

The Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association's Year in Review—2008

On October 10, 2007, Brian Hunt was elected President of the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association. In his acceptance speech at the 89th Annual Convention & Trade Show in Denver, CO, he spoke about his life and how he entered into the transportation business. His work plan for 2008 included:

- Continued implementation of the TLPA strategic plan
- Development of a Web-based TLPA Driver Enhancement/Education Program
- Implementation of a Free TLPA Technical Assistance Program for Transit Planning
- Establishment of a TLPA Library of Favorable Administrative and Court Cases
- Production of the three TLPA 2008 conferences in Kansas City, Paris, and Tampa
- Carrying out legislative initiatives to ready TLPA for the 2009 presidential administration.

Brian announced that he would like to have an emphasis in 2008 on educating TLPA members about customer service. He stated, "I believe best practices coupled with proper employee training in customer service can add to our previously developed driver and company standards. I believe specific education on this topic in articles and by speakers in sessions will continue our branding strategy by developing our member companies into being absolutely the best in the industry at what we do and will gain additional respect and loyalty from customers and regulators.

I think you will agree with me that service is what we sell. Let the strength of the TLPA membership be put to that task, in 2008, so we may continue to set ourselves apart from the competition. Let's vow to learn together all there is to know about this subject of customer service and let's document it for the benefit of future members." Following are the major accomplishments of President Hunt's year in office.

The Winter Planning Meetings

Many TLPA members are unaware of the amount of member committee work that occurs



Brian Hunt was sworn in as the 2008 TLPA President by Past President Brian Wier at the 2007 Annual Convention & Trade Show in Denver, CO.

between the times the Annual Convention & Trade Show ends and the Spring Conference begins.

Taxicab & Paratransit Steering Committee Meetings

On Thursday, January 10, 2008, the TLPA Taxicab and Paratransit & Contracting Steering Committees held their annual winter

planning meetings in New Orleans, Louisiana. The committees chose topics to be presented at the Spring Conference educational sessions in Kansas City and suggested topics to be presented at Roundtable and Breakout sessions at the Annual Convention in Tampa. The Committees decided to update the TLPA Medicaid Broker paper and each appointed a subcommittee to oversee this effort. The Committees also agreed that their division Fact Books would include an addendum focusing on customer service issues. The Taxicab Steering Committee discussed the legislative issues of concern to them including: accessible vehicle mandates, alternative fuel mandates, independent contractor status, proper regulation and service taxes. The Paratransit & Contracting Steering Committee approved the language of the *Paratransit Driver Screening and Training Standards Recommended by the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association*. The Paratransit Committee recommended that TLPA seek the following in the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, 1) language making private operators eligible subrecipients for FTA program funds, 2) private operators eligible for a seat on MPOs, 3) money set aside for a private operator demonstration program (i.e., same day ADA service), and 4) money for private sector advocates.

Limousine & Sedan Steering Committee

The Limousine & Sedan Steering Committee held their winter meeting in Las Vegas on March 18. President Hunt and CEO LaGasse attended the meeting. Topics and issues covered included:

- Drafting of a model independent contractor agreement designed to meet federal requirements for limousine chauffeurs
- Overtime wages issues confronting the limousine industry in Florida
- RIDE Act issues
- Colorado PUC limousine issues

Meetings of the TLPA Executive Committee

The TLPA Executive Committee met in February 2008 and took action on many important issues. Present for the meeting were President Brian Hunt, President-Elect Rick Hewatt, Treasurer Anthony Palmeri, CEO Al LaGasse, Vice President Victor Dizengoff, Vice President Robert McBride, Vice President Mary Smarelli, International Vice President Blair Davies, International Vice President Jim Donnelly, Immediate Past President Brian Wier, Past President Ellis Houston, Director Craig Hughes, Director Jo-Anne Thompson, and Director Margie Wilcox. President Hunt opened the meeting by commenting on customer service being the theme for his year as President, expecting customer service to be the major focus for meeting sessions and to be a part of all the Association's activities in 2008. The committee gave a final review of the 2005-2007 Strategic Plan. Everyone was pleased with the outcome. The committee then reviewed the 2008-2010 strategic plan. In its review, the committee received an update on the status of all objectives to be completed in 2008. As the "Preferred Future" was being reviewed several committee members commented that the plan does not currently promote an outreach to the media and the general public. It was noted that all TLPA members should print the TLPA logo in their advertising, letterhead, business cards and place the TLPA member decal on each of their vehicles.

