



TLC TIMES

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Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Matthew W. Daus, Commissioner/Chair



Commissioner's Corner

By Matthew W. Daus

This past Winter capped-off a trailblazing year in 2006 at the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission

(TLC), and at the same time kicked-off the historic year of 2007. The TLC's future goals have become even more far-reaching and innovative, as we continue to not only deliver some of the safest and best ground transportation services – but seek to develop and promote best practices in both our geographic vicinity and internationally.

In late 2006, we celebrated adding many more clean-air vehicles to our taxicab fleet by dedicating medallions for this use and approving many model vehicles, and in early 2007 passed even more incentives by allowing vehicle retirement extensions for those vehicles so they can stay on the road longer. Now, hundreds of hybrid-electric taxicabs are roaming the streets of the City, enhancing our environment and sending the right message that our industries will play a significant role to help address some of the environmental issues we are facing – by both example and with actual impact. In fact, since embarking on this course, some black car, limousine and livery businesses have either worked clean-air vehicles into their fleets or are planning on doing so. Since the environment is a global issue and we all must play our part, we introduced and encouraged this important initiative to government, automotive and taxicab industry leaders from around the world at the International Association of Transportation Regulators' (IATR) conference in

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New Customer Service Enhancements

ON THE ROAD !

The Taxicab Technology Enhancement Project has come a long way since 2004, when the TLC's Board of Commissioners mandated the implementation of four specific technology enhancements to the riding public. These enhancements include credit/debit card capability, a passenger monitor screen with map, an interactive driver information monitor, and an automatic electronic trip sheet.

To recap, four successful vendors, Digital Dispatch Systems Inc., Mobile Knowledge Corp., Taxi Technology Corporation, and Verifone Transportation Systems Inc., passed a rigorous bidding process for

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IATR Seattle Conference –

A Transforming Experience!

The City of Seattle has a lot of things going for it, not the least of which is a beautiful skyline and fine cup of coffee, but a few months ago it was the center of the Ground Transportation For-Hire regulatory universe. The occasion was the 19th Annual Conference of the International Association of Transportation Regulators.



Above: NYC Taxi and Limousine Commissioner/Chairman Matthew W. Daus (at left) led a panel of distinguished national and international regulators that included (left to right) City of **Calgary** Livery Transport Services Manager Karen Cameron, **Chicago** Department of Consumer Services Commissioner Norma Reyes, former **District of Columbia** Taxicab Commission Chairperson Causton Toney, IATR 2008 President-Elect Joe Mora of **Miami**, Florida's Transport Regulatory Division, Chief Executive Officer on National Taxi Policies Theo Van Schaik of **The Netherlands'** Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management; and Alan Matthews, Director, Head of Projects and Developments at the Public Carriage Office in **London**.

A day of concentrated events on "Vehicles and Standards" began with a presentation on "Regulatory Policies, Standards, Experiences and Trends" and a Survey of Jurisdictions featuring panelists Calgary, Chicago, Washington, D.C.; Miami-Dade, Florida; the Netherlands and London, led by NYC Taxi and Limousine Commissioner/Chairman Matthew W. Daus, who developed, organized and oversaw all of the first day's activities and discussions. Conference attendees also had

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IATR's expert microscope, starting with a panel that included noted international journalist Wim Faber, Design Trust for Public Space Executive Director Deborah Marton, Magna Motors President Mark Hogan and Marc Klein, President of the Standard Vehicles Group, whose purpose built taxicab created its fair share of buzz during the conference.

Pulitzer prize-nominated author, and acknowledged alternative fuels expert Edwin Black offered the keynote luncheon address, discussing his hard-hitting, hot off the presses book "Internal Combustion." The provocative book — and its more provocative author — tackled the controversial issue of petro-politics and the nation's seemingly unquenchable thirst for oil.

With the stage set by Edwin Black, the afternoon continued with an exploration of "Alternative Fuel Vehicles" facilitated by Commissioner Daus, who welcomed a Survey of Jurisdictions and an "Overview of Clean Fuel Taxicabs" presented by the NYC TLC's own Assistant Commissioner for Safety & Emissions Peter Schenkman and Eric Kim, former Chief of Staff to the TLC's First Deputy Commissioner.

A highly-anticipated "Environmental Roundtable Discussion" was held with a panel on the topic of "Environmental Stakeholders Working Together — Advocates, Regulators and Manufacturers" with participants from *SmartTransportation.org*, the *National Resources Defense Council (NRDC)*, the *Ford Motor Company*, *Center for a New American Dream*, *ECO Fuel Systems*, and the *US DOE FreedomCAR and Vehicles Technology Program*.

