



Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)

Presented by:

**Scott McGolpin
Public Works Department**

In partnership with:

Santa Maria Organization of Transportation Helpers (SMOOTH)

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Presentation Outline

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

- Program History
- Program Statistics (over a 2½ year period)
- Factors Affecting Viability & Financial Feasibility
- Presentation on CalVAN, Executive Director of Kings County Area Public Transit Agency
- Conclusions
- Recommended Board Actions



Program History

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- May 2005** — **County Board of Supervisors allocates \$100,000, and the City of Santa Maria allocates \$50,000 to fund the pilot program**
- February 6, 2007** — **Board approves an application to Caltrans for funding the farmworker vanpool program (awarded in March 2007)**
- July 10, 2007** — **Board approves a contract with the SMOOTH to administer the AWTP**
- October 23, 2007** — **Board approves the purchase of 9 used vans and authorizes submittal of a grant to purchase an additional fleet for 3 years**
- December 13, 2007** — **County is awarded a State AWTP grant of almost \$3.1 mil—used to expand the vehicle fleet and pay for program operations for 3 years**
- March 25, 2008** — **Board authorizes purchase of 9 additional vans. In 2010, 2 vans are sold as surplus, reducing the fleet to 16 vans**

Program Stats – Driver Recruitment & Marketing

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To date, 36 drivers screened and qualified – 12 drivers are active

■ Board-Approved driver screening process:

- Review of a driver's history
- Medical exam
- Criminal background check (as directed by the Board)
- Program training and vehicle orientation



■ To generate program awareness, staff:

- Used Spanish speaking radio and television stations
- Made over 50 presentations to various community groups, grower/shipper organizations, farms and vineyards



Program Stats – Vans on the Road

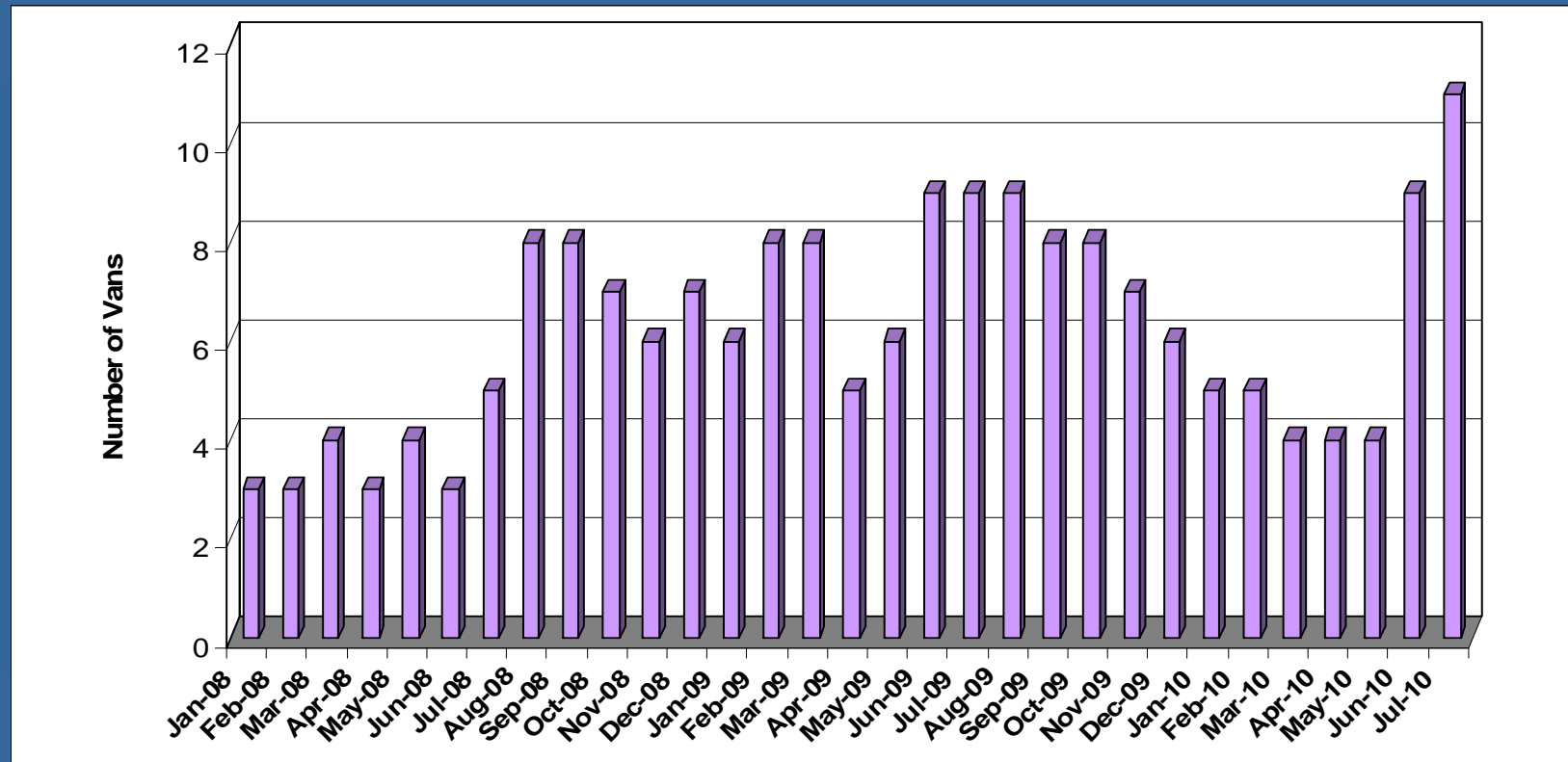
SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

