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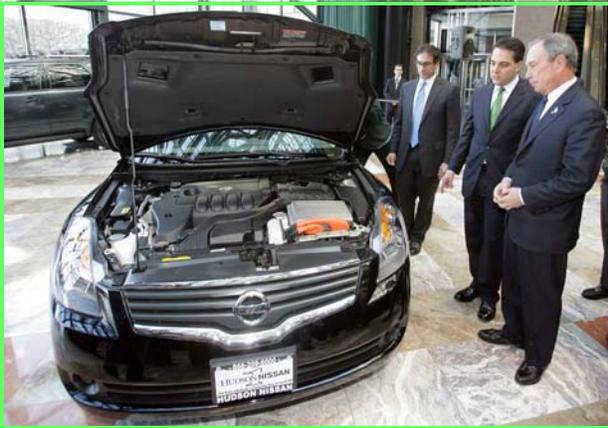


Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Matthew W. Daus, Chairman/Commissioner

TIMES

NEW YORK CITY'S BLACK CARS ARE GOING GREEN

With the momentum of the TLC's December 2007 passage of regulations enhancing fuel efficiency for medallion taxicabs still in full swing, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, TLC Commissioner and Chairman Matthew W. Daus, Black Car industry and prominent business leaders announced plans for the "greening" of the Black Car industry by the year 2013.



Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Daus discuss the benefits of "greening" the Black Car.

The plan to improve the fuel efficiency of the 10,000 black car fleet was envisioned as part of the Mayor's PlaNYC 2030, a comprehensive set of 127 initiatives aimed at reducing New York's carbon emissions and meeting the challenges of the City's growing population. In December, the TLC voted unanimously to approve regulations that will require all yellow taxis licensed after October 1, 2008, to meet fuel efficiency standards currently only achievable through the use of hybrid technology.

Black cars currently release 272,000 tons of CO2 equivalents annually, which make up 2% of the City's transportation related emissions. Under the new standards, emissions

from black cars will be cut in half. To help drivers finance the down payment associated with buying a new car, the City has worked with partners in the financial sector, auto dealers, and black car fleets to develop a range of solutions that will finance the higher down payment.

Currently, black cars average 12-15 mpg. The TLC will require fuel efficiency standards for new licensed black car vehicles of 25mpg in 2009 and 30mpg in 2010. Also included in the proposed rule change is a requirement for vehicle retirement.

The TLC currently does not set a vehicle retirement age for for-hire vehicles like it does for yellow taxis. There will be a retirement phase-in cycle that will ensure almost all vehicles associated with black car bases are more fuel-efficient by 2013. Black cars currently contribute 272,000 tons of CO2 equivalents annually, which make up 2% of the City's transportation related emissions. Under the new standards, emissions from black cars will be cut in half.

Hybrid cars will save owner-operator drivers upwards of \$5,000 per year in gasoline expenses - approximately 50% of their current fuel costs. These savings will allow drivers to cover, in just one year, the additional cost of purchasing a new hybrid car over the currently used Lincoln Town Car.

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The Secret's Out! "Operation Secret Rider" Is A Success

On January 23, 2008, the TLC began an undercover "sting" operation to gauge taxicab drivers' compliance with the gamut of customer service related regulations, with results suggesting the TLC's most successful enforcement operation yet!

With a scope the likes of which has not been seen since the kick-off of "Operation Refusal", "Operation: Secret Rider" began as the result of a number of complaints the agency received regarding some drivers' reluctance to accept credit cards as payment, despite the vehicle's being equipped with the new technology. The philosophy was simple, as the operation borrowed a page from the business community's "secret shopper" quality assurance programs that have been successfully used in the retail and service industries. In short, TLC Officers have been specially trained to simulate both local and tourist taxi passengers, and ride an unspecified distance to gauge drivers' performance in delivering the levels of customer service required by law.

While *Operation: Secret Rider* will be the most public aspect of this customer service initiative, the TLC will be pursuing other avenues to ensure that passengers receive the highest levels of customer service to which they are entitled, and the *Passenger Bill of Rights* promises. For one thing, the TLC will be "beefing up" the Bill of Rights to include such things as "the right to pay by debit or credit card on request." This will put drivers on notice as to what is expected of them, as well as informing passengers about what is and what is not acceptable in terms of the regulations and code of conduct that all drivers must follow in order to provide the expected passenger experience.

While the operation began with an 81% daily compliance rate, statistics now highlight a consistent 92% average daily compliance rate, with over 4,000 "Secret Rider" ride-alongs under the project's collective belt as of the time of this writing. The numbers for cell phone and credit card usage compliance are even more impressive with an average of more than 95% for each.

