



# TLC TIMES



## A Garden In Transit Grows in NYC



Dozens of volunteers, organizers, students and officials gathered to send the first "Garden in Transit" vehicles off in style at a gala launch event held fittingly in Union Square.

What kind of taxicab has 750,000 square feet, room for 80,000 flowers and fits more than 23,000 children and adult volunteers? No, it's not the Checker Cab (though they were pretty big!)... rather, it's a

"Garden in Transit" cab!

The historic mobile art project announced by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in July 2006, which began with the painting of flowered panels by tens of thousands of schoolchildren, is now in

full bloom. The colorful designs, created by the project's parent entity *Portraits of Hope*, have truly become a part of New York's urban landscape, and have become almost as ubiquitous as the yellow cab itself. By design, many taxi and medallion owners have volunteered to have these

scientifically advanced panels installed on their cabs in celebration of the traditional metered taxicab's Centennial (October 1, 2007). The panels will remain in place, inspiring the millions who see them, until the year's end so that they may be enjoyed straight through the holiday season.



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a "Garden in Transit!"

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In this issue:

Garden In Transit	1
A Brand New Taxi Logo	1
Technology Update	2
Commissioner's Corner	2
Medallion Sale	3
International Association of Transportation Regulators	3



## "Brand" New Logo for NYC Taxis

In celebration of the Centennial of the metered taxicab, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) has implemented newly-designed markings that would enhance the taxicab's ability to communicate, and update its image, even while preserving its iconic nature. "Our taxicabs will be getting a makeover with graphics that communicate passenger information in a better and more uniform way," said TLC Commissioner Mathew W. Daus. "This Design will provide a sleek, new

look for an iconic symbol of New York City that continues to evolve and adapt to its dynamic urban surroundings." The design was conceived by Smart Design, a design firm renowned for its ergonomic cooking implements, and Willy Wong, Creative Director for NYC & Company, in close consultation with the TLC. The markings will follow in the spirit of the Design Trust for Public Space's yearlong exercise entitled, "Designing the Taxi," during which architects, designers, industry representatives and

other stakeholders, worked together with the TLC to reimagine the taxicab through the lens of its roles in both the City's comprehensive transportation network and its urban landscape. One resulting goal was to "tweak" aspects of the taxicab's basic look with new markings, bringing it into the 21st century, while maintaining its universal recognition factor.

Continued on Page 4

## Technology Update

Having already voluntarily surpassed 2,600 equipped taxicabs even before the four-month inspection phase-in cycle began on October 1, the Taxicab Passenger Enhancement Program – or T-PEP as it has popularly come to be known – is in “full speed ahead” mode!

At the time of this writing, there are 3,224 T-PEP-equipped taxicabs serving the riding public, a number that, thanks to the impressive number of voluntary installations we have already seen, puts us in an enviable position

from a scheduling standpoint. New installations are taking place at a truly amazing rate,

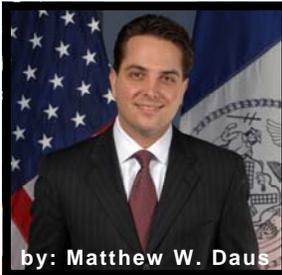


which is not surprising given the level of dedication with which the vendors have ap-

proached this phase of the project, where the “rubber” truly meets “the road.”

We are pleased to report that, as anticipated, the new technology has already been a factor in the return of lost property without the assistance of any identifying information. Between that and the riding public’s positive feedback on the convenience of credit and debit card acceptance, it looks like we’ve got a hit on our hands!

## Commissioner’s Corner



by: Matthew W. Daus

**B**elieve it or not, the traditional metered New York City taxicab is 100 years old! Amazingly enough, this milestone took place on October 1, commemorating the date in 1907 when 30-year-old entrepreneur Harry Allen had his fleet of 65 Darracq vehicles, freshly imported from France, begin to serve the network of taxi stands he had arranged at all of the city’s major hotels. Legend has it that the very first pick-up took place in front of the Plaza Hotel, which celebrated its own centen-

nial on October 1. Equally legendary is Allen’s coining of the word “taxicab” – a combination of the French words “*taxi*” (fare or tax) and “*metre*” (or meter to measure) – and the fact that he sought out such a device because he believed he was overcharged by a carriage driver for a short hop of a ride! He found the perfect meter – one that, unlike others of its time, measured both distance AND time – had been invented in Germany in 1891 by a fellow named Wilhelm Bruhn. As is sometimes the case with some in the taxicab industry, the new meter technology was met with considerable resistance from both drivers and owners in Berlin where it was introduced, but the passengers had their way, and the meter was there to stay! Within a year, Mr. Allen had grown his fleet to more than 700 taxicabs before events – including a taxi strike – conspired to sour him on the business by

1909, inspiring his return to the business he knew best.....importing cars.

Jumping from the past to the future, it will not be long before we have a fully-defined vision of the “Taxi of Tomorrow.” As most people know, the Ford Crown Victoria has for a number of years been the workhorse of the taxi fleet. What may be less well known is the fact that Ford will soon be discontinuing the Crown Victoria, as Chevrolet did years earlier in 1997 when its own Caprice was the fleet’s workhorse. This presents an incredible opportunity to work closely with all of the stakeholders – the passengers/users, the drivers, the community of the city, vehicle owners, medallion owners, etc... – to craft a vision for a vehicle that resonates with everyone that it will serve.