- **Public Works and SMOOTH anticipated that van usage would grow slowly**
- **Van utilization was generally stronger in the summer and early fall, and weaker in the winter**
- **Van utilization was consistent with the peak growing and harvesting cycle of agricultural operations**
- **In September 2010, 12 vans on the road marked maximum program utilization to date**
- **Due to the careful screening and training efforts, there have been NO accidents or traffic tickets associated with operating the program to date**



Number of Vans on the Road

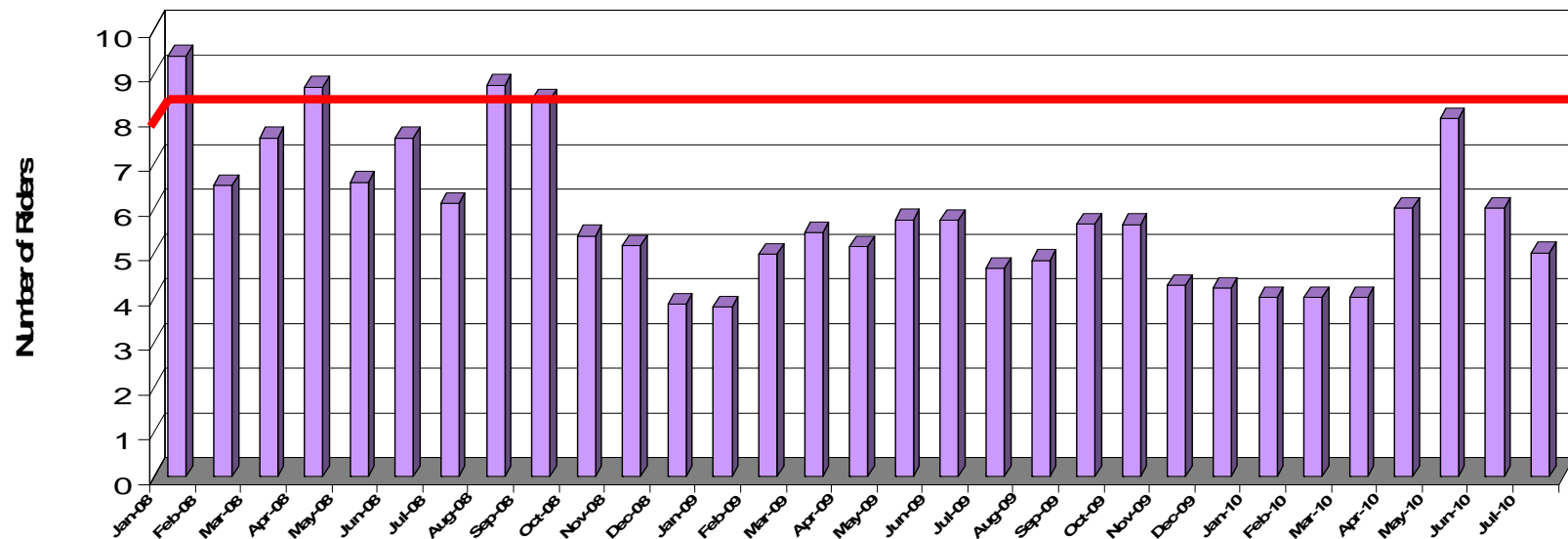
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Program Stats – Average Ridership

