

15,000 Miles to Nowhere
Copyright 2003 Wayne chen
www.circusoflife.com

The statistics are in. In 73 days I drove a total of 13,750 miles, going from Seattle, WA to as far south as Laredo, Texas, to Savannah, GA, then all the way up to Boston, MA, and finally criss-crossing back to Southern California. With lots of detours in between. With the exception of Florida I covered all 4 corners of the continental United States. It was quite a journey. In a few days I will be driving another 1300 miles back up to the Seattle, WA area in a moving truck.

A total of 15,000 miles and I will have traveled across nearly the entire US, with the North Central being the only gap. When I was living in Orange County, California I averaged 15,000 miles / year.

15,000 miles to nowhere.

Nowhere because they are all places that are for daily work or routine day to day living. Passing by places that often don't register in the brain as anything particularly notable because one has passed by them hundreds or thousands of times. Nor should they when we are looking at them through a windshield at 60 miles per hour.

Does anything seem ridiculous about this?

I haven't even mentioned all the health and social effects of such mindless driving. Let alone environmental. And I'm not going to here.

How far do you drive everyday to nowhere?

Notes:

My commuting mileage for the bulk of my time in OC is pretty close to the 1999 average of 32 miles round trip. (See report below) It isn't a difficult stretch to imagine that other people's mileage for shopping and miscellaneous side trips would bring their total to 15,000 miles/year also. 12,000 at a minimum - as that is what most car leases allow per year.

My last job was 17 miles from home. That totals a little over 8000 miles just going from work and back. [(365 days - 104 weekends - 10 holidays - 10 vacation days - 5 sick days) * 34 miles] The other 7000 miles comes from just everyday tasks. From going to the grocery store, visiting friends, going out to shop or for entertainment. Due to the spread out nature of towns and inefficient public transportation many more miles are accumulated on non-work movement. My total of 15,000 miles has a few trips to San Diego and Los Angeles, but for the most part all within Orange County.

State of the Commute Executive Summary - 1999 (S. California Association of Governments)

<http://www.scag.ca.gov/publications/index.htm> - State of the Commute report is at bottom

My average commute distances in the 6 years I lived in Orange County.

- 11 miles with a tollroad (Aliso Viejo - Newport Beach), 20 miles without the tollroad - 9 months
- 5 miles (Aliso Viejo - Mission Viejo) - 11 months
- 17 miles (Aliso Viejo - Irvine) - 2.25 years, Irvine facility eventually shut shortly after I quit, new location would have been Aliso Viejo - Pomona which is 40 miles EACH WAY!
- 17 miles (Aliso Viejo - Lake Forest) - 1.75 years