The Committee discussed possible public relation activities. Items mentioned included holding educational sessions on how to write a press release and on dealing with the media; a TLPA sponsored national program to get drunk drivers off the streets; and retaining a public relations firm to assist TLPA in developing and promoting the TLPA international brand. President Hunt appointed himself along with Victor Dizengoff, Rick Hewatt, Robert McBride, Tony Palmeri, Jo-Anne Thompson and Al LaGasse to a Public Relations Subcommittee. The subcommittee

developed a recommendation, to be presented to the entire TLPA Board of Directors at their meeting in Kansas City in May, on how TLPA could proceed with a public relations program.

The Executive Committee endorsed an idea of having the Taxicab and the Paratransit & Contracting Steering Committees form a subcommittee to update the Association's current paper on brokerages and Medicaid funded transportation service into a more generic paper on all types of ground transportation service brokerages. The committee then reviewed the Association's financial status. It was noted that the Association office had been successfully relocated from Kensington, Maryland, to the newly acquired condominium office in Rockville, Maryland. The TLPA Finance Committee (President Hunt, Treasurer Palmeri, President-Elect Hewatt, Past President Houston and CEO Al LaGasse) was charged with developing a written, investment policy for the Association's reserve funds, and overseeing and approving the sale or lease of the Association's old condominium office space in Kensington, Maryland. It was agreed to renew the Association's endorsement of the accidental death and disbursement program offered by John Burnham Insurance Services and AIG.

Sites for the seminars that TLPA will host as part of its grant from the Federal Transit Administration were discussed. It was agreed that the sites for the five seminars should be Washington, DC, Chicago,

Denver, Las Vegas and Tampa. *The Paratransit Driver Screening and Training Standards* policy recommended by the Paratransit & Contracting Steering Committee was reviewed and approved. The policy is now posted on the Resource Center page in the Members Only section of the TLPA website.

The TLPA Executive Committee met again in Washington, DC, on March 31, 2008, to review and update the strategic plan. During its half-day meeting, the committee added six new objectives, and received an update on the status of every objective.

Each objective under Goal 1—*Create a Favorable Operating Environment in the For-Hire Ground Transportation Industry for TLPA Members*, was reviewed. After the status report for each objective was reviewed the committee took the following actions:

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The Board of Directors met at the Spring Conference in Kansas City.

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- TLPA has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for TLPA to provide education and technical assistance to private operators. A toll-free telephone number has been set up and TLPA has begun to assist operators in meeting with FTA and planning officials. The toll-free number is 866-928-6550,
- Under the objective to identify and respond to emerging threats, it was noted that AAA in Buffalo, NY, is offering a livery service called “Easy Ride.” It was agreed that TLPA should learn more about this service,
- Under the objective to outreach to other organizations, it was noted that the Community Transportation Association of America has invited Hal Morgan to speak on transit planning and coordination at its convention in New Orleans. The committee accepted the invitation.

The following new objectives were added under Goal 1 of the strategic plan:

- File testimony opposing the Notice of Proposed Rule making that would enable states to stop funding non-emergency medical transportation,
- Seek passage of an amendment to the RIDE Act to improve the law and to expand protection from excessive airport fees,
- Oppose expansion of interstate transportation status to passengers arriving at or departing from transportation terminals via for-hire ground transportation carriers,
- Work with the U.S. DOT and Congress to assure that SAFETEA-LU is implemented properly and that the gains achieved are maintained.

The objectives under Goal 2—*Expand Business and Market Knowledge for TLPA Members*, were reviewed. Regarding the objective to educate members how to influence transportation policy, it was noted that seminars were being developed to be presented in 2008 in Washington, DC, Denver, Las Vegas, Chicago and Tampa.

The review concluded with a progress report on the objectives under Goal 4 — *Elevate the Industry Image of TPLA Members*. The taxicab driver education project had four courses in progress with two of the courses going to the storyboard phase of development. The committee voted to implement the TLPA Company Driver of the Year Award by developing a suggested company awards program format, allowing each company to select its own driver award recipient. President Hunt appointed Jo-Anne Thompson as the chair of a new Literature Awards Committee to determine how the awards program should be set up and operated. A new

objective was added to investigate retaining the services of a public relations firm to assist TLPA in developing its brand and to bring favorable recognition to TLPA.

