Sun Tran announces SunGO smart card fare system launch

Sun Tran will launch SunGO, a new smart card fare payment system coming to transit vehicles on Sunday, June 30. The SunGO fare payment system uses smart card technology to allow fare payments and transfers throughout the region on Sun Tran, Sun Express, Sun Shuttle and eventually the Sun Link modern streetcar, all with just one card. “This should help speed up the boarding process,” said Kate Riley, General Manager of Sun Tran. “The ability to transfer from one transit system to another with just one card makes it easy for passengers to take advantage of the different transit services available.”

“The new SunGO system is key to delivering our promise of seamless regional transit mobility, reported Jeremy Papuga, RTA Director of Transit Services. “Residents and visitors have a new reason to get out of their cars and try public transit.”

All passengers, whether regular bus pass holders or those paying by the ride with cash, are encouraged to get a SunGO Card. Sun Tran is working to educate bus riders on how and where to purchase new SunGO smart cards and tickets, and load passes or cash value to a card.

Economy fare passengers should already have their SunGO ID & Card as proof of qualification for the reduced fare. The SunGO ID & Card is available for seniors 65 years and older, Medicare Cardholders, and disabled and low-income individuals. Passengers with the SunGO ID & Card should call (520) 791-4100 or visit the Special Services Office, 35 W. Alameda, to ensure their SunGO ID & Card is valid before the systems launches June 30.

For more details on SunGO, visit www.suntran.com or call Sun Tran’s Customer Service Center at (520) 792-9222 (for individuals with TDD equipment, call 520-628-1565).
Cynthi Knight is not just a Transportation Coordinator. She is also the Manager of Team Member Services and Development with the Tucson Airport Authority. Debbie Massie, a Team Member Services and Development Representative, is her TC backup.

When asked about the transportation challenges for TAA employees, Cynthi mentioned that employees have different schedules that make it harder for them to carpool. Also some employees would like to ride the bus, but sometimes there isn’t an express bus or route that works for them.

To promote alternative transportation, Cynthi sends emails and paycheck stuffers, and displays posters, all of which promote their Incentive program with prizes and recognition for employees who sign up on the Sun Rideshare website, and those who are the top alternate mode users.

The TAA highlights the Incentive Program as being the most successful strategy to get their employees involved, engaged and actively participating in the trip reduction program. “We promoted the Incentive Program at our Health & Safety Fair. We are trying to get people to use alternate means of transportation. Once they sign up at www.884ride.org we are asking them to track their usage on the Commute Calendar and use our Incentive Program to achieve this.”

The Incentive Program helps increase employee participation in alternative transportation and recognizes those employees at our Service Award Recognition that is held twice a year. TAA generously helps employees with the cost of transportation by subsidizing bus passes 100 percent for employees.

Cynthi recommends that TCs get the word out and approach employees to try using an alternate mode of transportation and help them sign up.

Bike Fest was celebrated by thousands of area residents throughout April. There were events and activities all over town for every type and experience level of cyclist. There were two Cyclovia events this year: one on the south side and the other through mid-town Tucson. Roads were shut down to auto traffic allowing bikers, walkers, skate boarders, and roller bladers to move freely along the five-mile routes. Over 25,000 people participated in these two events and enjoyed the gorgeous weather, the sites along the routes and all the fun activities. Bike to Work Week had a kick-off gathering at Whole Foods, which was new this year. Awards were given out in recognition of those who work hard to promote biking throughout the year. Food stations were available around town on Bike to Work Day for bike commuters on their way to work. Residents could also win prizes or earn discounts from local merchants by riding their bike to work or play.

Cyclovia Tucson events attracted 25,000 participants.
How did you get started using an alternate mode?
For the past 20 years, I have used the bus, walked or rode my bike because I don’t have a car.

How far and how often do you commute?
It is 2.5 miles one way or 5 miles round trip. I do this five days per week to get to work and also on all my other errands.

What do you like about your commute?
Riding the bus takes a long time but I meet lots of different people with different backgrounds.

Walking takes time, but I find it relieves stress, keeps my weight down & I get to see and enjoy my surroundings. The weather can be a challenge though.

Biking gets me there much faster. It’s also good exercise. Road conditions and traffic can be a problem, and some streets don’t have enough lighting.

Have you had any measurable positive results?
I have met lots of new friends riding the bus. Also, I get to finish a lot of good books and newspaper articles. Using alternative means of transportation has saved me money as I don’t have to pay for a car, insurance or gas.

Any recommendations on how to get started using an alternate mode?
If you want to ride the bus, pick a route for an off day and see how it works for you and how long it takes.

Is there one experience you’ve had on your commute to or from work that you’d like to tell about, something funny that happened?
One time walking home, I came upon a mom and baby javelina hiding in the bushes. I think they got scared when they saw me and when they ran out I got scared. So we scared each other. I have also run into a couple of coyotes and heard them sing when they heard the police sirens. I really get to enjoy nature when I walk or ride my bike.

Anything else that you’d like to share, maybe something that you’ve learned but wish you knew from the get go?
Have patience when riding the bus and take a book along. When walking, just enjoy your surroundings. You never know what you might see.
TC ‘Pool Party’ Lunch held on May 7, 2013

Sun Rideshare held our first TC “Pool Party” on May 7. Participants received refresher training and lunch, and everyone went home with new ideas and a Sun Rideshare gift item. Everyone got some great tips on how best to promote alternative transportation from our awesome speakers. All of the speakers were TCs with successful applications for the TRP Incentives Program. First up was Karen Wilhelmsen from Pima County Department of Environmental Quality. She spoke about their Travel Reduction Rewards and Recognition Pilot Program. Their “Reduced Emissions and Air Pollution” or REAP Commuter Rewards makes use of the incentive items they received as prizes for their challenges. Kristen Hershberger with the Tucson Community Food Bank spoke about their “Saves More on Gas” or S.M.O.G. Program and their contests with challenges, incentives and newsletter articles throughout the year. Ronnie Gonzales from Raytheon talked about vanpooling and transit use, and Glenn Grafton, an avid cyclist from the University of Arizona, spoke about the benefits of cycling and the many bike programs offered at the University of Arizona. If you missed this event, you can access the TC Training Booklet at www.pagnet.org/documents/TRP/TrainingBooklet2013.pdf.

Earth Day Festival was April 21

This year, Earth Day was held on Sunday, April 21, at Reid Park, with a parade, solar competition, music, performances and food vendors. Alternative-fueled vehicles were on display.

Upcoming Events

Air Quality Forum, Tuesday, June 18, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. For more information, go to www.PimaCleanAir.com.

Listen to Mrs. Green’s Down to Earth radio show on the second Tuesday of each month where she talks with some extraordinary people on sustainability topics:
June 11 – Clean Air Starts with Me!
Aug. 13 – Clean Water
Sept. 10 – Car Free Day/On the Move
Go to www.mrsgreensworld.com

Travel Reduction Program

TRP Task Force Meeting
The next TRP Task Force meeting will be at 10 a.m., Monday, July 15, in the main conference room at PAG, 177 N. Church Avenue, 5th Floor. All TRP employers are invited.

TRP Employee Survey high performers
Response Rates:
The Lodge at Ventana 75.0%
M3 75.5%
Lowe’s Ina 71.0%
Lowe’s Valencia 97.1%
Fred Acosta Job Corps Center 77.3%

Alternative Mode Usage vs. TRP Goal:
Macy’s Tucson Mall 91.3% and 19.4% vs. 15% goal