TAXI RIDER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

As a taxi rider you have the right to:

- Go to any destination in NYC, Westchester, Nassau, or Newark Airport.
- Direct the route taken: The most direct route or one of your choice.
- A safe and courteous driver who obeys all traffic laws.
- A knowledgeable driver who speaks English and knows City geography.
- Air conditioning or heat on request.
- A noise free trip: no horn honking or radio.
- Clean air: smoke and scent free air.
- Working seatbelts for all passengers.
- A clean taxicab: interior, exterior and partition.
- Be accompanied by a service animal.
- A driver who does not use a cell phone while driving (hand-held or hands free).
- Decline to tip for poor service.

PROUDEST GRADUATES IN NYC!



tation Enforcement which the TLC each of the chaplains, led Archbishop Class Valedictorian Daniel Zakharov summed up his fellow graduates' feelings with brief remarks, and shared the spotlight with Class Salutatorian Daniel Zakharov and Class Sergeant James DiNome. Supreme Court Justice Pauline A. Mullings administered the oath of office to the newly-minted officers.

The TLC welcomed its latest class of Officers into the Uniformed Services Bureau's fold with a gala graduation ceremony and reception recently. Among the highlights were remarks by New York City Police Department Chief Michael Scagnelli, under whose supervision falls STED



(Surface Transportation District), with works closely; and agency's beloved by Chief Chaplain, David Hartman. torian Manuel Ortiz



Top to bottom, Deputy Commissioner Pansy Mullings congratulates her newest complement of officers on their achievement; the graduating class takes the Oath of Office; and, left to right, are Commissioner Matthew Daus, Valedictorian Daniel Zakharov, Class Sgt. James DiNome, and First Deputy Commissioner Andrew Salkin.

TAXI OF TOMORROW ...A STEP CLOSER TO TODAY

Staff from the Mayor's Office of Operations and Sustainability/Long-Term Planning, as well as from the TLC and NYC & Co. traveled to Detroit, Michigan to meet with automobile manufacturers whom respond to the TLC's Request for Information (RFI), including General Motors, Nissan, and Chrysler. The TLC has met with over a dozen potential respondents whose final deadline for submissions for responses to the RFI was April 21, 2008.

The TLC is currently reviewing the responses.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/html/news/taxi_of_tomorrow_intro.shtml

Commissioner's Corner

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As we begin another Spring at the TLC, I reflect on the great strides made this past Winter in planning for the future of our agency, our passengers, our regulated industries and the environment. Building upon the greening of our yellow taxicab fleet by 2012, our Commission unanimously passed regulations to green the black car fleet by 2013. I take tremendous pride in implementing Mayor Bloomberg's bold efforts to ensure that the collective carbon footprint of our regulated industries continues to shrink, as other cities around the world consider similar efforts to help the environment. At the same time, our taxicab technology project (credit cards, driver text messaging, GPS and rear seat passenger screens) continues to successfully progress,

already leading to more quickly recovered lost property, fare opportunities at city events and hubs, and a sustained increase in tips for drivers. These new systems enhance customer service for our passengers – a top TLC priority – further demonstrated by the launch of our new Operation Secret Rider program. This operation deploys undercover TLC officers to ride in taxicabs to ensure that our Passengers' Bill of Rights is fully enforced, including: drivers accepting credit cards, not talking on cell phones while driving, and providing good, courteous service to all. Additional TLC officers were recently hired to assist in this effort. Meanwhile, our Taxi of Tomorrow project continues to progress, where we seek to create the perfect taxicab that is green,



BY MATTHEW W. DAUS

wheelchair accessible, affordable, durable, big and comfortable on the inside, small on the outside and aesthetically designed for a dynamic urban environment. As you can see, we have big ideas and plans indeed, which continue to pave the road of progress we travel.

TLC DRIVER RECOGNITION CEREMONY 2008



Pictured, left to right are: TLC Commissioner Elias Arout, black car industry leader Victor Dizengoff, Driver of the Year Charles Kabbani, Vital Transportation President Berj Haroutunian, TLC Commissioner Edward Gonzales (rear), TLC Chairman Matthew W. Daus, TLC Commissioner Iris Weinsshall, Cash Cab host Ben Bailey (rear), and "A Catered Affair" star Tom Wopat.

Our drivers are the face of New York City, and are often the first and last people that most city visitors see – forming lasting impressions and perceptions. The overwhelming majority of drivers serve as unsung heroes, working hard – day in and day out – driving safely and providing exemplary customer service to almost one million passengers each day. About seven years ago Commissioner Daus started a driver recognition program, which includes an Annual Driver Recognition Ceremony to honor outstanding drivers that keeps getting better every year. Providing incentives for exemplary behavior is just as important as enforcing our regulations – and this ceremony is one small way to show our appreciation for a job well done.

This year, the event was held at Top of the Rock – atop Rockefeller Center – and drivers enjoyed prizes, free food and fantastic views of the city – as well as a day off from work. Drivers were selected based upon good deeds that were mostly brought to our attention by passenger compliments received through the city's 311 hotline. We were joined by industry leaders and several TLC Commissioners – including Commissioner Iris Weinsshall, Elias Arout and Ed Gonzales, as well as Matthew Sapolin – Commissioner

of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. Many thanks go to Tom Madden of Tishman Speyer and Top of the Rock for donating the facilities and food to the drivers, as well as NYC & Co.'s CEO George Fertitta, whose staff helped arrange for most of the gifts to our drivers.

