



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

TLC TIMES

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IATR CONFERENCE

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New York City was the “host with the most” when the world’s pre-eminent regulator organization, the International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR), held its 22nd annual conference in New York City in September at the Brooklyn Bridge Marriott.

Technology was the overarching theme, with informative sessions and discussion about New York City’s Taxicab Technology Enhancement Program (T-PEP), as well as accessible vehicle dispatch technology, location technology applications; in-vehicle cameras of various types; vehicle dispatch technology; meter technology; electronic fingerprinting technology; handheld summons technology and much more.

With an emphasis on education, the IATR strives to keep the public and business community informed about ways that transportation regulators can work effectively to keep people moving in the safest, most efficient ways possible.

The conference officially began on Sunday evening with an entertaining welcome reception featuring “Dreamgirls” star Adrienne Warren singing “*Ain’t No Party.*” Monday saw numerous discussion groups zeroing-in on technological advances and planning, which included one panel moderated by famed NY Times Personal Technology Columnist David Pogue, who closed the event with one of his trademark corporate satire songs. Tuesday paired business sessions with tours of the TLC’s Licensing and Safety & Emissions. The conference’s final day, combined working sessions, an International Driver Appreciation luncheon, and an unforgettable dinner gala at the spectacular Rooftop Garden overlooking Rockefeller Center. The gala saw TLC Chairman Matthew Daus, who served as Chair on the organization’s Education Committee, installed as the organization’s new president. It was also announced that the IATR’s 2010 conference will be held in Chicago.



Right: The IATR Board enjoy the breathtaking view at Rockefeller Center’s Rooftop Gardens, which was the venue for the organization’s gala reception.

FHV ACCOUNTABILITY RULES

Following the TLC’s approval of the “For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) Accountability Rules” on April 16, the TLC and the FHV industry have been working together in tandem to ensure that all stakeholders are well prepared for the positive changes coming their way. TLC outreach has also included meetings with Borough President District Service Cabinets and Community Boards to talk about the new rules and distribute educational materials such as informational brochures in English, Russian, Spanish, French and Arabic. The most gratifying result of these meetings is the positive feedback from passengers, who are telling us that they feel safer with the display of TLC licenses and the Livery Passenger Bill of Rights.

The TLC and FHV industry have been hard at work on implementing additional accountability and safety measures. Since August 1, 2009, the FHV industry has been subject to a new penalty point system that now holds FHV bases accountable for their affiliated vehicles and the actions of their drivers, with the results posted on the TLC Web site. Also, to make base owners aware of any open summonses, the TLC has posted a list that reflects not-yet-adjudicated summonses.

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Below: photos from the IATR Conference.....



Right: David Pogue (left) accepts an honorary plaque from TLC's Chief of Staff, Ira Goldstein.

Left: TLC Commissioner Matthew W. Daus (far left) and former IATR President, Malachi Hull (far right) accept a Proclamation from Brooklyn Borough President, Marty Markowitz (middle)



Continued from page 1.... FHV RULES

Since September 1, 2009, the vehicles of all new vehicle ownership applicants must be inspected at TLC's DMV-certified, state-of-the-art Safety & Emissions inspection facility in Woodside, Queens. While appointment requests are currently being scheduled within 48 hours of receipt, the new process has been a learning experience for both the TLC and FHV industry and of course is subject to changes as we move ahead.

In another dividend of the appointment process, the TLC has collected useful feedback from licensees and trade groups about our Web site and information that may be useful to our licensees during this process, leading to a comprehensive re-organization of licensing related Web pages in order to have information and resources easily accessible to licensees and applicants.

To see what's new on the TLC Web site, visit www.nyc.gov/taxi

T-PEP - Taxi Technology 2.0

Now that all 13,000+ taxis in New York City have been successfully outfitted with credit card machines, Passenger Information Monitors (PIMs), Driver Information Monitors (DIMs), and electronic trip sheets as per the TLC's Taxicab Passenger Enhancement Program, both drivers and passengers alike have expressed tremendously positive feedback. Of course, passengers' positive feelings on the subject have been well documented over the months since the systems have been in widespread use. Drivers, however, were skeptical about the new systems, despite the TLC's assurance that the systems would benefit them significantly.

On November 7, the NY Times released an article on how the NYC taxicab industry and drivers have been benefiting from the Taxicab Passenger Enhancement Program (T-PEP), due to an increase in passengers paying fares with credit cards (approximately 28%), which has resulted in an increase in tips to the drivers. It was reported that the average tip is 22% on credit card transactions, since September 2009 – compared to around 10% when credit cards were not accepted in taxicabs more than two years ago.

Besides the credit card machines, the technology has helped in many other ways. Text messages to Driver Information Monitors (DIMs) have generated rides at otherwise underserved locations. Trip searches by the TLC staff utilizing the driver's automatic trip sheets have helped the TLC locate and return lost property to passengers without the benefit of medallion numbers. Aside from the hundreds of items such as passports, luggage, cell phones, wallets, a viola, and jewelry, the TLC most notably facilitated the return of musician Hahn Bin's irreplaceable antique violin, valued at over \$650,000. Real time maps, TLC Rules & Regulations, informative public service announcements, as well as various other entertainment and informational content are available to passengers via the backseat Passenger Information Monitors (PIMs).

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The TLC is currently exploring the future of this unique system, and is in the process of analyzing information generated by a recent Request for Information (RFI), seeking input and fresh ideas for the next generation of taxi technology – “Taxi 2.0.” The TLC is likewise analyzing feedback from a September 17, 2009 Information Exchange Conference, which brought together industry leaders and members, technology providers and advocacy groups to discuss the future of this truly innovative program.