The committees also agreed that the Association’s legal counsel should update the model taxicab lease contract and develop a model limousine lease contract.

Technical Assistance for Private Operator Participation in Transit Planning and Contracting Opportunities

As noted above, in a contract signed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on October 10, 2007, FTA entered into a cooperative agreement with TLPA to provide educational seminars, instructional articles, technical assistance, and other web-based materials to assist private for-hire vehicle operators in understanding and becoming involved in the collaborative transportation planning processes through their states and local metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

A key element of this cooperative agreement was for TLPA to develop training seminars to present to TLPA members and other private operators across the country on how to participate in the MPO process. The goal of the seminars is to enhance the planning knowledge, skills, and abilities of private transportation operators to facilitate the inclusion of private operators in the statewide and metropolitan planning processes and to educate private operators on how the process works and the benefits of getting involved.

On September 22, 2008, FTA awarded TLPA a second year of funding for this project. Five additional *Planning Ahead* seminars will be held in 2009. Presentation of five training seminars will take place in New York, Kansas City, Fort Worth, Seattle and Providence. Also, as a follow-up to the *Planning Ahead: Enhanced Contracting Opportunities by Participating in the Transportation Planning Process* seminar series, a *Private Operators at the Table* handbook will be developed for TLPA and FTA that includes key components from the seminar presentations and manual.

Under the auspices of this cooperative agreement, TLPA’s Hal Morgan participated in a March 20th meeting between some of the TLPA New England members and the FTA Regional Administrator for Region 1 and his staff. The purpose for the meeting was for TLPA members to express their concerns about the lack of outreach to private operators by states, MPOs and transit agencies in the region as required under SAFETEA-LU. The FTA regional office staff saw the meeting

as an opportunity for basic awareness building with private operators on current FTA procedures and policies. Dan Leonas, City Cab Company, Lewiston, ME; Bill Legare, Valley Transportation Corporation, Woonsocket, RI; Jo-Anne Thompson, Tommy's Taxi, Framingham, MA; and Hal Morgan met with Dick Doyle, the FTA Region One, Regional Administrator and Noah Berger and Judy Molloy who are FTA regional program managers. Dan, Bill and Jo-Anne provided brief histories of their companies, the types of services and vehicles they operate and their experiences with FTA programs. They discussed their frustrations with state and local officials who often did not return phone calls and seemed reluctant to include the companies in segments of the planning process as required by SAFETEA-LU. From the operators' point of view, they were pleased that the meeting was hosted and conducted by the Regional Administrator himself. Mr. Doyle was very interested in seeing that the operators had every opportunity to participate in the planning and provision of FTA services. He made it clear the FTA Region 1 office would welcome calls from the operators to help them understand and become more involved in the FTA program. He also offered to host a follow-on meeting for all the MA operators located within the Boston urbanized area who would be interested in participating in the FTA program with the appropriate state and local officials invited to attend. He also said they would welcome requests for information from other operators in New England.

