

Dick Leshley, Yellow Cab Taxi, Coos Bay, Oregon Named the TLPA 2006 Taxicab Small Fleet Operator of the Year

Dick Leshley, owner of Yellow Cab Taxi, Coos Bay, Oregon, has been chosen as the TLPA 2006 Taxicab Small Fleet Operator of the Year.

Shirley Liberante, Executive Director of the Coos Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, nominated Dick for this award. She wrote, "It is with great community pride and respect that I nominate Dick Leshley, owner of Yellow Cab Taxi, for the TLPA 2006 Operator of the Year Award. Dick Leshley has been in the industry for over 20 years. Of the many accomplishments of Coos Bay Yellow Cab, I am most impressed with their enforced Drug Free policy. Dick not only implemented the policy, but has worked hard in the community to help other businesses do the same. Dick heads up the Drug Free Workplace taskforce for the Chamber of Commerce. Dick Leshley gives generously of his time and energy for the betterment of Oregon's Bay Area and Coos County. I highly recommend Dick Leshley for this most prestigious award."

Dick Leshley was born and raised in Oregon. He and his wife, Becky, have been married for 37 years. They have a grown daughter and son, and have 5 grandchildren, one boy and four girls. Dick and Becky moved to Coos Bay in 1984. Dick says, "Coos Bay in the mid 1980's was in a depression - no jobs were available. I was able to begin driving for Yellow Cab in March 1985. I took the job until I could get a "real" job. After a few months I realized that I didn't want to do anything else. When the owners of the company went bankrupt in 1986, we were able to purchase the company. We started with 2 cars and have been growing ever since." Today the company operates 20 taxicabs.

When asked to describe his management philosophy, Dick responded, "I believe that several things have to happen to manage successfully.



Dick Leshley enforces a Drug Free Policy at Coos Bay Yellow Cab and has worked hard in the community to help other businesses do the same.

First is fiscal responsibility – if you can't pay the bills you have nothing to manage. Second is to attract and keep quality people. Third is to assess the needs of the community and move quickly to fill those needs. Finally – education; constantly educate yourself. I graduated from high school in 1965 and had no further formal education. I quickly realized the extent of my ignorance in running a business and began looking for help. I found it through our Chamber of Commerce and the Business Development Center at our local community college. We continue to take advantage of these learning opportunities several times a year. This benefits our drivers and passengers by instilling a sense of confidence that our company will do what it says it will do and will be here tomorrow to try to do it better." Dick notes. "My wife, Becky, is my full time partner both in life and in our company. She is the detail person and lets me think I am the boss. I couldn't do it without her."

Dick says. "Our company has been a member of TLPA off and on since the mid 1990's. Like a lot of companies, if we had the money when it was renewal time we paid, if not, we renewed the next year. This all changed in 2003 when I attended the Annual Meeting in Reno. I looked around and could not believe my eyes! Here were professionals involved in my industry. I listened

and learned that their challenges were my challenges. Since that 2003 meeting in Reno, I have been a regular attendee to nearly all TLPA meetings. Since that 2003 meeting in Reno, our ride count has increased 50%; our turnover has decreased 50%, and our bottom line has increased substantially. I currently serve on the Taxicab Steering Committee. If you are a taxicab operator join TLPA. If you are a member of TLPA come to the meetings. It will be the best investment you will ever make!"

The list of community organizations that Dick belongs to is very long and includes: the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, the Coos County' Public Transit Advisory Board, and the Bay Area Rotary Club (he is President-Elect for 2007/2008). Dick says, "This involvement has helped our business in two ways; one it has helped to alert us to the changing needs of our community. Two it has put a face to our company."

In his spare time, Dick likes to read, spend time with his family and collect taxi memorabilia. He stated, "To be awarded the 2006 TLPA Small Fleet Taxicab Operator of the Year award is just incredible! We are gratified to have our work recognized by our peers. We are excited to bring this award home to the people that really deserve it – our employees, drivers, and clients. We are also humbled by the responsibility to continue and improve on the activities that lead to this honor."

In recognition of exceptional management of an outstanding taxicab service focused on customer service, maintenance and safety and for his extraordinary commitment to community service, the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is very proud to honor Dick Leshley as the TLPA 2006 Taxicab Small Fleet Operator of the Year. ■