Jane and John Q. Public—Communicating the Connection:
Transportation and Public Health
July 25, 2016

TDM Program Works to Improve Air Quality by Eliminating 4,234 Tons of Emissions
BACKGROUND

For anyone living along the Wasatch Front or visiting on inversion or high ozone days, it is clear to see that Utah has an issue with air quality. While our air continues to improve year over year, without constant focus we could easily lose ground given the rapid rate of population growth in Utah—our state will nearly double in residents in the next 30 years.

The air quality issue in Utah, particularly across the Wasatch Front, is a product of the area's unique geography—with large mountain ranges to the east and west, much of the pollution emitted from vehicles and other sources becomes trapped and remains in the immediate atmosphere. Too often, an unsafe level of air pollutants elicits health and environmental ramifications. While we can’t change our geography, we can affect how many emissions we release.

RESEARCH

LOCAL AIR QUALITY/TRANSPORTATION DATA

Working closely with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), valuable data was gathered:

- During the winter inversion season, about 50 percent of the particulate matter in Utah’s air, especially along the Wasatch Front, is from vehicle emissions.
- By driving ten percent less you can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 0.2 to 0.8 tons/year.
- Forty percent of all car trips in the U.S. are made within two miles of home.
- The average Utah driver travels 298 miles in approximately 60 trips per week.
- Roughly 80 percent of Utah’s population lives along the Wasatch Front corridor.

NATIONAL & LOCAL PUBLIC AIR QUALITY PROGRAMS

Time was spent researching air quality and travel reduction programs from across the country to get an understanding of what tactics had been effective and which had not in terms of behavioral change.

PAID MEDIA & NEWS MEDIA

Media choices today are endless; therefore, media tools including Scarborough, Strata, Quantcast, TNS Media Intelligence and Google Analytics were used to make effective media decisions and adjustments.

PLANNING

The first step to clearing the air and the congestion was to foster a discussion with key players on the personal, economic and health effects of bad air quality and to brainstorm desired results of a to be determined initiative. The result was an idea: create and execute a challenge, inviting Utahns to drive down their miles and thus improve air quality by driving less and driving smarter for one month. From this a unique partnership was formed where every partner supported the initiative in a very specific way. In addition to the broad array of community air quality partners who have engaged with the Challenge, the primary Challenge partners include:

TravelWise—a UDOT program working to decrease single-occupant vehicle trips across the state

Salt Lake Solutions—an committee put together to address issues identified by the City of Salt Lake

Salt Lake Chamber—a connection to the business community and educator of the economic effects of poor air quality

Utah Clean Air Partnership—a program making it easier for individuals, businesses and communities to make changes to improve Utah’s air

Penna Powers—a communication agency committed to programs that better the community

Core Problem:
Because of increasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Utah as a result of growth, vehicle emissions are contributing to poor air quality.
INITIATIVE
The Clear the Air Challenge, issued by business, government and community leaders, is an annual month-long competition, starting July 1, that gives Utahns the chance to reduce vehicle emissions by utilizing alternative means of transportation to driving in their car alone. By driving less and driving smarter, participants ultimately help improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and conserve energy. The Challenge uses a competition format that has teams of individuals competing against each other to reduce the most single occupant trips and the most greenhouse gas emissions. The Challenge seeks to initiate long-term behavioral change among residents by helping them see that small changes can improve the quality of life in Utah and don’t necessarily mean a total lifestyle change.

The Clear the Air Challenge is similar to commuter challenges you’ll find in other communities, yet it is recognized as one of largest such challenges, if not the largest, in the country.

TARGET AUDIENCES
All Utah travelers.

ANNUAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Primary Goal: Improve air quality by driving less and driving smarter while decreasing traffic congestion and energy consumption.

Secondary: Educate Utahns on alternatives to driving alone (e.g., TravelWise strategies).

Tertiary: Create progressive steps toward long-term behavioral change of Utah travelers.

Objectives: While specific targets varied from year to year, a sample goal was to:
• Eliminate 300,000 vehicle trips.
• Save 1 million miles.

MESSAGING
One of the most unique aspects about the Challenge was its ability to create a positive, proactive response to an environmental and health crisis. Instead of using a warning tone or scare tactics to generate action, messaging for the Challenge promoted working in teams, getting competitive and praising success. For example, print collateral included the message, “Let’s keep this perfectly clear—take the Clear the Air Challenge” along with clear sky images of the Wasatch Front. Another example is, “Show you care about Utah’s air—take the Clear the Air Challenge.” A full array of creative elements can be found in the samples section of this case study.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS
With desired outcomes and resources identified, partners moved forward in creating and implementing the Clear the Air Challenge. The Challenge has been an annual event for the past seven years.