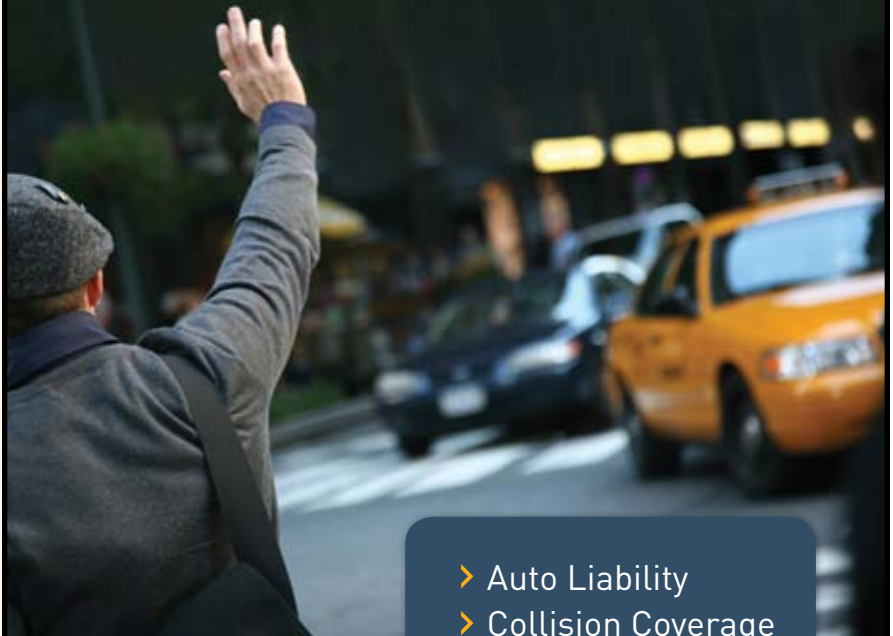
TLPA Open House at Its New Office

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves at the TLPA Open House, held on April 1, 2008 at the new TLPA International Headquarters—located in Rockville, MD (18 miles from the White House in Washington, DC). The Open House was scheduled to encourage members to see the new home of TLPA and was announced in our bimonthly newsletters, *Dispatch* and *TLPA NewsBriefs*. Many members have donated gifts to TLPA, such as artwork featuring transportation motifs, along with memorabilia such as taxicab badges, a

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“As the premier ground transportation association representing over 1,000 transportation companies...TLPA now has office space that matches the critical function it serves in effectively representing the for-hire vehicle industry,” commented 2008 President Brian Hunt when visiting the new TLPA offices on April 1, 2008.

limousine license plate, and a signed photo of movie star, Christopher Reeve, who was once transported by one of our paratransit members, adorning the walls. All of the member guests commented on “the great artwork and memorabilia” hanging on the walls. TLPA is proud of its heritage. Some faded old photos were brought from the previous TLPA office which now hang in the new conference room and the members loved looking at them. Some recognized family members from multiple generations, showing the longevity and impact of TLPA on American history. President Brian Hunt commented that as the premier ground transportation association representing over 1,000 transportation companies that transport nearly 1 billion passengers per year, TLPA now has office space that matches the critical function it serves in effectively representing the for-hire vehicle industry.

TLPA Testimony, Presentations and Outside Meeting Participation in 2008

On January 13, Hal Morgan attended and participated in a Transportation Research Board Session *Using Taxis Effectively in Paratransit Services*. On January 17, Hal Morgan participated in the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination Research Summit—at the US DOT headquarters’ building.

On January 31, Hal Morgan participated in the National Steering Committee meeting of the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination in Washington, DC. On February 21, Al LaGasse participated in the Highway and Motor Carrier Sector Coordinating Council of the Department of Homeland Security meeting. On February 25, Al LaGasse and Hal

Morgan met with the Transportation Committee of the National Council of Independent Living Centers in Washington, DC.

On March 24, TLPA filed testimony with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in opposition to Medicaid giving states the option, when certain conditions are met, to stop funding non-emergency medical transportation.

On April 1, Hal Morgan participated on a Transportation Research Board (TRB) panel to develop an RFP for the topic *Recruitment Performance and Retention of Quality Transit and Paratransit Managers—Skills, Qualifications, Needs and Future Prospects*. The meeting took place at the National Academy of Sciences headquarters in Washington, DC.

On May 27, Hal Morgan made a presentation to the Nineteenth Annual Public Transit Forum sponsored by the National Capital Region Planning Board in Washington, DC. On June 4, Hal Morgan spoke on a panel on the private sector role in human service transportation coordination at the CTAA Expo in New Orleans, LA. On June 5, Hal Morgan participated in a meeting of the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination Steering Committee in New Orleans, LA. On July 14 and 15, Hal Morgan participated in a meeting of the National Steering Committee of the National Center for Senior Transportation.

On June 19, Al LaGasse testified before the Legislative Program Review & Investigations Committee in Hartford, CT. On October 14, Al LaGasse filed a declaration in the court case between the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade and New York City. On October 23, Al LaGasse testified as an expert witness on taxicab regulations before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission in Denver.

On November 17, Hal Morgan participated in a meeting of the National Steering Committee of the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination. On November 21, Hal Morgan participated in the Easter Seals Project ACTION Mobility Management National Organization Stakeholder meeting in Washington, DC.

2008 TLPA Conference and Trade Show Participation

TLPA Limousine Committee member Joey Cirruzzo manned TLPA’s booth at the fourth annual Limo Digest Expo South in Orlando, Florida, in January. Hundreds of operators

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attended the event held at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort.

TLPA President Hunt gave the opening address at the 40th Annual Convention of the Taxicab Paratransit Association of California in April. He presented the new three-year strategic plan that TLPA had just adopted to more precisely focus TLPA's resources on the key issues confronting our industry.

