$1,305.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	3,354	\$270.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	2,442	\$618.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	3,224	\$180.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	72,043	\$4,800.00
Television	WSOC (ABC)	30 seconds	112,060	\$25,059.00
Wednesday, August 13				
Online	Charlotte Observer	15 photos		
Online	Rock Hill Herald	2,000 words		\$1,500.00
Print	Charlotte Observer	4,500 words		\$6,000.00
Online	Charlotte Observer	4,500 words		\$2,000.00
Print	Charlotte Observer	2000 words		\$4,000.00
Online	Charlotte Observer	2000 words		\$1,000.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	3,354	\$1,107.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	3,354	\$1,092.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	2,442	\$180.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	10,818	\$300.00
Television	News 14	30 seconds	10,818	\$894.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	53,182	\$3,000.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	53,182	\$3,000.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	39,106	\$3,975.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	39,106	\$4,950.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	39,106	\$1,500.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	39,106	\$1,500.00
Television	WBTB (CBS)	30 seconds	39,106	\$399.00
Television	WCNC (NBC)	30 seconds	32,272	\$2,409.00
Television	WCNC (NBC)	30 seconds	39,317	\$2,400.00
Television	WSOC (ABC)	30 seconds	100,303	\$6,600.00
Television	WSOC (ABC)	30 seconds	72,007	\$6,600.00
Television	WSOC (ABC)	30 seconds	29,562	\$2,100.00
Thursday, August 14				
Print	Charlotte Observer	1,000 words		\$3,000.00
Online	Charlotte Observer	1,000 words		\$2,000.00
Wednesday, August 13				
WRFX	Clear Channel Radio	2 minute story		\$3,000.00
WLYT	Clear Channel Radio	2 minute story		\$3,000.00
Total Value added				\$109,238.00