

JUNE 2011



APPLE VALLEY HUMAN RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

CONNECTIONS

**After Hours Membership and
Guest Appreciation Event!**

Thursday, June 9th, 2011
5:00 pm—7:00pm

Applewood Grill, Wenatchee

Attendees receive complimentary appetizers, one “Happy Hour” beverage ticket and a RAFFLE ticket!*

No host bar after.

*Additional raffle tickets available for purchase to benefit Sandra Smeller

Help us kick off our summer season!

VOLUME XV, NO. 6

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Friends and colleagues of Sandra Smeller,

As many of you may know, Sandra was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year and has been fighting a courageous battle since. As a result, she is incurring considerable expenses not covered by her health insurance. Because she has been such a vital part of growing HR within the valley and a great mentor and friend to many of you, we invite you to partner with us in helping her with her financial obligations.

If you would like to help Sandra during this most difficult and challenging time, the following options are available:

- **Contact** Jack Powers (jpowers@cwhs.com) or Lynn Bourton (lynn@linktransit.com).
- **Make a personal donation**—An account (#713223105) has been setup in Sandra's name. To make a donation:
 - Drop off a check at Numerica Credit Union, 615 North Emerson in Wenatchee.
 - Mail a check to Numerica Credit Union, 615 North Emerson in Wenatchee.

Whether you mail or drop off a check, be sure to note in the check memo line that it is a donation for Sandra Smeller.

- **Join us** during our June Program (information on next page) and purchase a raffle ticket(s) with all proceeds benefitting Sandra to cover medical expenses.

Raffle items:

- * An annual membership to SHRM
- * Two fantastic gift baskets compliments of:
AVHRA and private member donations
 - Must be present to win -

Please accept our sincere thanks for your willingness to help us help Sandra during her time of need and support.



After Hours Membership and Guest Appreciation Event

We listened to your feedback, and our June meeting will be a relaxed after hours networking event. Take this opportunity to get to know one another, share HR stories and get help with your challenges! If you're not already a member, plan to come and learn about the benefits of membership in this great professional HR organization!

Where: Applewood Grill, Wenatchee

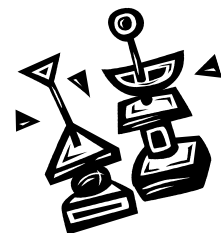
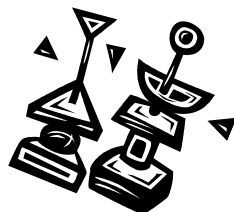
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Commuter Benefits: A Win-Win For Employers and Employees

By Eric West, Link Transit Marketing and Communications Coordinator

What Are Commuter Benefits?

Do you have employees who take the bus to work? Chances are you do, and they could be saving up to 40% on their commuting expenses. The federal government allows employees to deduct up to \$230 per month from their paychecks, pre-tax, to pay for transit, parking or vanpool expenses.

Employees save by using pre-tax dollars for their commuting expenses and employers get the advantage of reduced payroll taxes. This popular program is relatively easy to add to an employee benefit package and inexpensive to administer.

Thousands of employers across the country are offering Commuter Benefits to their employees. Your employees could be taking advantage of these savings, too!

Federal and State Tax Benefits

If your company pays for any part of an employee's transit pass costs, you may be able to claim the costs as an allowable business expense on your federal and state taxes.

Current tax laws allow tax-free transit benefits, up to \$2,760 per employee, per year. For more information on IRS Code Section 132 (F), as amended by TEA-21, Title IX, Section 910, refer to IRS Publication 15-B and check with your tax advisor or CPA.

Pre-tax Payroll Deductions

You and your employees can both save money when you offer them pre-tax payroll deductions to pay for part or all of their transit passes.

Pre-tax deductions reduce employees' taxable earnings, so they also reduce the amount of FICA and unemployment taxes you and your employees must pay. (Individual savings will depend on each employee's income tax bracket as well as federal and state tax rates.)