As always, we had a group of principal honorees, who were just as special as could be. They ranged from Usman Arshad, who was singled out for his compassionate and professional service to a disabled passenger and her elderly mother; to Mark Thomas, whose return of critical medical records saved the life of a Manhattan woman's beloved dog; to Ahmed Ibrahim, the famed "Matchmaker Cabbie" who just gets more and more famous with each Valentine's Day for driving his "Love Boat" on wheels. Of the six principal honorees, it appears that "Going the Extra Mile Award" winner Douglas Guldeniz and his historic trek from Queens, NY to Sedona, Arizona received the lion's share of notoriety, which is understandable.....who could resist such a tale? We not only had our share of drivers who returned lost property, or who exhibited superior customer service skills, but we also honored two drivers this year whose actions are on another level altogether..... they saved lives!

TOP OF THE ROCK™

OBSERVATION DECK

at Rockefeller Center®

Winter-Spring 2008

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Celebrating 100 Years of Service

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& Company

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TLC DRIVER RECONGNITION CEREMONY 2008

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Celebrating 2007's Cream of the Crop at Top of the Rock!

Commissioner Daus presented Mayor Bloomberg's proclamation to the TLC's "Driver of the Year" on behalf of all of the drivers honored at the ceremony – as well as those who provide outstanding service every day.

For 2007, our Driver of the Year was Mr. Charles Kabbani, a black car driver who has worked as driver of Car #204 for Vital Transportation for over 20 years. On August 23, 2007, Mr. Kabbani picked-up a female passenger at the World Financial Center, and began to take her to Grand Central Station. While the passenger said she did not

feel well right from the start of the ride, they chatted for a few moments and all seemed normal until she stopped talking and Mr. Kabbani noticed that she was having a seizure. Drawing on a similar experience from 20 years earlier, he helped to keep her breathing pathway open, preventing her from swallowing her tongue. An Emergency Room doctor confirmed that the woman would have likely suffocated were it not for Mr. Kabbani's quick actions.

The TLC was honored to welcome such special guests as Ben Bailey, the beloved host of Discovery Channel's *Cash Cab* who returned for his second year joining us, and Tom Wopat, of *Dukes of Hazzard* fame, who is in the new Broadway Musical *A Catered Affair*, in which he plays the role of a 1950s cabbie who must choose between his daughter's wedding and the taxi medallion he had always dreamed of. They each spoke eloquently and from the heart, and really paid a very special homage to our men and women behind the wheel – which was easy to do since Mr. Bailey was formerly employed as a limousine driver himself, and Mr. Wopat is currently undertaking an acting role as a cab driver.

Final Medallion Auction Breaks All Records

The NYC TLC successfully auctioned 89 new taxicab medallions, 87 of which were earmarked for wheelchair accessible vehicles, bringing to 231 the number of taxicabs offering ramp entry service to wheelchair users – the most in the nation. These vehicles will also facilitate the TLC's upcoming Accessible Dispatch Program, allowing wheelchair users to call for medallion taxi service citywide. Accessible Minifleet medallions fetched a record high bid of more than \$1.3 million for the pair. Two Independent Individual Alternate-Fuel Medallions were also successfully auctioned, setting their own historic high of \$524,000.



CUSTOMER SERVICE TECHNOLOGY REACHES A MILESTONE



TLC's technology team, (left to right) Chief of Staff Ira Goldstein, Serge Royter, Lev Kropsky, Sam Shady, Gary Roth and Staff Attorney Aileen Fox, celebrate a milestone – more than 10,000 taxicabs equipped with the new customer service enhancement technology.

The Technology Passenger Enhancement Program (TPEP) recently celebrated a milestone, with more than 10,000 systems having been installed in New York City's taxicab fleet. The TLC anticipates seeing the final installations of the systems, which include Credit/Debit Card capability, as well as Passenger Information Monitors (PIMs), automatic trip sheets, and text messaging capability via Driver Information Monitors (DIMs), by late summer/early fall 2008.

Over the months that the systems have been in widespread use, the TLC has successfully used them to communicate business opportunities to drivers and locate lost property without the details usually necessary. Passengers have been increasingly enjoying the popular content on the monitors, as well as the total control they have over the systems to turn them off or manipulate the volume, and to "surf" the various information and entertainment options. As anticipated, the TLC has seen credit card usage steadily increase in taxicabs, as the new payment options became more widely known by both regular and occasional passengers alike. Welcome to the future!

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

The TLC released the 2007 Annual Report January '08. The report outlines all of the major initiatives undertaken by the TLC in the 2007 fiscal year.



WE'RE ON THE WEB: [WWW.NYC.GOV/TAXI](http://www.nyc.gov/taxi)