

Partner Case Study: University of North Carolina, Charlotte



FACTFILE:

University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Industry:

College/University

Location:

Charlotte, NC
Mecklenburg County

Statistics:

- 1,800 employees
- 96 tracked commutes online during pilot

Reasons for joining *Clean Air Works!*

- Promoting cleaner air
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled to campus

Challenges Overcome:

- Raising awareness of CATS and other commute alternatives
- Varying shift schedules among instructors

Business Benefits:

- Air quality education for both students and employees

Results:

- Through clean commuting, participants eliminated 45,154 vehicle miles from area roads
- Hundreds attended the Ice Cream Social kick off event and learned about air quality and commute options
- UNC Charlotte reported improved employee morale and increased productivity

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Program Summary: 2006

Environmental sustainability is important to UNC Charlotte, and promoting cleaner air is a component of its new campus master plan. To help reduce vehicle trips to the campus, the university has been offering discounted transit passes to students and promoting transit use to faculty and staff who commute. Operationally, UNC Charlotte offers electric carts for employees who need to get across campus and discontinues machine usage after 2 PM.

When deciding to kick off the *Clean Air Works!* program in early summer 2006, UNC Charlotte worked diligently to reach all individuals commuting to the campus. Since many among the faculty and staff were off-site during the summer break, Project Leader Regina Guyer and team decided to promote the program predominantly through email and other worksite communications. UNC Charlotte also created a task force to help spread the word to faculty, staff and students.

On campus, the university held an Ice Cream Social for all employees to educate them on air quality and commute options. Hundreds were in attendance and participated in the "Jeopardy" air quality game created by Ms. Guyer and the Environmental Assistance Office staff to promote the university's efforts. To further raise awareness about the program, UNC Charlotte displayed four *Clean Air Works!* banners at each of the school entrances.

UNC Charlotte had one of the largest numbers of employees tracking their commutes this summer, with the most diverse travel patterns recorded. The majority of UNC Charlotte employees who tracked their commutes carpooled to work or took transit during the summer; however, there were also significant numbers of bicyclists, walkers, and a few commuters who teleworked.

Participation increased each month with more people tracking their commutes and registering with the online tracking system CommuteTrak. Over the course of the pilot, approximately 96 employees tracked their commutes online. In addition, numerous employees deposited completed paper logs each month into collection bins distributed across campus.

Working with a limited budget coupled with a smaller summer workforce made the project somewhat more challenging, however UNC Charlotte was successful in raising awareness and generating participation from employees. Through team creativity, passion and persistence, UNC Charlotte made a substantial impact on its campus this summer.



"Thanks to Clean Air Works! we noticed enhanced awareness to issues affecting air quality and how to make individual choices that when united with the Charlotte community create an overall enhancement of the air we breathe."

Wayne A. Walcott
Senior Associate Provost
University of North Carolina, Charlotte



Clean Air Works! is a project of the Regional Air Quality Board, a regional entity that brings together businesses, elected officials, and public staff from cities and counties throughout the Charlotte Region to work collaboratively on projects to improve air quality. The project is funded by Mecklenburg County Government and federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Funds ("CMAQ") awarded throughout the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization. For more information, visit cleanairworks.org.