TLPA President Hunt, CEO LaGasse, Vice President Dizengoff, Past President Palmeri and Directors Bell and Rouse attended the 21st Annual Conference of the International Association of Transportation Regulators held in Los Angeles in September.

In October, Vice President Dizengoff, and Limousine Committee members Joey Cirruzzo and Bob Boroday manned the TLPA booth at the 15th Annual Limo Digest Show in Atlantic City. They successfully recruited numerous new members to TLPA.

From May 13-16, 2008, President Hunt attended the International Road Transport Union (IRU) Conference in Istanbul, Turkey. Following is his description of the trip.

"Istanbul is a picturesque, modern city with views of the water and hillsides. The people I met were exceptionally polite. After about 25 hours of travel, I was met by the IRU management, specifically Murielle, Michael, and Oleg. Even though Mikhail Gorbachev was a VIP there, I doubted he had been treated any better. On Wednesday, May 14th, I attended the IRU's Taxi Committee meeting. The taxicab operators, even though from Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and other places, have similar issues to those in the States. Requirements of "black box" data reporting as a way of verifying taxes and defining the role of taxis in public transit which allows governance of quality standards were issues of this Taxi Committee meeting. One interesting item was the curriculum entitled *Eco Taxi*, training available to operators in Brussels, which teaches a driver ways to save fuel. Other initiatives of the IRU include taxi driver guidelines for transporting the disabled. The European taxi community sees transportation of the disabled as a business opportunity. There is very little discussion about whether the taxicabs should be accessible, but since the market has not been completely taken over by public subsidized transit like in the U.S.; the private operators contemplate targeting this niche ridership.

I attended the IRU's Governing Council meeting. The agenda included a debate over an

hour and wage issue that has been resolved by a compromise with the Labor Unions. Since the European transportation network is very popular and is used extensively by many people to travel to other EU countries, there is need to make uniform some of the regulations and licenses. For example, a Belgium based bus bringing passengers to Germany may be subject to different licenses and barriers than a bus bringing passengers from Germany to Belgium. The IRU is active in each country to promote fairness of competition. The IRU membership policy is to promote for their members to have access to any public moneys used for transportation. On Thursday May 15th, I attended the IRU General Congress. There were 1,800 registrants at this conference representing over 70 countries including many delegates from associations such as TLPA. The meeting with about 200 people present was very efficient. One issue was debated: whether the IRU should get involved with "local" issues such as a resolution for the Romanian delegation urging their government to take a more cooperative role with the transporters. A watered down resolution passed after much debate. I discussed our TLPA policy with IRU management of staff having the authority within guidelines to issue letters of support to companies who felt it would aid them in local matters. One member aptly summed up the situation: "Think Global, Act Local".

The IRU trade show consisted of about 30 exhibits. The IRU management wants to reach out to more parts of the world including the US. So, I suggested they create a strategic plan. They welcomed the idea. I offered to send a copy of ours to them and explained how and why we carried out the process to create the document. One speaker from Afghanistan was recognized for returning membership to IRU that was interrupted by the war. They were now in the process of rebuilding roads and were asking the IRU for support. Thursday's lunch was at a military museum where there was an exhibit 40 meters long about the development of transportation in Eurasia. This exhibit was formed in part by the US through our government office of tourism and Eurasia affairs. Afterwards, I attended the opening assembly where Mikhail Gorbachev spoke on Thursday afternoon."

TLPA Publications

TLPA supplies its dues-paying members with lots of key information that they need to know. Some of the key information that TLPA routinely issues is included in its bi-monthly newsletter *Dispatch*. With

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Dispatch, members also receive the newsletters for the TLPA divisions which they joined *Taxicab*, *Limousine* and/or *Paratransit*. *TLPA NewsBriefs* electronic newsletter features the top press clippings regarding taxicab, limousine, and paratransit news as well as general transportation industry ideas/trends. *The Business Owner (TBO)* is sent to all TLPA members based in the United States. This newsletter is designed to keep small business owners informed of strategies that can be used given the current state of U.S. federal laws and regulations. The members of each division are sent a survey requesting company operating and performance data. This information is used to develop a *Fact Book* for each division. The information in each *Fact Book* provides a general benchmark by which operators can compare their operating statistics with the national average. Members who complete *Fact Book* questionnaires receive a *Fact Book* at no cost. If you are not receiving these TLPA publications, you are missing out on vast amounts of information.

