

The Austin Taxi Confidential

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Taxi Driver Association of Austin update

Austin Cab Drivers have a forum to speak!

By: Ann Darbonne
Lone Star Cab 53

Since forming last year, the Association has been fighting for better working conditions for cab drivers. We have issued a report available on our website called "*Driving Austin, Driving Injustice*". Board members have attended an incredible amount of meetings with the Department of Transportation, the Urban Transportation Committee Members and City Council. We have spurred City Council into creating a taskforce, charged with improving the taxi industry as a whole, and for the first time taxi drivers are being given a forum to speak up and speak out. This road to improvement is slow and hard, but the Board and the members of the Association have not given up.

Want to Join?

Do you want to be a member? There are several ways you can join:

- Email info@austintaxidriver.org and ask for a membership application
- Send a letter of inquiry to: Taxi Drivers Association of Austin, PO Box 29734, Austin, Texas 78755
- Ask one of the Board members of the TDAA for an application directly.

Joining is quick and easy. Membership lists are not shared with the franchises, and participation can be limited to what each individual feels comfortable with. What is important is that we all stand together and support the cause in any way we can!

TDAA Officers Come Out of the Closet

Much to do has been made about the TDAA leadership being confidential. Although this was necessary at the time, The TDAA feels the time has come to go public. Therefore, without any further delay, the Association officers are:

Ann Darbonne.....President
Anna Fendlason.....Vice-President
Chris Obiama.....Treasurer
David W. Kelley.....Financial Secretary

Legacy Permit Proposed

TDAA Proposes Mobile permits

By: Ann Darbonne
Lone Star Cab 53

Mon May 30th 2010, the TDAA made a written proposal to the Taxicab Taskforce that proposed that the city turn 40% of the available taxicab permits into what it called "Legacy Permits". The Legacy permit would be assigned to a particular driver, based on seniority, who would then have the freedom to move from one franchise to another dependent upon which Franchise the driver

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Let's Stop the Mis-misinformation!

In Response to Yellow Cab.

By: David W. Kelley
Austin Cab 85

Recently, in the Yellow Cab newsletter, there appeared an article titled let's stop the misinformation. In this article it was implied that the information presented in the LAMP report, aka "*Driving Austin, Driving Injustice*", was not valid. This reporters' response to that article is "**BALDERDASH**"! For this report not to be valid would mean that sixty-six individual, independent contractor, drivers would have all conspired to tell the same set of lies to the lawyers who prepared the report and they believed them. The likelihood of this being true is not only ridiculous, but the odds of this scenario occurring are astronomical. The Authors of the report could only find one driver who disagreed with their findings.

Learn to Drive From Whom?

Yellow Cab's article goes on to say that if any drivers are having trouble earning money, they should sign up for a class taught by Ed Kargbo, general manager at Yellow Cab. To this reporters' knowledge, Mr. Kargbo, although a smart and talented guy, has never driven a cab in the city of Austin, or anywhere else for that matter! If you want some tips on how to earn more money, driving a cab, talk to one of the many drivers in the city who have actually done the job for years.

TDAA Needs Funding

As Association Grows, Funds get low!

By: Chris Obiama
Yellow Cab 447

Hey guys, we have made a lot of progress but, as the Association grows, so does the need for funding. TDAA officers and Board of Directors are not paid, but, Websites, office supplies, web access and phone service all cost money. So, if you know a driver who is not a member, ask them to join. Individual contributions are a tax deductible business expense and can be given to any officer or board of director member. Thank you for your continuing support!



To Join The TDAA!

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preferred. This new found freedom would make the Franchises compete for a drivers' loyalty and bring real competition to the industry for the first time.

New Taxi Staging Facility Update

The Airport management is in the design phase of turning the Budget Rental lot into an indoor waiting area for drivers. Make suggestions to TDAA about what you would like to see in the area. Email info@austintaxidriver.org with your ideas. Put "staging facility" in the subject line.

Austin City Council Insider

The taxi industry is a highly politicized business. Local authorities and politicians set taxi fares, specify vehicle color and set limits on the number of licensed vehicles. Taxi drivers need to know what is happening in order to ensure that the political decisions are fair to the drivers.

