

# FEDERAL ETC UPDATES

Employee Transportation Coordinator

## OPM PUSHES TELEWORK FOR FEDERAL CLOSURES



Recently, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced changes to its dismissal and closures procedures revealing clarification to the language it uses to inform Federal employees when offices are closed, which includes a renewed focus on teleworking.

OPM will now use the following message to announce closures throughout the Metropolitan D.C. area, 'Federal offices are closed – emergency and telework-ready employees must follow their agency's policies'

"The intent of that messaging was that we passed along to people that the federal government is really never closed," Dean Hunter, OPM's deputy director of facilities, security, and contracting, said at a press conference. "You're always going to have emergency workers and teleworkers. With Hurricane Sandy there was some confusion with that, so we're just modifying the language."

To help ensure operations continue during a storm, OPM is encouraging agencies to help their employees become telework-ready.

"The government doesn't stop because there is inclement weather," said Thomas Richards, OPM's communication and

public liaison director. "It's really important that we encourage as many people to telework when the federal government buildings are closed." OPM is advising supervisors to discuss telework agreements with their employees and to come up with solutions that are mutually beneficial to the employee and agency. Many federal employees' agreements require them to telework when federal buildings are closed and the recently released Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey found that one-third of federal employees, either because they are emergency workers or telework, work when the government experiences a closure.

For assistance in starting or growing your telework program, contact Commuter Connections at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

## CONGESTION NIGHTMARE AT BRAC IS A DREAM

In late 2011, with the looming BRAC-induced employee influx into Mark Center in Alexandria, "Carmageddon" was thought to be a foregone conclusion. Fast forward a year and... it just didn't happen.

The question arose as to how this crisis was averted and where all those cars went. According to Rich Baier, Alexandria's director of Transportation and Environmental Services, congestion went up slightly but through transit services such as DASH and Metrobus, and the intense promotion of vanpooling, carpooling, bicycling, and other transit use, the number of single-occupant vehicles coming into BRAC is less than half of the 6,400 employees.

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## CONGESTION NIGHTMARE AT BRAC IS A DREAM Continued from front



“The number of people that are getting there by other means than a single-occupancy vehicle is actually higher than the number of people who are getting there by car,” he said. “I think we’ve got a success story out of this.”

Public transit is serving an increasing number of BRAC employees. In August 2011, DASH launched a Mark Center Express route, the AT2X, which runs during peak periods

between Mark Center and the King Street Metro station. Metrobus also has made changes to accommodate Mark Center employees. When BRAC opened, Metro added the 7M line, linking Mark Center to the Pentagon. Ridership on the 7M has increased 58 percent from September 2011 to September 2012 and is now counting more than 38,000 passenger trips per month, according to data provided by Metro spokesman Philip Stewart.

Additionally, ridership on three bus routes serving Mark Center – the 7A, 7F, and 28X – increased from September 2011 to September of this year. Ridership on the 28X increased nearly 33 percent.

## WALTER REED PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL AND ELEVATORS GET FUNDING

Last August, Montgomery County won a \$40 million Defense Department grant to help build a pedestrian tunnel and high-speed Metro elevators at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda.

The tunnel, funded by the \$40 million, along with an additional \$28 million previously awarded to the County, will help make it safer for the more than 7,000 pedestrians who cross Rockville Pike (Rt. 355) each day to get from the National Institutes of Health to Walter Reed. The work is also intended to reduce traffic slowdowns and encourage more people to use transit.

“This funding is welcome news for the thousands of wounded warriors and their families who will use the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, as well as Montgomery County’s beleaguered commuters,” said Maryland Senator Ben Cardin.



The three planned high-speed elevators will take transit riders from the medical center side of the pike directly down to the platform level of the Medical Center Metro station, eliminating the need to cross the street.

The underpass and elevator work is expected to begin in 2013 and finish in December 2016.