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The TMA Group—Our Job is Getting You to Yours

VAN VOICES

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DRIVING — THE TRUE COST

So, you think gas prices are outrageous? Well, think again. Would you believe that what we pay for gas is only a fraction of what it truly costs to drive our cars? Consider the costs for maintenance, insurance, parking, and of course the purchasing, financing or leasing of the vehicle. This all adds up to a lot: over \$7,000 each year for the average American vehicle, according to the Consumer Expenditure Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The \$7,000 out of pocket costs that drivers pay is just a portion of what it truly costs to drive. There are other costs of driving which fall outside of the monetary transactions that drivers participate in known as external environmental and societal costs of driving. Consider the following:

- ◆ Road construction and maintenance; police, fire, ambulance
- ◆ Air, water, land pollution
- ◆ Property taxes lost

from land cleared for freeways

- ◆ Petroleum supply line policing; security
- ◆ Petroleum production subsidies
- ◆ 40,000 traffic deaths a year (National Safety Council)
- ◆ Trade deficit, infrastructure deficit
- ◆ Sprawl, loss of transportation options
- ◆ Uncompensated auto accidents
- ◆ Economic losses of \$100 billion annually from traffic congestion—a function of lost productivity, wasted fuel, and unnecessary wear and tear on vehicles through stop and go driving (US General Accounting Office)
- ◆ Expenditures under federal medical assistance programs, are a result of one-third of injuries caused by auto accidents (US DOT)
- ◆ \$350 billion annually is the economic cost to

families from traffic fatalities (Federal Highway Administration)

- ◆ Health cost of air pollution estimated at a minimum of \$10 billion a year, most of which comes from cars, trucks, and SUVs (American Lung Assoc)
- ◆ Ground level ozone and smog that is both ugly and unhealthy, and stunts the growth of trees, which are our source of oxygen and a hedge against global warming.

Much of the true cost of driving simply isn't seen, and it is easy to believe the fiction that driving pays for itself. Now more than ever it is more important to seek out and use alternative modes of transportation such as vanpooling, carpooling and transit. If only a tank of gas reflected the true cost of driving, it would be a bargain. But it's not.



REPORT ACCIDENT CLAIMS IMMEDIATELY TO:

Synaxis Polk & Sullivan

615-385-8341

(Kay Biggs)

-and-

MiMi Lee

615-790-4005 or

After Hours:

615-517-6321

Van Voices is a publication of The TMA Group.

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DEFENSIVE ROAD RULES

Welcome to "Road Rules" a new segment in *Van Voices* which will address defensive driving practices that every driver and passenger should know.



YIELD ANYWAY!

Nobody ever yielded their way into a collision. Think about it. If you are in doubt about who has the right of way, give it away. The other person may be wrong, but you can end up hurt or dead. We often say no one HAS the right-of-way until it is yielded to them. Right of way rules are often misunderstood. If there is uncertainty about which vehicle should have the right of way, give the other person the road. When it comes to driving safely, it's not the principle, but the outcome that counts!

PAY ATTENTION!

"I never saw him!" is the most common excuse after a collision. Virtually all collisions involve inattention on the part of drivers. A moving vehicle develops thousands of pounds of energy. As a driver you have the responsibility to not use that energy to injure or kill others, or damage property. Paying attention makes it possible for you to see, recognize and avoid the hazards lurking on the road; these are the three basic elements of defensive driving. The primary attribute necessary for a safe driver is alertness, and paying attention is the most important driving task because it helps create the time you need to recognize hazards and avoid a collision. Connect your mind to your eyes and work at consciously analyzing what you see while you drive. Driving is the most dangerous thing most of us ever do. It deserves your full attention.



"We won't have a society if we destroy the environment."

-Margaret Mead

Congratulations!

Diane Thorne has been named Executive Director of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), effective August 1.

Under her outstanding leadership The TMA Group has grown expediently. We wish Diane tremendous success on her new journey!

Vanpool Vacancies



LIVE IN SPRING HILL/THOMPSON STATION
AND WORK IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE?

LIVE IN COLUMBIA AND WORK IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE

THE TMA GROUP WANTS TO START A VANPOOL IN THESE
AREAS — CALL MIMI FOR DETAILS

If you have vacant seats on your van contact MiMi Lee at
615-628-0261 or mimi@tmagroup.org

AUCTION INFO

From time to time some of our vans are put on the auction block. We will notify you of upcoming auction dates, times and locations.



Tax Benefit

Did you know that participating in a vanpool can also reduce your taxes? In 2007, the monthly Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefits limits increased! For vanpools and transit, benefit limits increased from \$105 to \$110. Here are three ways for employees and their employers to utilize this benefit:

- ◆ Employee sets aside \$110 each month and isn't taxed on those funds
- ◆ Employer sets aside funds and is not taxed
- ◆ Employee and employer split the cost and both will win with tax reductions

For more information, contact The TMA Group.