



CONTACT:
Chandra Ravada
ECIA Director of Transportation
563-556-4166
cravada@ecia.org

NEWS RELEASE

March 10, 2015 – For Immediate Release

City of Dubuque and ECIA Launch Smarter Travel Study

DUBUQUE, Iowa — The City of Dubuque and East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) are seeking volunteers to participate in a Smarter Travel Study that will gather data to improve travel options within Dubuque.

The project is part of the Smarter Sustainable Dubuque initiative and will include the collection of anonymous data through smartphone technology on how, when, and where study participants travel within the community. The aggregate data will be analyzed and the findings used by the City of Dubuque and its transit partners to implement practices and policies that incorporate lower-cost and lower-impact travel options within Dubuque. The goal of the research is to identify and create travel options to save money, conserve resources, and improve the environment through better travel choices.

Participation in the Smarter Travel Study is open to anyone who lives in Dubuque or surrounding communities and commutes and travels in Dubuque by car, public transportation, biking, walking, or any other mode. Volunteers will be considered to be part of a research group that will provide necessary baseline information to guide the future transportation and travel policies and practices in Dubuque. If you are interested in participating in the study or want to learn more, visit www.cityofdubuque.org/smartertravel to apply by completing a brief demographic survey. Volunteers who complete the survey will be eligible to win one \$250 Hy-Vee gift card or one of three \$50 gift cards and a chance to participate in a 14-day study. Volunteers selected for the study who complete the requirements will be compensated with a \$50 gift card.

This study follows a Smarter Travel Pilot Study conducted in 2012. Using findings from that study and new technology on The Jule buses, significant changes were made to The Jule transit routes and implemented in January 2014. Transit ridership in Dubuque has seen a dramatic 28 percent increase over the past five years when ridership increased from 373,376 in fiscal year (FY) 2010 to 478,370 in FY2014. This increase of over 100,000 rides came in large jumps, with 50,000 of the rides between FY2011 and FY2012 during the Smarter Travel Pilot Study. More than 30,000 of the rides occurred between FY2013 and FY2014, after data collected in the pilot study was used to restructure The Jule's routes.

“Transportation decisions must be data-driven and the results of the changes made to The Jule's routes underscore the importance of local research to guide local policies,” said Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol. “We are pleased to partner with ECIA and IBM Research to continue research on travel issues that affect everyone who lives and works in or visits our community.”

The City, ECIA, and IBM Research are working together again to gather additional information about commuting and travel patterns in Dubuque. “Our goal is to make traveling and commuting in Dubuque even more efficient than it already is by using the data gathered in the Smarter Travel Study to provide detailed information on travel patterns; the mode of transportation used; and time of day. We want to build on the success of the Smarter Sustainable Dubuque program,” said ECIA Executive Director Kelley Deutmeyer.

For more information on the Smarter Travel Study, call ECIA Director of Transportation Chandra Ravada or ECIA Executive Director Kelley Deutmeyer at 563-556-4166.

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