Although strategies have stayed fairly consistent throughout the years, the tactics have varied significantly from year-to-year, in part due to the level of resources available. Below is an overview of the strategies and tactics employed over the years.
Grassroots Tactics:
• Create and utilize a Clear the Air booth at events.
• Create and distribute posters and rack cards.
• Host an open house and training session for key leaders, partners and team managers.
• Give outreach presentations at local businesses.
• Post weekly team spotlights on the website and include in the opt-in newsletter.
• Post the competition on community calendars.
• Host a Clear the Air Fair.
• Submit stories to local city and chamber newsletters.
• Host a blogger event collaborated with Today’s Mama, a well-trusted lifestyle blogger organization.
• Solicit prizes from local companies and organizations.
• Develop a team start-up toolkit that includes communication pieces, best practices and tutorials.

Mass Media Tactics:
• Advertise in print publications: The Salt Lake Tribune, Deseret News and City Weekly.
• Advertise using out-of-home media, specifically public transit (bus tails).
• Advertise online with Search Engine Marketing, contextual ads and banner ads.
• Advertise on the radio with 30- and 60-second spots, 10-, 15- and 30-second live reads.
• Use outdoor boards to promote the Challenge and to give kudos to companies who’ve started a team.

Interactive Tactics:
• Build a robust TravelWise Tracker (travelwisetracker.com) and competition platform to track trips and miles saved by various alternative transportation modes.
• Launch a website (ClearTheAirChallenge.org) that utilizes the TravelWise Tracker.
• Use the TravelWise Tracker for smaller, mini challenges throughout the year to continue behavior change.

CHALLENGE EXECUTION
Participants signed up for the Challenge as individuals with the option to form teams. Teams could be comprised of family, friends, co-workers or any mix of them. To promote competition between members of larger teams, sub-teams could be created. For example, Overstock.com could split up their team by department or the University of Utah could split their team up by the different colleges.

Weekly prizes were awarded to individuals through a random drawing of those who met or exceeded their goals. At the conclusion of the Challenge, an awards event was held at the popular Salt Lake City Farmer’s Market. Grand prizes and bragging rights were awarded to top participants and to companies for their achievements too.
EVALUATION

Response to the annual Clear the Air Challenge over the past seven years has been astounding. Within just the first year it had become one of the most recognized air quality initiatives in Utah, if not the country. Utilizing competition, working in teams and praising success, the Challenge itself became a success and made an impact on the air quality in Utah.

Achieving behavioral change of this magnitude required motivation beyond educational literature. Within the first year the Clear the Air Challenge had become one of the most recognized air quality initiatives in Utah, if not the country.

With each year, awareness and participation continued to grow. The changes Utahns have made in their driving habits are really starting to add up, but more importantly participants are telling us that they have been sustaining their TravelWise efforts beyond the Challenge. With such success, the Challenge facilitators are continuously getting requests for program information from organizations and municipalities in other states and countries.

CLEAR THE AIR CHALLENGE RESULTS (7 YEARS COMBINED)

- 11,749,361 vehicle miles saved
- 4,234 tons of vehicle emissions reduced
- 22,914,700 calories burned (two-year total)
- 907,359 vehicle trips eliminated
- $5,480,515 in gas, vehicle maintenance and wear-and-tear saved
- Participation as high as 8,916 for one Challenge

Approximately 50% new participants to each Challenge (i.e., educating new people every year)
BEHAVIORAL CHANGE RESULTS
Achieving behavioral change of this magnitude required motivation beyond educational literature. The month-long Clear the Air Challenge to drive down your miles was a competition, which provided Utahns with unique motivators—prizes and pride. By tracking miles saved and trips eliminated, participants saw their behaviors quantified into real results such as pounds of emissions reduced, money saved and more.

TRAVELWISE “MINI-CHALLENGE” RESULTS (2 YEARS COMBINED)
Because of the Challenge’s success, TravelWise enabled the use of the Tracker year round. For example, UDOT has many internal departments that track their fleet activities via the Tracker and many state agencies use the Tracker to help ensure that they are meeting Utah Governor Herbert’s goals for sustainability and reduced transportation related expenses.

In addition, year round use of the Tracker has given companies and municipalities the ability to host TravelWise “mini” Challenges at a time that best meets their needs. Results thus far include:
• 11 mini-Challenges held
• Saved 827,067 vehicle miles
• Eliminated 53,076 vehicle trips
• Reduced 231 tons of vehicle emissions
• Saved $245,193 in gas, vehicle maintenance and wear-and-tear
• Burned 1,447,476 calories
• Participation from 1,580 individuals

PARTNERSHIPS RESULTS
Through these efforts, and the support of the partners, key community leaders, local media and businesses, the Challenge created a positive response to and involvement in a critical community issue. Collaboration has been key; the initiative would not have succeeded without the integral role of the partners over the years. Not only did partners provide the strategic and monetary resources, but they also provided a very important channel of communication to reach our target audiences.

Partners and all other air quality conscious organizations truly embraced the Challenge. They went to the extent of integrating the Challenge as a tactic in reaching their own organizations’ goals. This was a big win because in years past air quality initiatives had been an extremely territorial thing.

