

Reinventing the Wheel – How do you commute?

Janice Schemp doesn't just use VanGo to get to campus — she drives the van.

Schemp works at the Colorado 4-H Foundation, part of CSU Extension, with offices on the corner of College Avenue and Pitkin Street. She lives in Greeley, and when the vanpool she had been part of was discontinued for lack of riders, she figured it would be worth driving to Loveland to pick up a van to Fort Collins. Because VanGo allows each vanpool to be flexible enough to meets the needs of individual riders, Schemp completed the paperwork and passed the test that allows her to keep the van and pick up other riders in Loveland on the way to Fort Collins. She has been driving this particular VanGo pool since March.

How many days a week do you vanpool?

4 or 5 days.

How long does it take to commute to work? How does that compare to driving yourself?

The vanpool takes 45 to 50 minutes one way to and from work. When I drive myself it takes as little as 30 minutes but usually takes 40 minutes, especially in the afternoon.

Describe your route and how the vanpool works.

I typically leave my house at 5:30 a.m., am in Loveland before 6, make pickups in two locations, and get to campus at 6:15 a.m. Depending on who is in the van I either take Wilson Avenue or Taft Avenue/Shields Street straight into Fort Collins. Staying off of I-25 prevents unexpected delays.

The other three riders all work at the USDA at Centre Avenue just south of Prospect. I drop them off and continue to CSU.

Each van has a coordinator, who is responsible for making appointments for upkeep for the van and gets a slight break in the monthly fee. It is usually the main driver, but the coordinator was already in place by the time I came into the vanpool.

There is a flat monthly fee paid directly to VanGo that varies for the pick-up point and destination. The fee for Greeley riders to Fort Collins is different from the Loveland riders to Fort Collins. The fee is analyzed each year to determine



Photo credit: Kyle Deuschle

if it is enough to cover costs. So far there has been \$1 increase in the fees for the last two years. Riders can receive a tax incentive on their individual income taxes; you can deduct up to \$130 per month.

How do you spend your time on the commute?

Since I do most of the driving I spend my time concentrating on getting everyone to work and home in one piece. Of course I have a captive audience, so they get to hear my life story! I also get to listen to my radio station of choice when by myself.

What concerns did you have about vanpooling before you started?

I wasn't sure the extra time driving was worth using the van and if it was cost effective. When I first started the cost of the van was about even with the cost of the fuel I used in my fuel-efficient car.

Do you ride with the same people every day?

Yes. The USDA workers work nine-hour days, so the van is never at full capacity as most everyone has one day off a week. Another reason I drive, besides living the farthest from my final destination, is that my schedule is more regular. We have a calendar in the van where everyone is to write their schedules, but I usually send a quick text the night before, just to make sure.

How do you manage workday business trips without having a personal vehicle on campus?

I don't have many business trips or meetings off campus, but I have access to the state car used by all Extension employees. The van can be used for personal use up to a certain amount of miles per month. For example, I have used the van for doctor appointments during work hours. When one of the others needs the van, they will drop me off at work so they can use the van for their errands.

How does the cost compare to driving and parking on campus?

Because gas prices are at a low, I'm not saving anything in actual dollars at this time. Not having to buy a campus parking permit has helped the cost of the fee to use the van. The cost of driving your own car and starting a carpool/vanpool is about even, but you are saving in wear and tear on your own vehicle, as well as helping the environment.

What advice would you give to a fellow employee who is on the fence about using alternative transportation to commute?

Find what works for you. If you can, find a carpool/vanpool that is close to where you live and/or work which can cut down on the drive time. The best is to form a pool with co-workers so you would find a central pickup point. With VanGo, interested parties can request to ride a van they would be interested in for two or three days to determine if they would benefit from joining the van. Not having to drive on I-25 in the afternoon has been the greatest benefit for me.

Find more information about VanGo, available routes, and more at smartrtrips.org.

Life is full of change. Has your insurance kept up?

An outdated policy could mean costly policy gaps or overlaps. To know for sure, call me for a free, no-obligation Personal Insurance Review



Lesla A Ringjob, A.R.M.
375 E Horsetooth Rd Bldg 6-100
Fort Collins, CO 80525-6800
lringkjo@amfam.com
(970) 223-0940
(888) 746-4556 Toll Free



American Family Mutual Insurance Company and its Subsidiaries
Home Office – Madison, WI 53783

© 2006

002138 – 3/06

