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MEDIA CONTACT: Roland B. Alonzi
ralonzi@daltonagency.com
Tel. 404-876-2875

**Georgia's Clean Air Force Offers Six Back-to-School Tips
for Atlanta Metro Commuters**

ATLANTA (August 2, 2016) – Atlanta is one of the top 10 cities with the longest commutes in the country, according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey.¹ With the back-to-school period now in full swing, and more cars on the road, commuting times are back on the rise.

[Georgia's Clean Air Force](#) (GCAF) is offering six common sense tips for saving time and money on your commute, while contributing to cleaner air in the Atlanta metro region.

“There are many ways to make the back-to-school driving season a little less stressful on metro Atlanta motorists,” said Pamela Earl, Mobile & Area Source Program Manager, Environmental Protection Division. “By taking advantage of technology and practicing common sense driving habits, everyone can play a part in minimizing the impact of harmful vehicle emissions on our environment.”

Download a helpful infographic on back-to-school commuting statistics at www.cleanairforce.com/documents/back-to-school-infographic.pdf.

- **Reroute Your Commute.** Inevitably, traffic in metro Atlanta becomes congested as the school year begins in early August. To avoid getting stuck in traffic, try staggering your commute. Ask your boss if you can arrive for work later in the morning, when school related traffic is minimal. If your employer allows telecommuting, you can opt to skip the traffic entirely.
- **Take a Dip in the Pool.** Set up a back-to-school carpool on Facebook with your neighbors. This way, you will only need to make one trip to school each week, instead of five. You can save even more money by carpooling to work on the days that you don't lead the kids' carpool.
- **Don't be an American Idle.** For parents who are waiting to pick up their kids, it might seem convenient to keep your vehicle running, but it is not. Not only does idling waste gas and money, it can be extremely harmful to the environment. For every 10 minutes of idling cut from your commute, you can save one pound of harmful carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The rule of thumb is to turn off your engine if you'll be idling for more than 30 seconds.

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¹ <http://www.trulia.com/blog/trends/renter-owner-commute>

- **Map with an App.** A good way to avoid school traffic is to use a smart phone app to explore alternate routes that bypass trouble spots. Apple and Android have a number of free apps that were designed to find the most efficient and fastest way to get to your destination. In fact, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) now has a data-sharing partnership with Waze, the free, real-time crowdsourcing app. GDOT is providing construction and road-closure data to Waze, which helps reroute drivers to a less congested route.
- **Lighten Your Load.** In Georgia, late July is a good time to evaluate what you have in your car. The heavier the vehicle, the more fuel it consumes. Studies show that removing just 100 pounds of extra weight from your vehicle can increase fuel economy up to two percent. Don't carry bulky items like sports equipment unless you need to, and remove the roof rack unless you plan on using it.
- **Maximize Performance.** Late summer is also a good time to have your car inspected by your local mechanic. He or she can check for malfunctioning oxygen sensors, underinflated tires, clogged filters, and other factors that can reduce fuel economy.

For additional information, visit Georgia's Clean Air Force at www.cleanairforce.com.

About Georgia's Clean Air Force

Georgia's Clean Air Force, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), is responsible for the management of the Enhanced Vehicle Emission Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program throughout Atlanta's 13 metro counties. Since 1996, the Georgia EPD has worked to reduce harmful vehicle emissions. Georgia's Inspection and Maintenance Program has prevented tons of ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air we breathe, by identifying and repairing more than three million heavy-polluting vehicles. For more information, visit www.cleanairforce.com.

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