



TAXICAB, LIMOUSINE &
PARATRANSIT ASSOCIATION

April 29, 2009

Alternative Fuel Panel's Q&A Session

The "Alternative Fuels and Taxicab Fleets" panel presented during TLPA's record shattering Spring Conference & Expo held in New York City, March 26-29, received exceptionally high ratings. The panel featured TLPA Past President Ellis Houston, TLPA Past President Neal Nichols, TLPA Director Hal Mellegard and TLPA Taxicab Steering Committee Member Joe Giannetto. At the end of the presentation, which was summarized in the April issue of our *Taxicab* newsletter, a very lively group discussion was held.

- Almost everyone agreed that the benefits of hybrids from an economic prospective went down with the price of fuel. However, one operator from Phoenix did state he was so pleased with the results he was receiving from his existing fleet of Prius hybrids that he had already placed an order for 80 more.
- An operator from Ottawa commented how they have mostly replaced their propane vehicles with gasoline vehicles because the price of propane there had risen to the point it was no longer economically feasible to operate propane vehicles.
- Approximately half the room of over 80 people surveyed was experimenting with at least one alternative fuel vehicle in their fleet.
- One of the biggest negatives of the hybrids was the cost of replacement parts and the downtime. One operator from San Francisco stated he had to pay \$795 for a headlight on one of his hybrids. On the other hand, several of the people operating hybrids stated their hybrids had recently reached 100,000 miles of use and were still operating with the original batteries.
- Concerns with CNG and propane were discussed and one operator from Toronto spoke of a fueling station in Toronto that blew up and took out a city block — prompting city officials there to enact more stringent standards for fueling stations.
- A representative from Blossman Propane spoke about the tax incentives available and what cost is involved in the transformation to a bi-fuel vehicle. There was also a representative from Clean Cities in the audience that spoke about some of the tax incentives available.
- A representative from the Vehicle Production Group (Standard Taxi) explained that their new CNG vehicle would not be a bi-fuel vehicle, only CNG.
- There was also discussion and some excitement about the Ford Connect clean diesel vehicle that has been operating in Europe coming to the states in the near future. Some of the NYC operators think this may be the new replacement for the Crown Victoria.

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