Commuter Benefits Are Easy to Set Up

The benefit works like other pre-tax plans such as dependent care and medical reimbursement, except that it's much simpler. It is exempt from the usual restrictions and reporting requirements that accompany other pre-tax programs allowed by the IRS. There are no plan filings or forms for the employer to fill out, no irrevocable elections and no mandatory enrollment dates.

Employers can offer commuter tax benefits as a payroll deduction, a subsidized benefit, or a combination of the two. Most employers administer the benefit themselves, purchasing the transit tickets or vouchers each month and distributing them to employees. Some employers (especially larger ones) might find it more practical to hire a third-party administrator to manage their program. There are a number of companies that specialize in transit benefits, but there is an expense associated with these services.

Example of savings with pre-tax payroll deductions

	Employee-paid	Employer-paid
12 all-zone one-month passes (\$80 per month)	\$960	\$960
Approximate federal tax savings (15%)	(\$144)	0
Approximate FICA savings (7.65%)	(\$73.44)	(\$73.44)
Approximate unemployment tax savings (2.44% average)	0	(\$23.42)
Total savings with pre-tax deductions	(\$217.44)	(\$96.86)
Actual annual cost after tax deductions	\$742.56	\$863.14

The Costs of Driving

If your vehicle gets 20 MPG, and your commute is 20 miles each day, you are using about a gallon of gas, at cost of \$4.00 or 20¢ per mile. Factor in the cost of oil, tires, maintenance and wear and tear on your vehicle, and the cost probably doubles. Just in fuel alone, a commute from Chelan to Wenatchee is about \$14 a day. It doesn't take long to start saving some pretty serious money when you begin using transit on a regular basis.

Continued on next page—

The Cost of Public Transit

A fare increase is scheduled to take place July 1, but transit passes remain very affordable, especially when compared to the cost of fuel. For travel within the Wenatchee urban area, and as far as the communities of Entiat, Cashmere, and Orondo, a monthly pass is just \$40. If you have employees coming from Leavenworth, Waterville, or the Lake Chelan area, the costs increase to \$80.

The Benefits of Encouraging Transit Use By Your Employees

- Solves parking shortages, and may reduce the need to expand parking
- Saves valuable parking for customers and clients
- Improves moral and reduces turnover
- Supports an environmentally friendly alternative to driving alone
- Ensures your employees always have reliable transportation to work
- Reduces your employees commuting costs, resulting in more money in their pocket

What Can Link Transit Provide For You?

In addition to answering any questions about the Commuter Benefits program, we will work with your employees to help them become familiar with our services, including planning their travel to and from their work location. This can be done in a one-on-one situation, or through some sort of on-site event. We will work with your benefits coordinators to get passes delivered to your employees either in person or by mail.

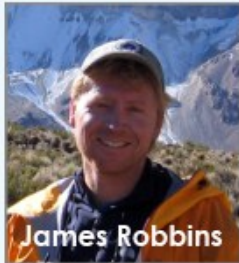
For More Information

Please contact at Eric West at 664-7622 or by email at eric@linktransit.com to get more information on how you can set up a Commuter Benefits program at your business.

NHRMA 2011 Conference & Tradeshow • October 5-7, 2011

Topics covered will include:
Employment Law & Legislation, Talent Management,
Global HR, Strategic Management,
and many more!

Meet Our Keynote Speakers!



James Robbins



John Vlastelica



Bill Stainton

For more information or to register, visit: www.nhrmaconference.org/2011/



Apple Valley Human Resource Association

Product/Service

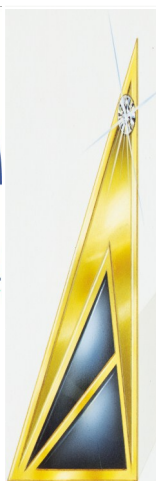


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2007 SHRM **SUPERIOR MERIT AWARD**
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