



## News Release

For Immediate Release

**Contact:**  
Jeremy Holmes  
RIDE Solutions  
540.342.9393  
[jholmes@rvarc.org](mailto:jholmes@rvarc.org)

# *Franklin County, Rocky Mount Launch Effort to Improve Transportation Options*

*Study aims to improve access and facilities for carpoolers and other alternatives*

**ROANOKE, VA (March 5, 2013)** - Franklin County and the Town of Rocky Mount are working with the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission to find ways to help area citizens cut their transportation expense.

The Commission's RIDE Solutions program is working with local governments on study to determine commuter needs in the region, with a goal of creating options that will allow people to get to work and save money on ever increasing transportation expenses. RIDE Solutions has served the region since its inception in 2001, but recent spikes in gas prices have made it more expensive for commuters in our area, many of whom travel to Roanoke or Martinsville for work.

"We know that transportation is the second largest expense in the average household," says RIDE Solutions Program Director Jeremy Holmes, "even higher than health care. And AAA recently reported that Virginia saw a record spike in gas prices over a single weekend in February. Commuters often feel they're at the mercy of the gas pump, but we want them to know that they have options, and we're working to find more."

The study will focus on what transportation options will serve Franklin County residents best, ways to get employers involved in offering commute alternatives, and working with local governments and private businesses to provide park and ride space for commuters to meet up and share a ride. The study will include anyone traveling in to or out from Franklin County.

The first step of the study is a pair of surveys to collect information on commuter and employer preferences. Residents are encouraged to visit [www.surveymonkey.com/s/franklincommuters](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/franklincommuters) to anonymously share information about the commute habits, while area employers are asked to complete a few short questions at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/franklinemployers](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/franklinemployers) to provide information on policies and incentives that might assist their employees. Links to these surveys will be available on the RIDE Solutions website at [www.ridesolutions.org](http://www.ridesolutions.org), as well as on the websites of Franklin County and Rocky Mount.

"Commuter options help more than just drivers," Holmes points out. "Carpooling just two days a week not only puts about \$400 back into each family's pocket, but by the time you add up all the households in Franklin County, you could see up to \$6 million being put back into the local economy. So much of what is spent on a gallon of gas leaves the localities and the state that saving money on fuel can pump a lot of dollars back into our hometowns."

The study should be completed by the end of June, with recommendations to be implemented starting in late 2013 or early 2014.

RIDE Solutions is a sustainable transportation program operated by the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission in partnership with the New River Valley Planning District Commission and Region 2000. It is a grant-funded program that provides multimodal trip planning services – including carpool matching, bicycle commute routing, transit assistance, and telework consultation - for citizens and employers in the Roanoke, New River Valley, Lynchburg regions and in the surrounding areas within southwestern Virginia. Visit [ridesolutions.org](http://ridesolutions.org) for more information.

###