

~*TransTalk*... a multimodal message from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation

September and October 2011

~ Watch out for the kids!



School bells have started ringing again. That means motoring commuters need to raise their level of alertness near schools. Bicycle and pedestrian traffic increases around schools. Watch for crossing guards helping kids cross **streets safely**. It wouldn't hurt to add a few minutes to your commute so you can stay patient for school buses, children, and bicyclists. Remember that flashing red lights on school buses **and an extended "Stop" arm mean** to stop no closer than 20 feet from a bus and proceed only when the bus is in motion and the red lights are off. If your child is walking to school, teach them to look first left, then right, then left one more time before stepping into the street.

~ Walk to school day

Summer can only last for so long, and as we transition **into the fall, it's once again time to** focus on sending the kids back to school. In the spirit of this seasonal change, the National Center for Safe Routes to School invites you to participate in the [2011 Walk to School Day](#) on October 5th.



Walk to School Day encourages families with school-age children to explore alternative means of travel to and from school, advocating an increase in children who walk and bicycle to school on a daily basis. It also draws community attention to safety concerns along area roadways. Walk to School Day and similar events are organized at the local community level each year. If you have a suggestion for an event, please contact your local school district.

~ Going roundabout!

One lane roundabouts, two lane roundabouts! When to signal, when to change lanes!? What should be done when an emergency vehicle needs the right of way? Does maneuvering your way through roundabouts have your head spinning? Confusion exists even for those who go through the roundabouts regularly. So how are you suppose to go through them properly? Wisconsin DOT has [two new videos on driving roundabouts](#). One is animated and interactive. You get to choose from a set of movements and a commentary will walk you through the intersection. The other is an informative video. **So why 'roundabouts'?**



Roundabouts move traffic safely through an intersection because of:

- Slower speeds
- Fewer conflict points
- Easier decision-making

Studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) show that roundabouts provide:

- 90% reduction in fatal crashes
- 76% reduction in injury crashes
- 30-40% reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 10% reduction in bicycle crashes

~ October is rideshare month

Fall is a great time to start a carpool or find someone to bike to work with.

~ Start a carpool: Family schedules settle down into a routine in fall and **that's a good time to start a carpool.** Register your commute, run a match list, and contact your prospects to share the drive and save money on gas and car repairs. [Wisconsin Rideshare](#) makes it so simple. Remember, even carpooling one day a week is a savings.



~ Find a bike partner: **With the heat of summer behind us, it's a** great times to hop on a bicycle and plan a biking commute to work. Think about hooking up with a bike buddy. Two bikers are more visible to motorists and provide ready help if a repair is needed. Find your bike buddy through www.rideshare.wi.gov.

~ Ride the Drive

Take advantage of the first weekend in fall with this great opportunity to explore the city of Madison! On Sunday, September 25, the city of Madison will host its third annual [Ride the Drive](#) event. Between the hours of 10am and 3pm, walkers, bikers, skaters and the like are invited to come out and experience the streets of Madison in a very unique way – car free! A six-mile route through the downtown area will be blocked off for non-motorized transportation use. A variety of physical fitness activities will be available including yoga, dancing, and hula hooping. In addition to these offerings, the route will pass by some of the most scenic areas in all of Madison such as State Street, the capitol loop, and the shores of Lake Monona. The event is free and no registration is necessary.



~ Where does the money come from and where does it go?

Municipalities across Wisconsin are sharing over 137-million dollars to help maintain local roads and streets. The bulk of the money – over 134 million dollars – is being distributed as General Transportation Aids to help 1,921 local units of government maintain, construct and operate local roadways. In 2011, local governments will share an estimated \$446 million from the state transportation fund which is made up primarily from gas tax revenues and vehicle registration fees.



~ Here's a "did you know?"

The state is home to 15 commercial ports which annually handle about 40 million tons of cargo valued at over \$8 billion. Along with corn and other agricultural products, Wisconsin ports accommodate coal for power plants, iron ore and wood pulp for industries, cement for construction, and salt to keep roadways safe. The **state's ports and waterways also support recreational and commercial fishing and ferry services.**



~ Hike, bike, or drive a rustic road

There are now officially 111 [Rustic Roads](#) winding their way through Wisconsin. The state's Rustic Roads Board recently approved adding two new routes to the Rustic Roads' network. Rustic Road 110 travels about six miles through the Columbia County towns of Lodi and West Point. Rustic Road 111 covers about 25 miles through the Chequamegon National Forest in Sawyer and Ashland counties. Created nearly 40 years ago, the Rustic Roads Program relies on local citizens and governments to nominate lightly-traveled scenic routes for the enjoyment of hikers, bikers and motorists.



~ Passenger rail service "on track"

Amtrak's Hiawatha Service operating between Milwaukee and Chicago is "on track" to establish yet another ridership record. Through the first half of this year, nearly 391,000 passengers have boarded Hiawatha trains – up over 6-percent compared to the first six months of 2010. Commuters can choose from seven daily round trips (six on Sundays) between the two cities. A typical one-way Milwaukee-Chicago ride costs \$23 and takes about 90 minutes.



~ Wild flowers

This is among the most scenic times for traveling Wisconsin's highways. As summer turns to fall, watch for the whites of Whorled Milkweed and Daisy Fleabane, the yellows of goldenrod

and native sunflowers, the blues of Sky-blue Aster and vervain, and the purples of Joe-Pye weed and ironweed springing up along roads and paths throughout the state. You can also see leaves starting to change colors on trees and sumac bushes.



~ The Oak Leaf Bike Trail

One of our area's most extensive networks of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is the [Oak Leaf Trail](#). Comprised of a series of off-road paved trails, parkway roads and municipal streets which may include bike lanes and signed bike routes, the Oak Leaf is a shared-used trail that accommodates bicyclists and pedestrians. When the trail routes on the street or parkway roads it shares the roadway with motorists, all users are expected to follow the [rules of the road](#) and [trail etiquette](#).

As part of the Milwaukee County Parks System, the Trail extends more than 100 miles in length, looping around nearly the entire county and connecting a vast array of local parks and other public spaces such as:

- The Milwaukee County Zoo
- State Fair Park
- Milwaukee Art Museum
- The Lake Michigan shoreline



The Oak Leaf Trail also serves a vital transportation link for area bicycle commuters, as it connects to a series of additional trails and bike paths that run throughout southeast Wisconsin. It connects to:

- The Ozaukee Interurban Trail to the north (via the Brown Deer Trail at Brown Deer Road & Green Bay Road)
- The New Berlin Trail to the west (124th Street & Greenfield Avenue via Greenfield Park)
- The Hank Aaron State Trail through center of Milwaukee County (at Veterans Park to the east and State Fair Park to the west)
- The **Beerline Trail on Milwaukee's East Side (Gordon Park area)**.

To access the Oak Leaf Trail, you can visit nearly any of the public parks located within the Milwaukee County Parks System. For a detailed map of the Oak Leaf Trail, and to find out which parks and facilities connect to the Trail, please visit the [Milwaukee by Bike](#) website. The Milwaukee by Bike also shows bike routes of the City of Milwaukee and throughout Milwaukee County.

~ **New flight directory**



Pilots and aviation enthusiasts can now pick up a copy of Wisconsin's new Airport Directory and Pilot's Guide. The new guide offers updated color photos and basic information on Wisconsin's 133 public-use airports including communications frequencies and airport-based services. For the first time, the guide also highlights seaplane bases in the state. The guide's primary purpose is as a pre-flight planning tool and is not meant for in-flight use. Copies can be purchased through most businesses operating at local airports.