Other sessions included modules on "Gathering Operational Statistics" and an "Information is Power" discussion was led by Seattle Consumer Affairs Unit Manager Craig Leisey. Leisey returned, alongside leading Atlanta regulator (and the host of the 2007 conference) Malachi Hull, to lead a spirited discussion on "Establishing Rates Using Operational Statistics." Schaller Consulting President Bruce Schaller led discussions and case studies in "Establishing the Correct Number of Taxicabs" in our cities. Seattle regulator Mel McDonald and Ottawa Director of By-Law Services Susan Jones' session in "Marshalling the Public Will."

The conference closed after a day of concentration on the crucial issues of vehicle accessibility and driver safety, with delegates exploring the issues of process, and the roles

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that stakeholders play in both successes and failures.

All in all, the conference was a huge success, allowing delegates to return to their homes with a kit bag full of concepts ripe for testing in virtually every kind of municipal jurisdiction. The 2007 Atlanta Conference will continue the Theme Day structure begun in 2006. To learn more about the IATR and its work, and the 2007 Atlanta Conference, visit www.IATR.org.

Customer Service Enhancements

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the right to create and sell systems that would represent the first time ever that such enhancements would be available in one integrated unit.

In the past year the TLC has overseen the design, development and implementation of the four vendors' products via a thorough and scrupulous process which will culminate with the vendors' right to distribute their product.



Currently, the four vendors are in "Stage 2/ Beta Testing." This includes a rollout of 50 equipped vehicles per vendor, plus continued testing and oversight of security standards of each vendor's systems by independent auditors. With cars from each vendor currently on the road, the

public can have a taste of the groundbreaking new "goodies" while looking forward to a full rollout taking place between mid- and late 2007.



Commissioner's Corner

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Seattle last year. Together, transportation regulators can make a difference by introducing more clean-air vehicles in their jurisdictions, to collectively help stem global warming.

Late 2006 saw our much anticipated testing phase begin for the TLC's taxicab technology enhancements project. Using technology to improve the passenger experience in this integrated way has never been done before – and before 2007 is over, all passengers will be able to pay their fares with plastic, have a better chance of recovering lost property, more opportunities to find taxicabs after events, and to receive useful information at their fingertips on a back-seat video screen. Taxicab drivers will also benefit by being able to earn more money through increased credit card tips, discarding all of their handwritten trip-sheets forever, and instantaneously receiving job-related information - such as traffic reports, targeted business opportunities and emergency instructions or information. This project is nothing short of revolutionary and evolutionary for the taxicab industry, with government officials far-and-wide indicating significant interest in replicating this initiative. The power of technology has been harnessed and will bring us to unimaginable heights in years to come.

In New York City the taxicab, limousine and black car industries have never been healthier, stronger and safer than they are now. This is in part due to the enhanced local economy – especially the record number of tourists who continue to flock to the City – as well as sound and stable regulatory policies. In order to proactively maintain its labor force of experienced drivers when times are good, the TLC took a first-of-its-kind move in late 2006 by granted a waiting-time fare adjustment that went entirely to its licensed taxicab drivers. Taxicab owners and drivers have never earned as much income as they have in recent times, and medallion prices have reached astronomical all-time highs – of over one half million dollars each. At the same time, ridership, safety and customer satisfaction are at levels never before deemed conceivable, let alone achievable.

In terms of spreading best practices, the passage of the *Inter-Jurisdictional Pre-Arranged For-Hire Vehicle Operation Act of 2006*, spearheaded by the TLC, established for the first time a legislative model that increases regulatory standards while simultaneously resolving jurisdictional border disputes. The TLC pushed for a statewide Act to require drug testing, higher insurance requirements, driver point systems for traffic violations, and criminal background checks to encourage local governments to opt-in to a system where their licensed companies could pick-up passengers in neighboring jurisdictions within the state - without incident. The New York State legislature passed a law codifying most of the provisions of the successful reciprocity agreement between Westchester County and New York City so that our

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Commissioner's Corner

Counties (as well as Nassau County) would benefit from such heightened standards and recognition of licenses. The TLC has not only inspired other jurisdictions to raise their standards, but a trend towards regulation – when done correctly – may be brewing as other localities within New York State (such as Suffolk and Rockland Counties) and abroad have been considering the creation of regulatory bodies. When government and industry quarrel over outside businesses providing for-hire ground transportation on one another's turf – everyone loses – the businesses, the government, and most of all – the passengers. We are glad we have and will continue to make a difference in promoting regulatory peace.

