

World News



UK

Crush your Car for Free Transit

Some United Kingdom towns are trying an unusual new tactic to encourage people to choose public transportation or cycling over driving. The city of Newport, Wales is giving away a year's worth of free travel on Arriva Trains Wales and their city bus network to motorists who turn in their cars to be crushed and sold for scrap. Newport council worker Geraint Roberts, 27, was the first to volunteer his automobile in exchange for the free transport. "Having my car crushed is going to give me the push I need to use public transport," says Roberts, now one of the five car-less commuters who has participated in this program.

The scheme is part of Newport's contribution to European Mobility Week, a full week of events promoting sustainable mobility. Martin Dolan, from the company Capita Symonds, is helping to run the scheme, which he said was the first of its kind in Wales. "The whole idea is to break people's cycle of traveling by car. Hopefully, if we can get people on to public transport they will actually see the benefits and continue to travel via that mode," states Dolan.



bbc.com

PHILIPPINES

Bicycle Facilities Increase in Major Philippine Cities

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) recently announced

plans to collaborate with private businesses to create 124 miles of interconnected pedestrian and biking lanes in metropolitan Manila by 2010. Bicycle advocacy groups in Manila, such as the Firefly Brigade, support the proposed improvements and have also requested that the agency provide free bicycle parking throughout Manila. Following the lead of Marikina City, which

will soon require businesses to provide parking spaces for bicycles of employees and customers, MMDA is appealing to private establishments in Manila to provide bike racks to encourage bicycling. In September, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando asked malls, supermarkets and offices to install bicycle racks.

Meanwhile, in Marikina City the gov-



ernment has already begun providing free bicycle parking in strategic areas. According to Lota Conteras, head of the Marikina City Bikeways Office, free bicycle racks, consisting of pink railings where bicycles could be chained, have been set up near the city hall, hospitals, schools and public markets. Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando supports the changes. "Biking has many benefits for the people. It is good for the health and for the environment. People will also save on gasoline expenses," states Mayor Fernando.

inq7.net

MEXICO

BRT Streamlines, Speeds Buses in Mexico City

On June 19, Mexico City began operating Metrobus, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, on a 12-mile route along Insurgentes Avenue, one of the city's busiest north-south corridors. Metrobus will replace the former unregulated system of 262 minibuses which

provided service to commuters on Insurgentes. The owners and operators of the former minibuses have agreed to remove their buses and are now either part owners or employees of Metrobus.

Although the launch of Metrobus was hampered by a rush to begin service before Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador stepped down as mayor and began his bid for the Mexican presidency, public reaction has been generally favorable. According to a household opinion survey fielded by Consulta Mitofsky one month after Metrobus began its service, approximately 56% of sur-



vey participants are in favor of the BRT system, citing reductions in commuting time and congestion.

Metrobus is based on a BRT model pioneered in the Brazilian city of Curitiba in the 1970's. Mexico City officials hope to expand the system in the coming years to improve air quality in the city and save time for commuters.

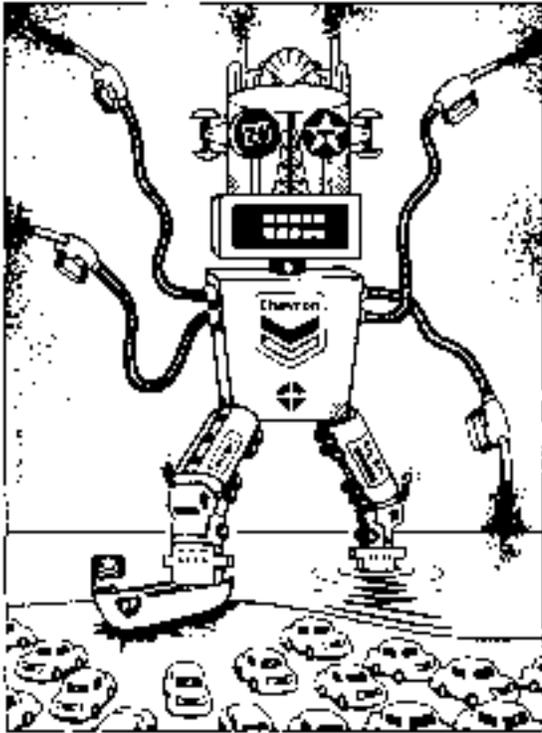
Itdp.org and EMBARQ

GLOBAL

Action Campaign on Global Warming

Taking their cue from civil rights and peace activists, citizens concerned about global warming are taking their message to the streets. They have declared Saturday, December 3rd as a Day of Action in conjunction with the Climate Conference in Montreal, Canada. Most of the conference attendees will be representing countries who have signed on to the Kyoto Protocol on global warming. The conference will cover the latest developments with this deepening world crisis and what should be done about it. Participants in the day of action are calling for the U.S. to join the world by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, as well as working to promote alternative energy and energy conservation measures.