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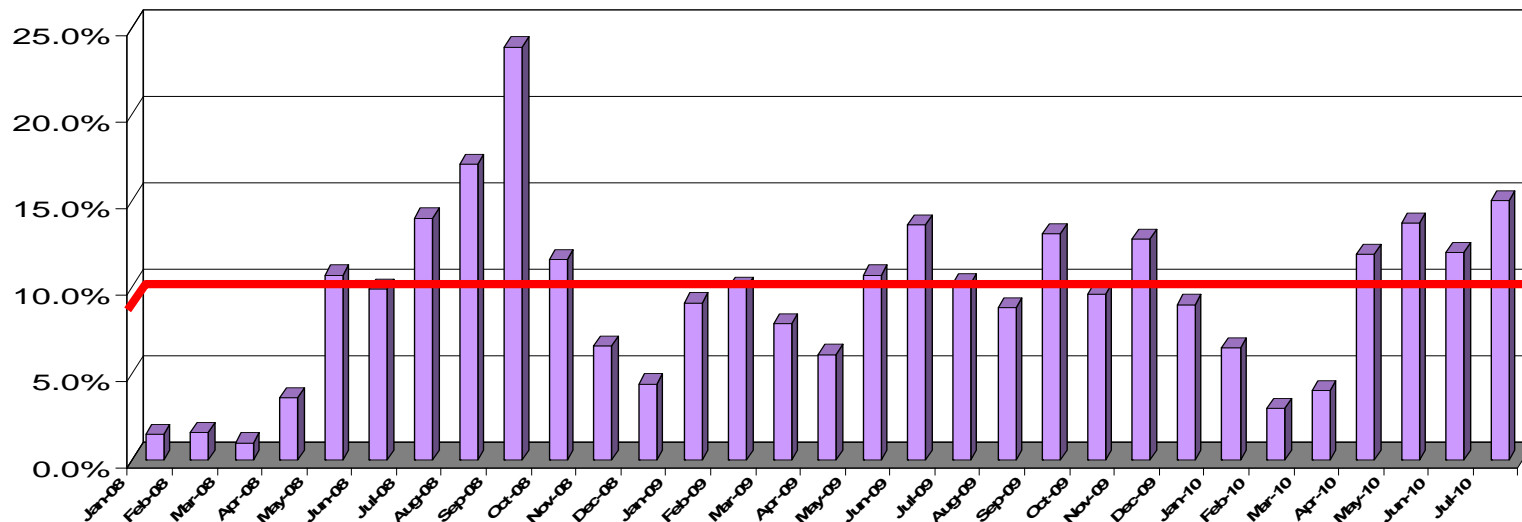
Program goal: Drivers need to try to attain a passenger load of 8 or more so that more AWTB expenses can be covered by passenger fare revenue.



Program Stats – Farebox Recovery

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Program Goal: After 3 years, the County's AWTTP should reach a 50% farebox recovery to attract Federal transit grants that pay for the remaining 50% of AWTTP expenses.



Program Stats – Air Quality Benefits

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In the two and a half years since the program began:

- **Auto trips reduced
11,216**
- **Total miles traveled
156,705**
- **Vehicle miles reduced
1,502,971**



Factors Affecting Viability

(Compared with Kings County)

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- Residential areas are in close proximity to agricultural field locations
- Santa Maria area crop-types and growing seasons contribute to a more “transient” work force
- Impacts of weather on timing and stability of agricultural employment
- Downturn in the economy has made agricultural work more sporadic

Financial Feasibility

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- **Total program costs and revenues for FY 2009/10 - approximately \$254,000**
- **Total revenues - for FY 2009/10 - approximately \$20,000**
- **A JARC program grant would cover 50% of total operational costs or approximately \$127,000**
- **Revenues from the program would be needed to cover the remaining 50% of operational costs, thus a deficit of \$107,000 would need to be funded with local funds.**
- **If a JARC grant award could not be obtained, local sources would need to fund \$234,000 of program costs**
- **Potential but unlikely options to cover deficit are:**
 - **Considerably increase passenger fares, and**
 - **Substantially increase fleet size and ridership**





CalVAN

Statewide Vanpool Agency

Presented by:

Ron Hughes

Executive Director
Kings County Area Public Transit Agency

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

Conclusions

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- **The County has honored its commitment under the State AWTP grant to test a farmworker vanpool program in our region**
- **Due to fundamental differences compared with Kings County, the effort in our region appears to lack long-term viability and self-sufficiency primarily due to insufficient scale**
- **Staff recommends an orderly end of the pilot program by June 30, 2011 when AWTP State grant funds expire**
- **Continue to work cooperatively with SBCAG and Kings County to determine if the State CalVAN program is viable for our region**



Recommended Board Actions

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- **Receive and file progress report from the Public Works Department regarding the County's Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)**
- **Receive a presentation from Ron Hughes, Executive Director of Kings County Area Public Transit Agency regarding CalVAN, a State-wide Vanpool Agency**
- **Approve and authorize the Chair to execute a letter requesting that the SBCAG Board of Directors consider participation in CalVAN as the region's designated ride-share authority**
- **Direct staff to return to the Board of Supervisors in the Spring of 2011 with a report from Caltrans on procedures for concluding the AWTP in an orderly manner, including directions on how to surplus or transfer assets and vans by June 30, 2011**
- **Approve and authorize the Chair to execute Amendment No. 2 to the Contract with the Santa Maria Organization of Transportation Helpers (SMOOTH), extending the contract term to June 30, 2011**





THANK YOU!

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010