As we look at our recent past and optimistic outlook for the future, it is important to remember how far we have come. 2007 promises to be a banner year for the TLC not only because of substantive forward-looking changes, but also because it is the 100th Anniversary of the first metered taxicab in New York City. The best way to remember our past is by going “back to the future” – to challenge the automotive and taxicab industries to design an even better purpose-built taxicab, which is both functionally and aesthetically appropriate for an iconic symbol of the City that provides an exceptional transportation service. To celebrate, one week in April 2007 was declared “Taxi Week” by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and will include numerous events that both look back and forward. New prototypes of the taxicab of the future will be on display courtesy of the Design Trust for Public Space at the New York International Auto Show at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. Also, a host of other taxi activities will take place, including taxi exhibits, taxi movies and draping the Empire State Building in the color yellow. Before the end of 2007, we will roll out thousands of taxicabs with decals affixed to the hoods, trunks and roofs of flower murals painted by children in one of the City's largest volunteer project efforts – providing all residents and visitors with a view from both the ground and the sky of mobile taxicab art.

It is quite a time for the TLC right now – and we intend to keep things positive, exciting and eventful for years to come. Let's take the time to remember, celebrate and look forward to our shared future.



One Door Closes, and Another Door Opens

Happenings on the TLC Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Elliot G. "Lee" Sander has moved on from his long and distinguished service as a Board Member of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission to serve at the helm of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Elliot G. "Lee" Sander began his tenure with the TLC a decade ago, bringing with him a wealth of transportation knowledge forged in practice as a respected former transportation commissioner between 1994 and 1996. The TLC paid tribute to Commissioner Sander with a plaque at a recent public meeting.

The old saying "one door closes and another door opens" has proven prophetic once again, with the arrival of new Manhattan TLC Board Member Lauvienska "Lubi" Polanco. Commissioner Polanco brings with her legal and community experience, currently serving as the Principal Law Clerk for the Bronx State Supreme Court, and previously having served as a Court Attorney for the NYS Civil Court and as an associate at

Fitzgerald & Fitzgerald. While we will, fortunately, be able to continue to draw from Commissioner Iris Weinshall's deep well of experience on the TLC's Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Weinshall was recently appointed as a Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning, Construction and Management at The City University of New York. While it is true to say that Commissioner Weinshall will have responsibility for the University's design and planning initiatives and a five-year capital construction budget of more than \$3 billion for 23 colleges and University professional schools, it hardly does justice to the sheer breadth of her new challenge.



Above: Commissioner Weinshall



Above: TLC Commissioner Matthew Daus presents MTA C.E.O Elliot G. "Lee" Sander with a plaque honoring his TLC service.



Right: Commissioner Polanco

NYC Taxicabs Are A Hybrid Happening!



Hybrids continued to set the pace in the New York City taxicab industry in 2006, and the momentum is only growing with 327 on the road currently. While 281 taxicab medallions were set aside for use on alternative fuel and hybrid-electric vehicles, a small but growing number of those 327 were put on the road voluntarily by farsighted medallion owners (like Cliff Hammond-Adler, pictured left in his Lexus).



Toyota Camrys, like the one above, were added to the list of hybrid-electric vehicles approved for use as official NYC taxicabs in late 2006, bringing their total to nine, including the Ford Escape, the Toyota Highlander, Prius and Camry, the Mercury Mariner, the Saturn Vue Green Line, and the Honda Civic and Accord.

Fare Adjustment & New Flat Fare

Correcting a longtime imbalance, the TLC approved an adjustment to the "wait time" aspect of the metered fare that became effective November 30, 2006. The adjustment modifies the taximeter component specific to traveling in stopped or slow traffic, which now reflects a charge of 40 cents per 60 seconds, or \$24 per hour. New York City had previously had the lowest "wait time" of all the major taxicab cities, at \$12 per hour.

Also effective on November 30, was the TLC-approved \$45 flat fare for



trips from any point in the Borough of Manhattan to John F. Kennedy International (JFK) Airport. This flat fare joins the highly successful existing \$45 flat fare from JFK Airport to any destination in Manhattan.

TAXI FARE	
\$2.50	INITIAL CHARGE
40¢	Per 1/5 Mile
40¢	Per 1 Minute Stopped/Slow Traffic
\$1.00	Weekday Surcharge 4pm - 8pm
50¢	Night Surcharge 8pm - 6am



Flexibility in the number of models approved for use proved an exciting factor for recent successful medallion bidder Placida Robinson, show here at right with Commissioner Matthew W. Daus on the day she picked up her brand new Saturn VUE Green Line hybrid taxicab.

