

## DSCC, DFAS Columbus are employers of excellence

from Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

The U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have joined to recognize employers that understand the importance and benefits in reducing the number of people driving alone to the workplace. Employers across the United States undertaking the challenge are being recognized as employers of excellence.

The Defense Supply Center Columbus and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Columbus, Ohio have recently become Commuter Choice Leadership Employers of Excellence Charter Members. This attainment is due to their pro-active promotion of commuting benefits and transportation options to their employees.

"When I became aware of the Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative, I immediately thought of DFAS and DSCC. RideSolutions has been successfully working with them on providing both information and services to enable employees to rideshare," said Janet Berardi, of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission RideSolutions program. "Both DFAS and DSCC have reduced the number of people driving alone to the installation each day. Sharing the ride reduces congestion and pollution, which benefit the entire community. With the continuing RideSolutions partnership to bring employees the benefits of ridesharing through education and awareness, we expect to not only meet the federal government's national standard of excellence, but exceed it."

To have reliable, safe and economical transportation to and from work, DSCC and DFAS are partnering with the EPA, DOT and MORPC for everyone's benefit. By offering RideSolutions' Guaranteed Ride Home program to any-

one in a carpool, vanpool or riding COTA, employees enjoy the peace of mind that they won't be stranded. After registering, in the event of an emergency or unexpected overtime, a cab is called and the person goes home; GRH reimburses 90 percent of the cab fare. Providing one telephone number, (888) 742-RIDE (7433), makes it easy for employees to register for the free GRH program or get into a carpool or van pool.

Currently, DFAS and DSCC offer shuttle service, special vanpool and carpool vehicle parking, flexible work schedules, and have on-site amenities so that employees do not have to use their vehicles at lunch. Both DFAS and DSCC utilize the Federal Commuter Choice Tax Benefit program to provide up to \$65 to COTA bus riders and VanOhio vanpool riders. Each month employees take advantage of these economical, safe and reliable methods of commuting to work. All of these initiatives on the part of both DFAS and DSCC helped them attain the National Employers of Excellence Program status.

Today, 11 VanOhio vanpools travel to the base every day, eliminating 140 single occupant vehicles from the roadways. Most have been on the road for over six years! Computing at 13.6 cents per mile, the combined vanpoolers save an average of \$550,000 in one year over driving alone, and that doesn't include wear and tear on the car, not to mention depreciation due to accumulated high mileage. These same vanpoolers eliminate over 52 tons of pollution in an average year also. Vanpool commuters read, sleep or work, rather than fight traffic or bad weather.

Now is a good time to explore ridesharing options. After learning how easy it is to utilize these transportation options, commuters often choose not to drive alone. Call (888) 742-RIDE (7433) today.