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Another way to work

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PASADENA - Geltz Communications specializes in developing and promoting energy and water efficiency programs. And each employee literally walks the walk. And rides the bike.

The Pasadena-based marketing and communications firm's three staff members all use alternative means of commuting.

The company works with Southern California Edison, the Pasadena Department of Water and Power, San Diego Gas and Electric and other entities.

Principal Christine Geltz bikes to work three times a week, traveling about 10 miles from her home in Monrovia.

The bicycle commute takes 40 to 50 minutes, but driving through traffic isn't much faster, she said.

"We're in the business of providing energy efficiency programs," Geltz said. "We've had an interest in energy efficiency for a long time. It just makes sense to do it." Biking provides great cardiovascular exercise, reduces emissions and cuts fuel costs, she said.

"When you're commuting by bike there's no congestion," Geltz said. "I'm sailing along while everyone on the freeway is inching along."

Riding her bike has also improved her time management. She plans out errands so she can complete them in one trip rather than spacing them out. Biking also allows for more time for prayer and personal reflection, she said.

Program manager Susan Carrier did some self-reflection whenever she showed up to talk with clients about energy efficiency in a gas-guzzling station wagon.



NO TRAFFIC: Christine Geltz, left, principal of Geltz Communications, rides her bicycle 10 1/2 miles each way to work every day, while Abby Lloyd Sabin, right, program coordinator, walks 1.7 miles to work. Another Geltz employee, Susan Carrier, drives a hybrid vehicle. (Walt Mancini / Staff)

She bought a Toyota Prius in January, a hybrid that tripled her gas mileage from 15 miles per gallon to nearly 50 miles per gallon.

She only has to fill up every two weeks instead of every five or six days, which her station wagon required, saving her \$200 per month on gas, Carrier said.

"It's very zippy," she said of her Prius. "I like driving it. People are nicer to me on the road. It's easier to change lanes."

Program coordinator Abby Lloyd Sabin walks 1.7 miles to work, which is rare in Southern California but common in New York City, where she grew up. She also receives health benefits from this commute.

"I come to an office and sit at a desk," Sabin said. "It seemed like sitting in traffic to get to the office didn't make a lot of sense for my overall health."

Walking through residential neighborhoods and admiring Pasadena's architecture is a much more peaceful way to start your day than dealing with stop-and-go traffic, she said. "People are more connected when they're on foot than when they're in vehicles or on bicycles," Sabin said. "I say, 'good morning' to people I walk past and they smile and say, 'good morning.' "

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