kyotoandbeyond.org,
climatecrisiscoalition.org



NEW YORK CITY

Less Idle Time for City School Buses

Five school bus companies operating more than 1,700 school buses in New York City have agreed to reduce air pollution by reducing their idling. State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and Congressman Charles Rangel announced the agreements with the five companies. Spitzer says he now has anti-idling agreements with nine New York City school bus fleets with a total of 6,000 buses, or 75% of the city's school bus fleet. State law restricts bus idling to no more than five consecutive minutes. New York City law restricts idling to no more than three consecutive minutes. But an investigation by the Attorney General's office found that

buses from the companies repeatedly violated these idling laws. Often, the buses idled for as long as 15 to 20 minutes in front of schools and in residential neighborhoods.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council numerous studies have shown that diesel fumes cause cancer, particularly lung cancer. In fact, government regulators estimate, based on lifetime risks, that diesel exhaust is responsible for 125,000 cancers nationwide. The particles in diesel exhaust are also dangerous, impairing the lungs and aggravating diseases like emphysema and bronchitis; they can also worsen—or trigger—asthma attacks. This agreement will reduce the amount of fumes and particles emitted by school buses.

The latest agreement covers United Tom Tom Transportation, Jofaz Transportation, Rainbow Transit, County Coach Corporation and Hendrickson Bus Corporation.

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BROOKLYN

MTA Approves Atlantic Yards Sale

The MTA has approved the sale of the Atlantic Yards property in Brooklyn to developer Forest City Ratner for less than half of the property's \$241 million appraised value. The project will now go through environmental review before developer Bruce Ratner is cleared to build a basketball arena for the Nets and 17 office and apartment buildings along Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn.

The proposal has been surrounded by scandal as reports revealed in September that the

main community group lobbying in support of the project, BUILD, received \$5 million worth in funding from the developer himself.

Community groups are concerned with the extensive subsidies the City government would extend to Ratner to develop the site. They are also concerned with the project's impact on their neighborhoods including the estimated 9,000 additional vehicles, an accompanying traffic, noise and pollution that would be drawn to the neighborhood every weekday. According to Community Consulting Services, a Brooklyn-based transit think-tank these cars and trucks would be joined by an extra 2,500 vehicles whenever there was a home game at the Arena.

Mayor Bloomberg is happy with the decision stating in a press release that the sale meant "great news for Brooklyn."

nydailynews.com, nyc.gov, ferc.com

NEW JERSEY

NJT Daily Ridership Tops 800,000 Trips

Daily ridership on New Jersey Transit (NJT) trains and buses rose more than 5% in the past fiscal year, topping 800,000 trips for the first time, the agency announced this summer. Nearly 37,000 more trips were being taken



daily by June 30th, 2005 than a year earlier, which NJT executive director George D. Warrington credited to expanded rail, bus and light rail service. Light rail, the newest and least-used mode, saw the biggest gains. Use of Hudson-Bergen Light Rail rose by nearly one-third, to 21,050 daily trips, while the River Line in southern New Jersey now has 6,100 weekday trips, a nearly 30% gain over the prior year. More people were also commuting to New York City. Bus trips to the Port Authority Bus Terminal rose 8.4%, to 163,700, while 140,000 rode the rails into Penn Station New York, up nearly 2%. Use of the Northeast Corridor trains grew more than three times the rate of other lines, with 4,450 new trips. NJT also announced plans to improve the public address systems at more than 20 stations. An \$846,000 contract will allow for new speakers as well as the replacement or addition of signs that can provide updated information.

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NEW YORK

Spike in Gas Prices Impacts New Yorkers

Two-driver families in the New York City metropolitan area will pay \$1,478 more for gas this year, according to a study conducted by Sperlings Best Places, a data firm based in Portland, Oregon. Sperlings looked at the increase in gas prices over the last 12 months in the 85 largest cities in the U.S and found that gas prices in the New York City region have increased 59.4%.

The effects of higher gas prices vary across the New York metropolitan area. Many city dwellers are not affected by the price spike, or are choosing to take advantage of public transportation more often. In the suburbs, drivers are choosing to drive less, combine trips and many are starting to bike to work.

Taxi drivers are especially hard hit by the price increases. Taxi drivers lease their vehicles for between \$105 and \$129 a day and are spending \$35 dollars a day on fuel. Cab drivers are asking New York's Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) to authorize a fare increase or temporary surcharge to help restore income lost at the pump.

TLC approved its last major fare adjustment in the spring of 2004, when gas sold for \$1.90 per gallon, \$1.30 lower than the current rate. Matthew W. Daus, chairman of the TLC said his board is considering three proposals for surcharges to help with fuel costs, but is hesitant to implement another increase while fuel prices remain unstable.

msn.com, bostonglobe.com