



TLC TIMES

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Michael R. Bloomberg, *Mayor* Matthew W. Daus, *Commissioner/Chairman*

Commissioner's Corner

By Matthew W. Daus



One of the matters foremost on the minds of those of our regulated industries this summer is the high price of fuel. I must regretfully inform our readers that the taxicab industry petitions – exclusively requesting various types of fuel surcharges – were rejected in early July, as I do not believe it is in the best interests of both the industry and the riding public to add more "surcharges" to the taximeter. While we sympathize with the legitimate concerns of our hardworking drivers about the increased fuel costs they must bear, the next TLC fare increase will address rising fuel prices. The price of fuel is one of several expenses that may individually decrease or increase over time, and must be analyzed to determine whether the overall levels of driver and owner income are appropriate and sufficient. While gasoline costs have risen, the average level of driver income remains within the amounts targeted by the last fare increase in 2004 – where the TLC built-in "extra cushion" to prepare for situations such as this.

On a more positive note, there was much fanfare and media attention devoted to the outcome of the recent medallion sales. The record prices and robust bidding are certainly an indication of both confidence and support for the future of New York City and its taxicab industry. First, it was nice to see the tangible evidence of our outreach efforts to prospective bidders – attracting many more bidders than medallions offered for sale.

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Mayor Bloomberg welcomes members of "Children For Children" who will participate in the volunteer effort.



Planting a "Garden In Transit" are Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg (3rd from left) and (left to right) TLC Board members Noah Dear, Elias Arout, Edward Gonzales, Howard Vargas, and Chairman Daus.



Commissioner Daus and Mayor Bloomberg discuss the massive art project.

Planting a "Garden In Transit"

In celebration of the centennial of the metered taxicab, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg recently announced that the Design Trust for Public Space's *TAXI 07* project and a private-funded, but *very public* art project would partner to combine taxicabs, children, and the healing power of art. Beginning September 2006, the project would unite school-age children, including children that are ill or disabled, along with thousands of volunteers from corporations and community programs in painting large, colorful flowers onto decals that will be placed onto thousands of yellow medallion taxicabs.

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Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the TLC Plant a “Garden in Transit”

This is what it will look like.

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With the help of the Mayor’s Volunteer Center, the Taxi and Limousine Commission, and a gamut of City agencies and leading taxi industry organizations, the decorated cabs will constitute a mobile art exhibit that will have its “run” between September and December 2007. “Garden in Transit” is the latest concept of Ed and Bernie Massey, founders of *Portraits of Hope*, a public art, creative therapy and educational program for hospitalized and physically disabled children.

While many children and volunteers who do not face illness or disabilities will be taking part in this particular effort, those children who will be participating that are disabled or ill will have available to them a series of specially designed paintbrushes and tools including shoe paintbrushes, telescope brushes and flavored mouth brushes.

“From the silver screen to our City’s street corners, our yellow cabs are an essential part of the New York experience and our daily life, and now our City’s children will have the opportunity to use them as their canvas,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “‘Garden in Transit’ will be a great way for New Yorkers of all ages to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the metered taxi. The mobility of this innovative project is particularly exciting as New Yorkers and visitors across the City will be able to see works created by volunteers, largely children, temporarily adorning one of the City’s most iconic symbols - the yellow cab. With our unbeatable cultural and recreational attractions, it’s no wonder that visitors are coming here in record numbers. By hosting these kinds of imaginative and inspiring events we are both enhancing our landscape and aiding our economy. We look forward to this unique installation, and we thank Bernie and Ed Massey for bringing this exciting project to New York City.”

“No other city’s taxis are more celebrated or internationally recognized than the yellow cabs that ride the streets of New York City,” said TLC Commissioner Daus. “Combining the healing power of art with the talents of enthusiastic children is just a wonderful way to celebrate this milestone year for New York City’s iconic yellow taxicabs. We are delighted to receive these beautiful mobile gifts, which will renew focus on our taxicabs on and above our City streets.”

