

2014 Commuter Challenge Kickoff!

Winnipeg (May 29, 2014)—Manitoba’s active and green commuters take on the challenge.

**11 a.m., Thursday, May 29th
Disraeli AT Bridge - South Side
(Rover Avenue and Gladstone Street)**

Join Green Action Centre and special guests as we celebrate a healthier way to get to work. Hear from the Honourable Sharon Blady, Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors; Brian Mayes, City of Winnipeg Councillor for St.Vital; Stefano Grande, Executive Director of the Downtown Winnipeg Biz; and Elisha Dacey, Managing Editor of Metro Winnipeg along with the inimitable emcee Ace Burpee.

The 15th annual Commuter Challenge takes place June 1-7, 2014. Last year, almost 7,000 Manitobans rode the bus, walked, cycled, carpooled, and telecommuted in this annual national, friendly competition. As the organizers of the Commuter Challenge in Manitoba, Green Action Centre is looking to increase that number in 2014. Participants who use active and green transportation during the week are eligible to win great prizes. To recognize the 15th anniversary, there will be 3 grand prizes! Plus, participants can qualify for multiple entries into the grand prize draw with an entry for each day they commute sustainably.

“Since the launch of this competition, Manitobans have proved that they’re up to the challenge of getting active and removing thousands of kilograms of greenhouse gases from our air while doing it,” said Sharon Blady, Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors. “I congratulate all the communities that continue to promote active transportation during Commuter Challenge week and throughout the year, and I encourage all Manitobans to again step-up, step-out and go-green as they go to work.”

“The Commuter Challenge is a fantastic way for Winnipeggers to reduce their carbon footprint by using transit, and being active by biking or walking to work,” said St. Vital Councillor Brian Mayes. “The City of Winnipeg is proud to participate again this year as it provides a great opportunity to enjoy some of our many trails and demonstrate our commitment to active transportation and Rapid Transit city-wide.”

Says Tracy Hucul, Executive Director for Green Action Centre, “This is a week to celebrate and make use of Winnipeg’s improved infrastructure for transit, cycling and walking. It’s also a great opportunity to inspire individuals in our communities and workplaces to participate, and to demonstrate the positive impact we can make on our environment and our health by choosing more sustainable transportation practices.”

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Last year, Winnipeg and Thompson claimed Gold, holding the highest percentage of participation across Canada in their respective population categories. For Winnipeg, it was our 10th win in the last 11 years, and Manitoba had the highest rate of participation amongst all the provinces!

As an exciting addition to this year's Commuter Challenge, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ has launched a promotion to encourage and reward transit use – **Bus is Better**. Free transit passes, coffee, reusable transit pass holders, and music will be provided throughout the promotion.

“We know transit is important to our members and in connecting people to our downtown,” says Stefano Grande, Executive Director of the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. “If we can engage more downtown workers and other commuters to use transit more often, we're sure to see less reliance on travel by car. With more than 45,000 trips made into the downtown each morning by car, the need for sustainable transportation options, like transit, is absolutely critical.”

Green Action Centre is the hub for all Commuter Challenge activity in Manitoba. Visit www.GreenActionCentre.ca to register and log your green kilometres during Commuter Challenge week.

Thank you to our sponsors of the 2014 Commuter Challenge, which include: The Government of Manitoba, The City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Transit, Manitoba Hydro, Great West Life, Investors Group, Manitoba Public Insurance, Assiniboine Credit Union, Metro Winnipeg, and Taylor McCaffrey LLP.

In the spirit of the Challenge, we encourage everyone to join us by cycling, walking, running, taking transit or carpooling to the kickoff.

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CONTACT:

Amanda Kinden, Green Action Centre

Tel: (204) 925-3779

E-mail: commuterchallenge@greenactioncentre.ca

Website: www.greenactioncentre.ca



Green Action Centre is a non-profit, non-governmental organization focused on greener living at home, at work, at school and in the community. We share a greener, better living message through the delivery of community programs, events, education and policy work.