Continued on Page 4

## It's Time Again to "Drive Your Dream"

Yes, it's true – the TLC is back in the "American Dream" business! With the legislative authority to sell another 150 wheelchair accessible medallions, the TLC has placed 63 of these prized licenses on the auction block for November 1, 2007. At a very attractive Minimum Upset (Bid) Price of only \$189,000, it is anticipated that the bidding will be fiercely competitive.

Bids will be accepted October 26, 29, 30 and 31, from 9 a.m. to noon at:  
40 Rector Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10006.



A series of well attended Informational Seminars and Technical Workshops took hundreds of motivated attendees through every nuance of the auction process, yielding answers to even the most arcane of questions (see a "streamed" Infor-

mational Seminar for yourself at [http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/media/video/10-03-07-Taxi 512k.asx!](http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/media/video/10-03-07-Taxi%20512k.asx)).

The excitement continues in 2008 -- the remaining 87 (Corporate and a small number of Independent Alternative Fuel) medallions will be sold at a separate auction in the Spring of 2008 on a date to be determined. Stay tuned to the TLC web site at [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).



## A Peach of a Conference for Transportation Regulators

Southern hospitality was everywhere to be seen and felt, as the International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR) held its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual International Training Conference in the beautiful and historic City of Atlanta, Georgia. New York City TLC Commissioner Matthew W. Daus planned the first day of events, focusing on "Managing Stakeholder Relations" and starting with an orientation and overview of the topic, and continuing with a case study in Reciprocity and an overview of the Federal Real Interstate Driver Equity Act, led by one of its original architects.

Next, distinguished panelist discussed the NYS Inter-

Jurisdictional Pre-Arranged For-Hire Vehicle Operation Act, and then a representative sampling of Airport Disputes. The afternoon was devoted to media relations with a workshop on "Effective

Communication and Best Practices" followed by a "Television Workshop – Unlocking the Secrets of the On-Camera Interview."

Continued on Page 4



Commissioner Matthew Daus put together a distinguished expert panel on stakeholder relations that can boast more than a century of collective hands-on experience. They included (left to right) National Limousine Association President Jeff Greene, Nassau/Suffolk Limousine Association

Peter Giordano, NJ Limousine Association President Barry Lefkowitz, Taxicab, Paratransit and Limousine Association President Alfred LaGasse, and Black Car Assistance Corporation President Victor Dizengoff.



## ...A "Brand" New Taxi Logo

Continued from Page 1

While there are many thousands of taxicabs already sporting the graphic makeovers, the designs will be fully phased-in over the four-month inspection cycle that began October 1, 2007 and will end January 31, 2008.

...Commissioner's Corner  
Continued from Page 2

To this end, we created the "Taxicab of Tomorrow Project" to design a vehicle that, among other things, will: withstand the rigors of use as a taxicab; meet the very highest standards of safety and accessibility; provide superior comfort to both passengers and drivers alike; reduce the taxicab industry's carbon footprint consistent with the goals set by Mayor Bloomberg for every cab to be hybrid-clean (or better!) by 2012; and feature an iconic design for our urban landscape that will reconcile the taxi of the past with the "Taxi of Tomorrow." Simply put....we want it all!

The project will comprise four distinct phases that will take it from a wish list of ideas to technical specifications that will be in the language of the manufacturers themselves, and which will incorporate feedback from our stakeholders and those manufacturers into a final purpose-built vehicle we can proudly roll-out in the next few years. This project comes on the heels of Taxi '07, which culminated in a showcase of concept taxis and ideas at the New York International Auto Show earlier this year – recognizing the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cab by looking at both its past and future role in the public space and domain of our exciting city. Taxi '07's celebration and events, along with the work of the Design Trust for Public Space over the past few years, was certainly inspirational and provided the TLC with

many exciting ideas and insight. Simply put, these are exciting times – and much more is yet to come!

Finally, while we reflect on our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the taxicab owners and drivers who continue to participate in the *Garden in Transit* public art project. Many of you have seen the colorful flower decals on thousands of taxicabs, or may have been approached by volunteers from the non-profit organization *Portraits of Hope* to ask you to participate. This one-of-a-kind mobile public art project celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the taxicab, and the flowers on each taxicab were painted and the logistics coordinated by more than 23,000 volunteers. Our taxicab artists overwhelmingly included children, as well as taxicab drivers, TLC staff and their families, and many other volunteer groups coordinated by the Mayor's Volunteer Center. Not only has the industry embraced it, but taxicab passengers and pedestrians alike have expressed their appreciation for its positivity and the sense of fun and joy that it conveys. The flowers will continue to brighten our days even when the coldest days of Winter are upon us.



*Happy  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Everyone!*

## A Peach of a Conference for Transportation Regulators

Continued from page 3

Day Two was all about "Managing the Daily Work" and included sessions on "Facilities, Staff and Procedures" and "Inspection Techniques." Day Three rounded out the conference's full schedule with concentration in "Best Practices in Managing an Accessible Taxicab Service." Intensive, expert-led modules were held in "Accessible Taxicab Best Practices"; "Managing Expectations – The Trials and Tribulations in Delivering a Successful Accessible Cab Service"; and "The Political Challenges in Implementing Accessible Taxicab Reforms." These were followed by a distinguished panel discussion of "Developing a Financially Viable and Successful Accessible Taxicab Program" and a "Presentation of Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act: Proposed Transportation Standards for Accessible Taxis."

While everyone came away having learned any number of lessons that could be taken home and digested for possible duplication by the dozens of regulators, they likewise came home in the warmth of having basked in the uniquely welcoming sunrays of Atlanta, Georgia.