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MEDIA CONTACT: Kevin Chambers
Director of Communications
Georgia Environmental Protection Division
(404) 651-7970

Five Back to School Tips for Commuters and Parents from Georgia's Clean Air Force

ATLANTA (August 17, 2015) – As kids head back to school and parents hit the roads, [Georgia's Clean Air Force](#) (GCAF), a partnership with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), reminds motorists of some easy tips for saving time and money on their commute, while contributing to cleaner air in the Atlanta metro region.

“Parents who drive their children to and from school, and even commuters who don't have children, are impacted by the changes in traffic whenever a new school year begins. And this year is no different. Fortunately, there are ways that motorists can save time and money, while also curbing the impact that their driving habits have on the environment,” said Pamela T. Earl, Air Protection Branch Program Manager, Environmental Protection Division.

Using the acronym “**GA AIR**,” the experts at Georgia's Clean Air Force offer five simple tips for motorists during the back-to-school season:

- **Get Your Trunk Cleared.** Late summer is a good time to evaluate what you have in your car and remove any unnecessary items. The heavier the vehicle, the more fuel it consumes. Dropping 100 pounds from your car can increase your fuel economy from two to five percent. Don't carry bulky items like sports equipment unless you need to, and remove the roof rack unless you plan on using it.
- **Alter Your Commute.** Inevitably, high traffic areas become even more congested as the school year begins. Drivers can avoid getting stuck in traffic by altering their commute. Ask your boss if you can arrive for work later in the morning, when school related traffic is minimal. Or even better, look into whether your company allows telecommuting, and skip the traffic entirely.
- **Avoid Idling.** For parents who are waiting to pick up their children from school, it may seem convenient to keep the car running, but it is not. Not only does it waste gas, but it is extremely harmful to the environment. For every 10 minutes of idling you cut from your commute, you can save one pound of harmful carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The general rule is to turn off your engine if you'll be idling for more than 30 seconds.

- **Initiate Carpools.** Consider setting up a back-to-school carpool with the parents of four other kids in your neighborhood. This way, you only have to make one trip to school a 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.
- **Ride the Road Less Traveled.** Many commuters get stuck in school traffic while traveling to work. To save gas and time, research some additional routes to your workplace to avoid school traffic. Google Maps and MapQuest offer interactive mapping options to explore alternate routes that bypass school traffic.

For additional information or to download an infographic with back-to-school commute tips, visit Georgia's Clean Air Force website at www.cleanairforce.com or contact the GCAF Call Center at (800) 449-2471.

About Georgia's Clean Air Force

Georgia's Clean Air Force, part of 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 nearly two million heavy-polluting vehicles. For more information visit www.cleanairforce.com.

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