RECOGNITION
• The EPA recognized the Challenge in 2010 for its diverse community outreach and social networking components. Salt Lake City received a $7.8 million grant from the EPA partly due to the Challenge’s success.
• Salt Lake City received the National Award for City Livability from the U.S. Conference of Mayors in 2010 for the Clear the Air Challenge.
• Utah’s Green Business Awards honored the Challenge in 2010 as a community initiative that engages citizens and businesses to become green.
• The Public Relations Society of America Salt Lake Chapter awarded the Challenge with a Golden Spike (2014) and Finalist Award (2009). These awards were for excellence in research- and results-driven communication efforts.
• Fast Companies recognized the Clear the Air Challenge as a bold and brilliant idea helping to build the cities of America’s future in their May 2011 article titled, United States of Innovation.
• The Salt Lake Chamber received the 2016 Award for Communication Excellence from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives for the Clear the Air Challenge.
The Clear The Air Challenge, issued by business, government and community leaders, is a month long competition starting July 1st that gives you the chance to reduce your vehicle emissions by choosing alternatives to driving alone. By driving less and driving smarter, you will help improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and conserve energy in Utah. Do you have what it takes to be part of the solution?

ClearTheAirChallenge.org

Let’s Make This Perfectly Clear

Help Improve Air Quality in Utah by Driving Less & Driving Smarter

Drive Less

Drive smart

Benefits

AUGUST 1-31, 2012 | ClearTheAirChallenge.org

Share the Challenge to win prizes

Facebook: fb.com/ClearTheAirChallenge
If you haven’t already noticed, air pollution in Utah is becoming an unwelcome reality. Poor air quality means health complications, environmental problems, and diminished quality of life in our communities. The good news is that this summer you can compete in the Clear the Air Challenge, which will help change all that.

The Clear the Air Challenge, issued by Governor Huntsman, Mayor Becker and Mayor Corroon, is all about improving air quality, reducing traffic congestion, and conserving energy in Utah by eliminating unnecessary vehicle trips. By simply eliminating a few vehicle trips throughout your week, you can make a big difference in your community while competing for weekly prizes, grand prizes, and statewide recognition.

Register at ClearTheAirChallenge.org to take the challenge and start making a difference.
Partner Video Salt Lake Comic Con (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5mSwKwJRJU)
CLEAR THE AIR

Challenge

Drive Down Your Miles

Sign up! ClearTheAirChallenge.org

BIKE TO BEAT RIO TINTO

ClearTheAirChallenge.org

WHO’S UP TO CHALLENGE IMPACT HUB’S TEAM?

ClearTheAirChallenge.org

YOUR CHALLENGE GETS STARTED IN:

3 DAYS

ClearTheAirChallenge.org

PREPARE TO POST SWEET VICTORY

Social Media Promoted Posts
On February 12, 2013 Governor Gary Herbert asked all State Agencies to establish a “meaningful and measurable” Trip Reduction plan through the UDOT—TravelWise program. We appreciate each of you evaluating ways you can reduce daily trips in each of your agencies and the effort put in to establishing your TRIP agreements.

Now that your TRIPs have been submitted, we recommend that you begin collecting your trip reduction data and tracking your progress using one of the following 3 options beginning Monday, July 1.

1) UDOT—TravelWise Tracker

The UDOT—TravelWise program provides an online tracker where employees can enter their trips and miles saved online (www.travelwise.utah.gov/tracker). You need to register once (5 minutes), and then we recommend keeping track weekly or even daily (less than 5 minutes/week). You can also track your trips saved on Facebook or using the TravelWise Tracker App on your cell phone.

Also, you can participate as an individual or a team in the 2013 Clear the Air Challenge (www.cleartheairchallenge.org). The Clear the Air Challenge, www.cleartheairchallenge.org, is a friendly competition issued by Governor Herbert, Mayor McAdams, Mayor Becker and the Salt Lake Chamber to improve air quality by reducing your vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. The Challenge runs from July 1 to July 31.

Note: the TravelWise Tracker is the calculator used for the Clear the Air Challenge, so when the 2013 CTAC is over, you will still be able to track your Trip Reduction efforts to meet the Governor’s Trip Reduction directive.

2) UDOT-TravelWise Tracking Survey

Attached you will find a survey that can help you track the trips saved by your employees. The survey asks four simple questions that will help you identify ways in which your agency is saving trips. You can set this up as an online survey if you prefer (like www.surveymonkey.com).

3) Your tracking tool

As every Agency is different, we recognize that one tracking method may not fit all agencies. If you have already established a tracking method, please feel free to continue tracking with your chosen method.

If you have any questions regarding tracking your TRIP, please contact Angelo Papastamos, TravelWise Program Manager, at apapastamos@utah.gov or 801-633-7712.

June 20, 2013

Top news from slchamber.com, June 20

Sign up for the Clear the Air Challenge

Since 2012, more than 11,000 Utahns have participated in the Clear the Air Challenge, saving more than five million miles.

The goals for 2013 are to engage 10,000 participants statewide, eliminate 300,000 vehicle trips and save two million vehicle miles. It’s ambitious, but certainly doable… with your help.

To take the challenge, visit www.ClearTheAirChallenge.org. It’s fun, quick and easy to register and start tracking your miles saved. You can register as an individual or a team.