Top: Hahn-Bin plays his violin worth approximately \$650,000 for TLC’s Azam Kifaieh (far right) and Sam Shady (near right). TLC staff found the lost instrument within five minutes after Mr. Bin filed a report by calling the City’s 311 hotline.



DRIVER RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Traditionally, the TLC has held an annual Drivers Recognition Day to honor stand-out New York City taxi drivers. This year, that event was combined with something new—the first “IATR International Driver Appreciation Day” honoring outstanding taxi drivers from many additional cities.

At the September IATR Conference’s “Drivers Recognition Day Ceremony” held at the Brooklyn Bridge Marriott, a total of 20 drivers received awards for their outstanding efforts and actions. These ranged from assisting passengers or pedestrians in times of need, to finding and returning lost possessions, to aiding the authorities in apprehending law-breakers. The following New York City taxi drivers received awards this year: Deniz Getting (Integrity Award); Fabio Peralta (Mobile Muse Award); Haron ur Rashid (Integrity Award); Gulam Mustafa (Role Model Award); Tareque Ahmed (Integrity Award); Sergio Castillo (Humanitarian Award); and Jack Dym (Lifetime Achievement Award). In addition, the following cities honored drivers for their exemplary actions: St Louis, MO; Atlanta, GA; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, IL; Ottawa, ON; Phoenix, AZ; as well as from Edmonton, AB and Manitoba, Canada. Though drivers were honored for their heroic actions, Mr. Thomas Chappell from Phoenix, AZ was awarded “Driver of the Year” for donating his kidney to one of his passenger’s. Mr. Chappell had driven the passenger, Rita Van Loenen, to and from her dialysis treatment sessions when he learned of her deteriorating kidney disease. The transplant occurred this past October. After the story appeared on local TV newscast, Mr. Chappell reunited with his estranged daughter after 31 years.

Serving as the emcee for the “IATR’s International Driver Recognition” ceremony was a most appropriate celebrity—Ben Bailey, host of Discovery Channel’s popular *Cash Cab* show. Also very appropriate was the entertainment that was provided during the program by two musicians who had, on different occasions, inadvertently left their valuable instruments in the back of a taxicab—and had them returned, thanks to the modern technology employed by the TLC and the cooperation of caring taxi drivers. Displaying their appreciation were Ann Roggen, a violist, and Hahn-Bin, a violinist, who gave of their time to perform on their instruments and create beautiful music for everyone attending the ceremony.



Above: IATR Driver of the Year, Thomas Chappell (far right wearing a hat) stands with taxicab drivers from the United States and Canada to accept awards and a Proclamation sent by New York City’s Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at the first

LiveScan at Staten Island

In direct response to the needs of the TLC's regulated industries, LiveScan technology has been available at the TLC's Staten Island Licensing Facility to process new applications as of September 28, 2009. This state-of-the-art fingerprinting technology will expedite the application process by electronically transmitting fingerprints to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Service in Albany, instead of relying on paper fingerprints that must be mailed. TLC's Staten Island Commissioner, Elias Arout, who was instrumental in bringing the new technology to his home borough, officially introduced the equipment with a brief ceremony with TLC staff and a group of appreciative industry leaders.

The Staten Island Licensing Facility is open Monday thru Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. To schedule an appointment, please call (718) 815-3734.

Right: Director of the TLC's Staten Island facility, Andrew Zammitto (left) and TLC's Staten Island Borough Commissioner Elias Arout (right) introduce the new LiveScan machine at the Staten Island facility.



Cell Phone Rules

During the October 16th Commission Meeting, the TLC announced a plan to address the problem of illegal cell phone use. The plan seeks to modify TLC rules for talking on a cell phone (handheld or hands-free), sending text messages, or using any other electronic communication device.

These changes are necessary as the TLC's cell phone rules, which have prohibited the use of cell phones (both handheld and hands-free) since 1999, have become outdated due to changes in technology. The rules are expected to be considered during the December 17th Commission Meeting. If you would like to view the proposed rules, please visit www.nyc.gov/taxi (TLC Rules and Local Laws/Proposed Rules/Electronic Device Rules).

Driving and Texting Ban

As of November 1, 2009, New York's driving while texting ban went into effect for all New York State registered drivers. Signed into law by Governor Patterson in August of this year, the new law provides an extensive definition for "texting."

Drivers are forbidden to hold, speak into, read from, type, or send text messages from any portable device while driving.



\$3.00 INITIAL FARE

+ \$0.40 PER 1/5 MILE & MINUTE STOPPED
\$1.00 MONDAY-FRIDAY, 4-8PM
\$0.50 NIGHTS, 8PM-6AM

\$45 FLAT FARE BETWEEN MANHATTAN & JFK

50-Cent Surcharge

The .50-cent State Surcharge went into effect on November 1, 2009, which imposes an additional .50-cents on all registered taxicab owners as part of the MTA bailout plan.

Taxicab owners are responsible for collecting and paying the surcharge, as well as properly equipping their vehicles. All taxicabs must be equipped with the following enhancements to reflect the tax surcharge: (a) Taximeters must be programmed to show the tax surcharge; and (b) Every taxicab must have a new fare sticker posted on the rear passenger doors. An overlay sticker is not acceptable for this purpose. The TLC is allowing 45 days (ending December 15, 2009) for the sticker's full implementation.

The TLC wishes you and your families a Happy and Healthy Holiday season, and a joyous, healthy and prosperous New Year!