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**Chicago Numbers: Happy, flex-y workers**

Posted by Ann D. at 4/27/2010 9:25 AM CDT



By [Matt Carmichael](#)

**The Big Number:** Last Thursday was Earth Day and our friends at Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (@goto2040) celebrated by tweeting all day about transportation statistics. We also just started digging deep into our [Best Places to Work](#) survey data.

What do these things have in common? A way to make you like your job more, help you perform better and still have a life outside the office.

Roughly 8.5 million people live in the 7-county Chicago area\* according to CMAP and the U.S. Census Bureau. They make 29 million trips daily. Those who drive (23.5 million trips per day) on the area's 34,000 miles of road find that for 11 hours a day, 20 percent of the highways are congested. That's a lot of traffic.

Now that folks can't text while they drive (no, really, stop . . . texting while driving can increase the risk of a crash nearly 25 times), they might be thinking there are better ways to use their time. Like staying off the road.

In March, *Crain's* released its [Best Places to Work](#) issue. Our research partner, [Buck Consultants](#), surveyed more than 30,000 employees at 150 self-selected companies who all thought they had a good chance to be the best Chicago-area workplace. One important issue for employees was flexibility. In a report Buck just completed, 78% of the companies in the pool offered flex-time programs and 75% offered telecommuting as an option.

According to our research (and some common sense) these options can lead to happier employees -- who can get an average of more than an hour of commuting time reduced or eliminated -- and help reduce the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in the area.

Flex-time and telecommuting don't work for every company, or every job function, but they are options that more companies should consider.

Do you have (or want) flex time? Tell us your story in the comments section below.

\* The seven counties are Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, McHenry, Lake and Will

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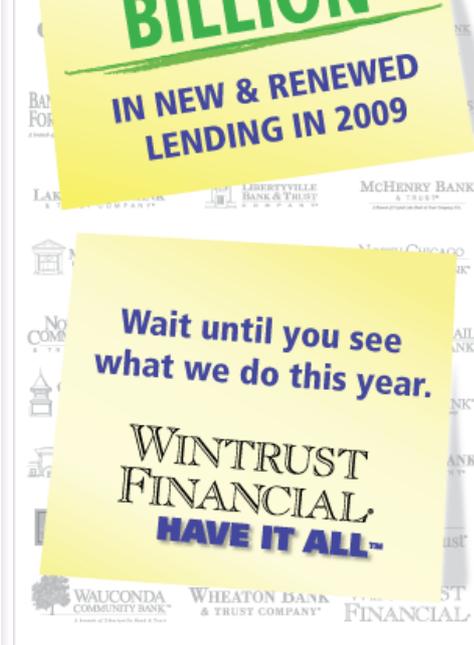
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