The Jury is Out on Alternative Fuels for Taxicab Fleets

TLPA is considering making a recommendation to taxicab fleet operators and the industry's regulators on how the industry can best be greener. In preparation for TLPA's internal debate on this important matter, we collected articles, interviewed fleet operators and reviewed what green advocates had to say. An excerpt from this TLPA Alternative Fuels paper was published in the Summer Issue of *Transportation Leader* magazine.

Study of the Full Cost of Implementing An Accessible Taxicab Program

The TLPF contracted with the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis to address the issue of the burden it would put on the taxi industry if there are mandates that require companies to meet certain accessibility levels. Dr. Ray Mundy presented the preliminary findings of the research at the TLPA Annual Convention in Tampa.

TLPA Spring Conference

The 12th largest TLPA Spring Conference & Expo was held at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center, in Kansas City, Missouri on May 7-10. The exciting event had a good turnout of over 200 participants.

This Spring Conference & Expo featured a new format where most TLPA committees and the Board of Directors met during the conference. The conference registration bags were sponsored by Liberty Motor Company and Digital Dispatch Systems contributed our name badge holders. A new vendor this year at the Spring Conference & Expo, Promptu Systems Corporation sponsored the welcoming cocktail reception on Wednesday night and also the buffet lunch on Thursday held in the exhibit hall. The exhibition was busy with the 26 vendors interacting with the operators during the breakfast, lunch and cocktail reception held in the exhibit hall. The first day of the conference officially began on Wednesday afternoon. Two concurrent open committee meetings were held. The Taxicab Steering Committee meeting was rated as 100% excellent or good, with several comments about the good information and high attendance that generated a lot of input. The Paratransit & Contracting Steering Committee meeting was rated 100% excellent or good with comments about the great topics from a broad topic range and the good contributions of multiple participants voicing opinions or concerns. The day ended with the grand opening reception in the expo hall sponsored by Promptu Systems Corporation.

After the delicious buffet breakfast held in the expo hall on Thursday morning, the Taxicab Steering Committee presented two roundtable discussions. *Managing an Ethnically Diverse Work Force* received 100% excellent or good ratings from the participants. Positive comments were made about the lively and productive discussions in the roundtable session atmosphere and about the good ideas that were given.

The second roundtable discussion, *Strategies for Getting Contractor Drivers to Improve Customer Service* also received 100% excellent or good ratings. Attendees commented on the good handouts from the moderator. The handouts were of items to include in the contract which members raved was great information and was helpful to them. Also, on Thursday morning, two Paratransit & Contracting breakout sessions were presented: *Status of Transportation Planning and Coordination in Region VII* and *The Medicare Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Gap*. With the assistance of Sheri Watson of the Checker Transportation Group in Kansas City, TLPA was able to have speakers from the State of Missouri DOT, the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Mid America Regional Council (MARC), and the FTA Region VII Office for the Region VII session.



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The Medicare session discussed the need and benefits of changing the Medicare law to allow for non-emergency transportation (NET) providers to work with hospital discharge planners to transport patients to their homes or a step-down facility such as a nursing home or rehabilitation facility.

Two customer service sessions, *Basic Customer Service Principles and How to Handle a Customer Complaint* were also presented on Thursday morning. President Hunt led the exceptional session on Basic Customer Service Principles. Thursday afternoon, after the sumptuous buffet luncheon in the expo hall, there was a General Session in which there were two presentations and an open call for nominations. The first topic covered was *Kansas City's Certified Ambassador Program*. Many attendees said they were inspired to take the great and very timely customer service focused ideas back to their city. The second topic covered in Thursday afternoon's General Session was the *TLPA/FTA Technical Assistance Program for Private Operators*. Joe Rubino, JM Rubino Consulting, Saint Augustine, Florida, provided a dynamic presentation stating that every company needs to fully understand the role that it plays in its community's overall transit infrastructure. Comments on the session included that the energy was infectious. The Nominating Committee was introduced at this session and

nominations were taken from the floor. About 30 people were nominated for positions as directors or officers. On Thursday evening, our host operators Checker Transportation Group and Kansas City Transportation Group co-sponsored an evening/dinner and attendance at The College Basketball Experience. It received a whopping 100% excellent or good rating.