The “Garden in Transit” project was approved unanimously by the TLC’s Board of Commissioners at its last public meeting, which allows for the painting of the panels for the project to commence in September 2006. The painting process will last approximately one year, and will culminate in the installation of the panels beginning in September 2007. A preview of the installation will take place during the New York International Auto Show in April 2007, and the installation itself will be on display for a total of sixteen weeks ending in December 2007. For more information on how to volunteer and participate, contact 311 or visit www.nyc.gov.

From left to right, taxi drivers Serigne Tall, Mohammad Miah, Newton and Ardella Adegbo, James Griego, Michael Bree, Umar Tahiru, Manjit Singh and Yosef Rosner join Mayor Bloomberg (center) in celebrating “Garden In Transit”.



Prospective bidders received direct mail, viewed television and print advertisements, listened to live radio interviews, watched television interviews and commercials, attended our workshops and informational seminars (or watched the seminars on streaming video), and received up-to-the-minute auction news via our new automatic e-mail update system as well as a comprehensive companion TLC website devoted just to the auctions. The result? In the case of the accessible medallion sale, for example, a *ten-to-one ratio* of available medallions to bids! Second, the auctions send a strong signal about the vitality of the taxicab industry and our City. While expenses and medallion market prices go up and down over small periods of time, when one looks at the "big picture", it is an excellent investment which some financial experts have deemed better than some real estate, stocks and bonds. The "big-picture" is that New York City tourism is at an all-time high, with the expectation that more records will be broken in the coming years; that hotel occupancy and airline travel to our area has increased; the City is safer than it's ever been; and the economic development plans of the Bloomberg Administration for the years to come will ensure that more people continue to come to the City to live, work and visit. In sum, congratulations to the winning bidders! I am confident that you made the right decision and now have one of the best investments around.

For those followers of border disputes and reciprocity issues, I am pleased to announce our achievement of a legislative solution to the challenge of regulating intra-state for-hire ground transportation — **The Inter-Jurisdictional Pre-Arranged For-Hire Vehicle Operation Act (S8400/A11540)**. In brief, once it has been signed into law by the Governor, which we anticipate will happen in the very near future, it, among other things, removes a loophole that had existed in the Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) that established jurisdiction based on drop-offs alone and would create a new and fairer system that guarantees the right for licensed New York City for-hire vehicles to drop off passengers anywhere in New York State. It also would allow Nassau and Westchester Counties to voluntarily "opt-in" to the reciprocity statute's protections if certain common sense licensing standards are met. By establishing true reciprocity with these other municipalities, the legislation eliminates the need for the TLC to issue Tier II and III permits to vehicles in participating jurisdictions.

This legislative victory levels the playing field for those downstate businesses that act in accordance with appropriate laws and regulations in New York State, while also codifying and promoting high licensing standards to protect the public. Of course, nothing so comprehensive in scope could have been accomplished without a well-coordinated collaborative effort thanks to our partners in the NYC Law Department, the Mayor's Office of Legislative Affairs, as well as State Senator Marty Golden and Assemblyman Jose Peralta, Victor Dizengoff of the Black Car Assistance Corporation, and Commissioner Barbara Monohan of the Westchester County TLC.

Until next time, be well.

TLC Medallion Auction Turns Dreams into Realities

On June 16 and 22, the TLC successfully auctioned 54 Accessible and 254 Alternate Fuel Medallions, bringing to a close the most comprehensive enhancement to the New York City taxicab fleet in the industry's history. In total, 900 new medallions were sold over the past three fiscal years, in an initiative that will bring the total number of medallion taxicabs in the city to 13,087. Only once before in the years since 1937 had new medallions been offered to prospective taxi entrepreneurs, when 400 new medallions were added to the fleet between 1996 and 1997.