Meet Your City Council Member

Council Member Bill Spelman was elected to City Council in June 2009 and his term will run until June 2012. He has demonstrated an understanding of how the taxi industry operates and concern for the working conditions of cab drivers. Council Member Spelman was the only Council Member to vote against renewing the franchises for five more years. You can contact him: Phone: (512) 974-2256; Fax: (512) 974-7655.

Resolution 60

City Council passed this Resolution which directed city staff and the UTC to gather stakeholder input and make recommendations on a number of taxi related issues including the idea of flat rates, passenger clean up fees, adding more cab stands and hailing icons and "all other issues regarding taxicabs as necessary." Other issues include the ways to allocate franchises, mobile permits, insurance for drivers, and an appeals process for drivers who are canceled. These meetings are ongoing. The next meeting is on July 15, 2010 at 6:30 in One Texas Center's 3rd floor conference room. To receive email updates of future meeting times email taxi@ci.austin.tx.us or call or text 512-539-0060 and ask to be included in all updates on meetings.

Urban Transportation Commission

The UTC makes recommendations to council on all transportation franchise requests, renewals, rate adjustments, hours of operation and requests for taxicab permits. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m. City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street, Boards and Commissions Room (Rm. 1101). To see the agenda go to www.ci.austin.tx.us/cityclerk/bc_info_center.htm.

Pedicabs

There are currently 187 pedicabs permits in Austin and 669 taxi cab permits. This is the highest ration of pedicabs to taxi cabs in the country. Currently, they are permitted to operate from 8 am to 4 am every day. They have geographic boundaries from Lamar to IH35 and Riverside to 38th Street, but the boundaries vary by pedicab company. Pedicabs are supposed to follow the same traffic laws as taxi cabs. They are only supposed to have three passengers in a vehicle. To file a complaint about unsafe driving, know the number and company of the pedicab. Call 512-974-1551 or 512-974-1552 or obtain a form at:

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/pwd/complaint_info.cfm.

Franchise News

Three Strikes you are out:

Austin Cab has a "Three Strikes You Are Out" policy. For minor infractions such as inspection violations, you will receive a letter of reprimand. A second minor infraction and a major infraction such as direct route violation will result in forced days off for at least two days. Austin Cab will terminate your contract or suspend you for one to two weeks for a third minor or second major infraction or a serious infraction such as use of illegal drugs or alcohol or too many accidents. See www.austintaxidriver.org for a copy of the policy.

Security Camera update:

Yellow Cab is now requiring drivers to put cameras in their vehicles, and making drivers pay for it. Let us know what you think about this by email to info@austintaxidriver.org with security camera in the subject line.

They done me wrong:

If you think your company has been unfair to you, fill out the anonymous complaint form. The form will be reviewed to see if the TDAA or volunteer attorneys can help you. The Complaint Form is available on www.austintaxidriver.org.

The Rumor Mill:

Urban Rail-What is it and what does it mean for Austin taxi drivers?

The city council is considering building a 17-mile [urban rail system](#) would cost about \$1.3 billion to start building in 2012. Officials project operating costs of up to \$25 million a year. The trains would run seven days a week, 16 hours a day, with 10 minutes between trains. The trip from each end to downtown, the city says, would take just over 30 minutes. The line would run from the old Mueller airport, the University of Texas, the Capitol complex and downtown, and then follow Riverside Drive to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. It is not known how much passengers would pay for the train, but a rail line from the airport would certainly impact airport driver income.

New to the Trade: Tips From the Old Timers

Know Your Rights: It's the Law

§13-2-348 DIRECT ROUTE.

(A) A driver shall transport a passenger to the passenger's destination by the most direct route available **unless otherwise directed by the passenger.**

(B) This section applies only to taxicab service in which a taximeter is used to calculate the rate of fare.

TDAA Meeting:

The Taxi Drivers Association of Austin will be holding a meeting open to all Taxi Drivers on Tuesday July 27th 2010. There will be two separate sessions, one at 3pm and one at 7pm in order to accommodate both day and night drivers. The meeting will be held at 4920 north I. H. 35, in the conference room. The agenda will be a short "state of the association" address, followed by a Q & A session. All drivers are urged to attend.

Meet your Fellow Hack:

Which cab driver hails from El Salvador from which he came to this country in 1999. In keeping with the Austin tradition of being the "live music capitol of the world", he plays gigs locally in a Salsa band. The answer will be in the next newsletter. Tell us something interesting about yourself or another driver. Email info@austintaxidriver.org and put "fellow hack" in the subject line.