Friday morning the first TLPA Board of Directors' meeting of the year was held. It was moved up from the Mid-Year Conference to the Spring Conference & Expo. This allows the Board to review issues and provide direction to the TLPA staff earlier in the year. Friday afternoon featured two exceptional site visits to our host operator's facilities. The shared information, hospitality, and networking opportunities were exceptional and everyone appreciated the outstanding effort given by the staffs of the host operators. The entire conference received high ratings.



Brian Hunt, 2008 TLPA President led an exceptional session on *Basic Customer Service Principles* at the Spring Conference & Expo in Kansas City.

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JOSEPH M. CHERNOW, P.C.

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TLPA Mid-Year International Leadership Conference

The first annual Mid-Year International Leadership Conference was held in Paris, France, on July 9-12. The conference was a big hit with operational and regulatory discussions spanning the globe. The world perspective showed just how much in common our industry has in just about every place in the world. If it weren't for the accents of the various speakers and the nuances of different



In Paris, speaker Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator of the FTA and a panel discuss *Government and the Private Sector Working Together*.

federal laws, one could have thought they were attending TLPA's Spring Conference in Kansas City. Of course the ornate meeting room and the foreign exchange rate for Euros made it clear we were nowhere near America's heartland. Our featured speaker was Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. Joining Sherry on a panel to discuss *Government and the Private Sector Working Together* were TLPA President Brian Hunt, FTA Chief Counsel, Severn Miller and Ron Hartman of Veolia Transportation. Deputy Administration Little urged private operators to get involved with the public sector. She said you have to "stick your neck out" to make progress. Our panel on *Customer Service Programs and Policies* featured Serge Metz, Chairman of Taxis G7 in France, Geoffrey Riesel, Chairman of Radio Taxis Group in England, and Jim Donnelly, President of Aboutown Transportation in Canada, who all agreed on the need to focus on customer service. President Hunt asked a series of questions and the panel shared how their respective organizations dealt with the customer service issue. The *Operational Challenges* panel was an interesting panel that featured Djamchid Dalili, CEO of G7 Taxis in France, Blair Davies, CEO of the



2008 TLPA President Brian Hunt welcomed Djamchid Dalili, CEO of G7 Taxis of France at the 90th Annual Convention & Trade Show in Tampa.

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2009 TLPA MEETING DATES

SPRING CONFERENCE & EXPO
NEW YORK, NY
MARCH 26-29, 2009

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Australian Taxi Industry Association, and Wayne Baden, Counsel to the Black Car Fund in the US. President-Elect Rick Hewatt asked questions about alternative fuels, accessible vehicles, labor laws regarding drivers and much more.

G7 Taxis hosted an informative tour of three locations that serve the taxi industry's needs in Paris, from the call center, to the vehicle maintenance facility/vehicle sales center, to the hack up shop for the installation of meters, radios, and even televisions. The tour took all afternoon and was well worth it. Veolia Transportation hosted an interesting tour of one of their suburban bus facilities. Once the group arrived at the facility, there was a slide presentation on how the bus services are run and how the new paratransit option to accessible bus service is being phased in over the next ten years. Veolia Transportation (France) hosted a private cruise down the Seine River with an open bar and a wide variety of hors d'oeuvres. During the cruise, participants saw many famous buildings and the architecture that Paris is known for.

TLPA 90th Annual Convention & Trade Show

TLPA held our 90th Annual Convention & Trade Show, October 26–29th, at the Marriott Waterside Hotel and Tampa Convention Center. The meeting was very well attended, making this the 8th largest in TLPA history. Some members arrived early to attend an optional Special Transit Contracting & Planning Seminar. Also, held on Sunday, was our optional annual Gateway Insurance Golf Tournament sponsored by Gateway Insurance and golf dinner sponsored by BB&T John Burnham Insurance & TaxiPro by AequiCap. On Monday morning there was a tour of the facilities of our host city sponsors, Yellow Cab of Tampa and United Cab Company. One of the most popular features of recent Annual Conventions has been the Roundtable Discussions and Monday afternoon's 27 Roundtables were no exception. Among the topics covered were *Computer Dispatch Systems, Creating a Customer Service Environment, Credit Card Processing & Debit Cards for Drivers, Alternative Fuels Discussion, Getting*

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Independent Contractor Drivers to Improve Customer Service, Web-based orders, Update on Accessible Vehicles, Performance-Based Incentive Programs for Call Takers, Telephone Systems for Call Centers, and Attracting new Passengers/Increasing Ridership.