--Tentative Results --

Accessible Medallions	
Hi/Low/Avg Winning Bid	\$477,666.50
Minifleet Alt. Fuel	
Highest Winning Bid	\$554,147.50
Lowest Winning Bid	\$500,500.00
Average Winning Bid	\$514,327.71
Independent Alt. Fuel	
Highest Winning Bid	\$425,101.90
Lowest Winning Bid	\$390,099.99
Average Winning Bid	\$403,613.98

While it is true that new records were set in terms of high medallion bids, we at the TLC were far more excited about the leadership role we have assumed with regard to hybrid-electric taxicabs. In a historic gesture, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced in May of this year that all of the 254 medallions remaining after the sale of the 54 accessible medallions would be set aside for clean air vehicles, a move that will make New York City stand out as a leader in "green" taxi fleets. As of this writing, we have seen a total of 53 new alternative fuel medallions "hacked up" to clean air vehicles, which brings the total number of "green" vehicles in the city's taxi fleet to 83 (74 hybrid-electrics and nine CNGs).

The Mayor also "put the wheels in motion" to receive the legislative approval necessary to sell an additional 150 medallions that would be earmarked for accessible medallions, which would bring the total number of taxicabs fully accessible to wheelchair users to 231. This legislation has already passed both houses of the NYS Legislature, and is currently awaiting the Governor's signature.

To see the detailed results of the TLC Medallion Auction, visit the TLC web site at www.nyc.gov/taxi.

Pictured, proud new business owner Abdou Ndoye shows off his newly-minted Alternate Fuel Medallion, and his newly-hacked up 2006 Toyota Highlander hybrid-electric taxicab.



Uniformed Service Graduates Walking the Path of Public Service

By Kate Hellman

On the morning of August 4th, senior TLC staff, family, and friends, gathered at 40 Rector Street to celebrate the graduation of the Uniformed Services Bureau (USB) Class of Spring 2006. The ceremony marked the entrance of 15 new Officers into the division. The new Officers recited the Oath of Office, and had shields and certificates conferred upon them by TLC Commissioner and Chairman Matthew W. Daus and Deputy Commissioner Pansy Mullings.



Commissioner Matthew Daus (left) and USB Deputy Commissioner Pansy Mullings (right) congratulate class Valedictorian Tai Tedder.

Commissioner Daus praised the graduates' accomplishments, and also offered the following words of advice: "Use sound judgment, discretion with your authority, and treat others as you would want to be treated." Tai Tedder, class valedictorian, spoke of the unity and family-like camaraderie of the officers that developed over the course of their intensive eight-week training. Tedder concluded his speech with passionate advice to his comrades: "Don't be afraid to inspire change." First Deputy Commissioner Andrew Salkin offered closing remarks, illuminating the pivotal role of USB officers as helping to insure the safety of the system that transports not only millions of New Yorkers and visitors, but perhaps also their very own loved ones — many of whom looked on proudly at the graduation ceremony.



The USB Class of Spring 2006.

Interns Make it a Summer to Remember at the TLC

By Kate Hellman

It's summer 2006 at the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, and ten interns and two college aides have dedicated themselves to making it a special one by joining the agency's staff. The interns and college aides, a mix of both undergraduate and graduate students, represent a wide range of universities and aspire to many different career paths.

"The interns and aides bring an infusion of talent and a unique energy into the agency in the short time they are able to share with us," said Chief of Staff Ira Goldstein, who coordinates the intern program. "Their enthusiasm makes it as exciting a time for staff members they work with as I believe it is for the interns and aides themselves."



TLC interns and college aides gather at Gracie Mansion barbeque on July 25.

While providing fresh eyes, hands and perspectives to numerous agency projects, such as an extensive For-Hire Vehicle Survey initiative, the interns learn about the New York City taxicab and for-hire vehicle industries, and gain a unique understanding of the inner workings of City government. Special programs for the interns were scheduled throughout the season, including tours of the Long Island City and Woodside facilities, as well as a barbeque hosted by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg for all interns Citywide to thank them for their service.