

Online carpool service saves gas, cash

By Jenny Whalen

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In continuing the school's sustainability efforts, Grand Valley State University has unveiled a new Web-based application to help students organize carpools.

The GreenRide program provides an online forum for members of the GVSU community who share similar schedules and addresses to connect and establish carpool groups based on the information they supply. The service is GVSU's latest attempt to offer alternative transportation for the campus community.

Carpooling reduces individual commuting costs by about 50 percent and is beneficial to the environment by helping to conserve fuel, preserve air quality and decrease traffic congestion.

“Though GreenRide is geared toward members of the GVSU community, applicants can opt to search for carpooling outside the GVSU network and in the greater Grand Rapids area.

“We wanted to provide as many options to the Grand Valley program without having to use buses or vehicles,” said Lisa Haynes, assistant vice president of operations management. “GreenRide is one of those options.”

A group of students, faculty and staff met earlier this summer to discuss a comprehensive program for campus transportation and parking, Haynes said. It was decided providing carpooling to the community was preferred to developing other parking alternatives.

As of Tuesday, 105 people have signed up for the program.

“Everybody's lifestyle is different and we wanted to make sure that all students have an option that fits in their lifestyle,” said Erin Babson, GVSU operations manager.

Members of the GVSU community interested in

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registering for the program can create an account on GreenRide's Web site, located at <http://therapid.greenride.com/gvsu>.

Those concerned about what the application process might entail can view a detailed, step-by-step preview of how the site works by following the support link on the GreenRide Web site.

"The site is very secure," Babson said. "You will not see someone's last name or e-mail address until you give it through a GreenRide message. You choose to meet where you want, you can meet in a public place until you feel comfortable with each other."

While an applicant's personal information is required during the registration process, once a

carpool match has been made, only the applicant's first name and the general area in which they live is released to other members.

An applicant's address is required solely for the system to map the applicant's location. Once a location has been established, the system will match the applicant with other registered site members.

Users will receive a list of matches based on general location, but specific addresses are confidential. An e-mail option is offered for matched members to contact each other, although it is a user's choice to initiate contact.

For more information or to register for the GreenRide program, visit <http://therapid.greenride.com/gvsu>.

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