

*Commuters urged to try mass transit for one day; Thursday is Dump the (Gas) Pump Day, but transit officials say plenty of drivers are already fed up with high fuel prices. The Miami Herald  
June 19, 2008 Thursday*

Copyright 2008 The Miami Herald  
All Rights Reserved

The Miami Herald

June 19, 2008 Thursday

**SECTION:** B; Pg. 3

**LENGTH:** 484 words

**HEADLINE:** Commuters urged to try mass transit for one day;  
Thursday is Dump the (Gas) Pump Day, but transit officials say plenty of drivers are already fed up with high fuel prices.

**BYLINE:** ROBERTO SANTIAGO, [rsantiago@MiamiHerald.com](mailto:rsantiago@MiamiHerald.com)

**BODY:**

Every Thursday, Broward County Commissioner Kristin Jacobs will take a five-minute bicycle ride from her home in Pompano Beach to the nearest bus station, where she will load her bike on the bus' bike rack and take a 57-minute bus trip to her office in Fort Lauderdale.

It will cost her \$1.25 each way. If she had driven, she would have used approximately \$5.75 worth of gas each way.

Although the bus ride is almost twice as long, it will be more cost-effective, she says.

``Overall, we want to encourage people to try public transit -- whether it is one day a week or once a month. I say, give it a shot -- see if it works for you."

Public transit agencies and government leaders are urging drivers to just say no to paying over \$4 for a gallon of gasoline -- at least for one day, perhaps once a week.

They are calling for commuters to boycott gasoline and diesel sales Thursday and ride the bus or the train to work as part of Dump the Pump Day.

"Take Broward County Transit buses or Tri-Rail trains," said Phyllis Berry, spokeswoman for Broward County Transit. ``And if you cannot do that, carpool or van-pool. Ride your bicycle."

This annual event, which started in 2006, is mass transit's way of encouraging commuters to use public transportation, which saves money and helps the environment.

Over 125 transit groups nationwide participate in the effort.

And South Florida commuters trying out buses or trains Thursday could even wind up winning money.

Both Tri-Rail and BCT will be distributing scratch cards to everyone who rides the bus or train Thursday.

'Commuters could win \$1,000, free rides, or products sold by Dunkin' Donuts,' said Bonnie Arnold, spokeswoman for Tri-Rail.

**Jacobs will be participating in a new county program called Green Thursdays, which runs from June 26 through Sept. 25. The program, created by BCT, urges residents to use public transportation once a week. Free passes, T-shirts and other merchandise will be given out to riders.**

The spike in gas prices is already leading to a spike in ridership, officials say.

Tri-Rail has seen its passenger count this month jump 43.7 percent over last June.

"This month, we have already seen 15,533 take Tri-Rail during the work week, compared to 10,812 last June," said Arnold.

And the same has been true for **BCT**.

**"From January of this year to May, we have seen weekday ridership increase by 4.6 percent -- or 5,647 more riders," said Berry. The overall ridership now stands at 128,927.**

Jim Udvardy, project manager for South Florida Commuter Services, says he increasingly gets calls from people who can no longer afford to drive their vehicles to work and are seeking advice on alternate transportation methods.

"Once gas went over \$4 a gallon, taking public transit became a necessity for many people, not an option," Udvardy said.

``People don't want to give up their cars, but they will if they cannot afford to fill their tanks."

**LOAD-DATE:** June 19, 2008