The Grand Opening Cocktail Reception was held Monday evening, including an open bar sponsored by BB&T John Burnham Insurance Services. Attendees networked, kicking off another successful trade show. The evening concluded with the optional Women In Transportation Dinner, where speaker, Mark Fulton made his presentation on *Behavioral Intelligence*. The First Time Operator Attendee Breakfast was held on Tuesday morning as an ice-breaking opportunity. At the same time there was a continental breakfast sponsored by American Service Insurance Company before the meeting day was kicked off by our State of the TLPA address by TLPA President Hunt and a Q&A session with Congressmen Jerry Costello (D-IL) & John Duncan (R-TN), senior members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. It concluded with a keynote address by Shep Hyken on *Customer Service—Moments of Magic*. Tuesday also featured two sets of breakout sessions including a session on *Accessible Taxicab Service* and *How to Respond to a Class Action Lawsuit* and meetings of the TLPA Limousine Steering Committee and the Canadian Taxi Association. The lunch was sponsored by TaxiPro by AequiCap, Inc. in the exhibit hall. Member Appreciation Cocktails sponsored by Promptu Systems Corporation were served before the Exhibit Hall closed for the day and members enjoyed a free evening to explore the beautiful southern hospitality of Tampa.

On Wednesday morning, members enjoyed a continental breakfast before our Second General Session. After the Foundation Business meeting which featured the passing of the gavel from out-going President Larry Slagle to incoming President Ellis Houston, there was the Presentation of Driver of the Year Awards and an Outstanding Service Award presented to the widow of longtime Yellow Cab of Houston executive Rudy Bruhns. An election of new TLPA officers & Directors was conducted before the acceptance speech by new TLPA President, Rick Hewatt. Rick promised that Work Hard! Play Hard! would be his motto for leading TLPA. After lunch in the Exhibit Hall, there were exhibitor prize drawings before the Trade Show officially closed for 2008. In the afternoon, there were two sets of concurrent Breakout Sessions featuring the introduction of revised lease contracts for independent contractor taxicab drivers and independent contractor limousine drivers and meetings of the Taxicab Steering Committee and

the Paratransit & Contracting Steering Committee. Then members gathered at the Florida Aquarium to attend the closing night Banquet. It included a Cocktail Reception and special animal encounters with a live alligator and a wagon full of penguins. Guests participated in the annual Silent Auction and heard the Operator of the Year Award presentations, before enjoying some free time to tour the Aquarium.

2009 TLPA Meetings

It is not too early to plan to attend our TLPA meetings in 2009. President Rick Hewatt's theme for TLPA in 2009 is "Work Hard! Play Hard!" Your attendance at TLPA's 2009 meetings will provide many opportunities about how to guide your business through these tough economic times, in addition to meeting with the top industry suppliers and vendors and having numerous occasions to network with your fellow TLPA members. Our major meetings in 2009 will be:

Spring Conference & Expo, Grand Hyatt, New York, New York, March 26-29, 2009. TLPA's 2009 Spring Conference & Expo is being held at the Grand Hyatt in New York City, March 26-29, 2009. The Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, the Black Car Assistance Corporation and Ronart Leasing are co-hosting the conference. This will surely be the biggest and best TLPA Spring Conference & Expo ever. See pages 31-34 for conference details and the registration form or visit our web site at www.tlpa.org to register online.

Mid-Year International Leadership Conference, Radisson SAS Royal Hotel, Dublin, Ireland, July 15-18, 2009. A very exciting educational program is being planned with multiple opportunities to interact with colleagues from all around the world.

91st Annual Convention & Trade Show, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada, October 4-7, 2009. TLPA's new convention format with General Sessions, Breakout Panel Sessions and Roundtable Discussions interspersed with hours of time to spend with exhibitors has been met with rousing praise at our last two conventions in Denver and Tampa. If you can only attend one meeting in 2009, let the TLPA convention in Las Vegas be the one. Golfers should plan to participate in the Gateway Insurance TLPF Golf Tournament on Saturday afternoon, October 3.

If you are not a member of TLPA, you are missing out on an exciting opportunity to grow your business. Membership applications for all five TLPA membership categories can be found on TLPA's web site at www.tlpa.org. Every company involved in the passenger ground transportation business will benefit from membership in TLPA. ■