

For Immediate Release

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Telework can reduce freeway congestion and boost businesses bottom line

Minnesota launches campaign to encourage concept in Twin Cities area

Minneapolis, MN (June 1, 2009) – Increased telework can reduce congestion on Twin Cities metropolitan freeways, save money for businesses and motorists and positively impact the environment. That is the goal of a new program announced today by the University of Minnesota in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The telework program is part of an Urban Partnership Agreement, a comprehensive initiative to improve traffic flow by reducing congestion on I-35W, Highway 77/Cedar Avenue and in downtown Minneapolis using transit, road pricing, technology and telecommuting.

“If 2,700 Minnesotans teleworked just one day per week, more than 1,000 rush hour trips on Twin Cities’ highways each day would be eliminated,” said Nick Thompson, Mn/DOT project manager.

Telework, often called telecommuting, enables employees to work from home or a remote location and connect to the office, co-workers and clients through the Internet and other technology.

“Businesses can realize significant benefits by implementing telework programs,” said Teresa Wernecke, Executive Director, Downtown Minneapolis Transportation Management Organization. “These include increased employee productivity, enhanced recruitment and retention, reduced costs and improved business flexibility.”

Minnesotans will start seeing and hearing about the value of telework when a campaign launches on Monday, June 1 online and on radio and outdoor billboards.

The campaign, called eWorkPlace, directs businesses and individuals to log on to eworkplace-mn.com for free training, tools and tips. For a limited time, employers can register to learn about participating in a pilot program. Qualifying employers for the pilot programs will also be eligible for free or discounted personalized professional consulting to launch or expand telework at their workplace.

The effort's primary purpose is to reduce congestion on roadways in and around the Twin Cities by encouraging employers to offer workers the option of teleworking. The program goal is to recruit and retain at least 2,700 participants between June 2009 and June 2010.

eWorkPlace is funded by a state appropriation to Mn/DOT and led by the U of M. The Urban Partnership Agreement includes the U.S Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit, the city of Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, and Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey counties and Transportation Management Organizations.

For more information on eWorkPlace, visit www.eworkplace-MN.com.