

Victory at the TAC!!!

5 Drivers to balance 5 Owners on advisory committee

The Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) is the principle policy platform for the San Diego taxi industry, and has traditionally been more than just advisory to the MTS Board. The TAC has set the standards for professionalism, rules, and regulations for the industry more broadly. But historically neither the TAC nor any other arm of the city transportation department had been a significant forum for drivers to participate in a democratic process and shared governance by stakeholders. In fact, the owner dominated committee never wanted any more than one driver.

Margo Tanguay, the only driver representative since the committee was established in 1994, had quite ably spoken as a driver on the TAC, but few drivers were aware that she was the only voice for *all* drivers.

In June, the TAC turned a deaf ear on the pleas of dozens of drivers through UTWSD and passed a recommendation to add the Sheriff Department on the TAC and to add no new drivers. Eventually the committee was

this issue

Victory at the TAC!!! P.1

Sacramento Immigrant Day 2011 P.2

Save \$\$\$ with Credit Card Wireless P.2

UTWSD Speaks at Police Meeting P.3

Advocate Spotlight P.3

Upcoming Events P.4



Drivers and Advocates celebrate victory downtown

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The challenges facing our San Diego taxi drivers are formidable and our concerns get lost in a massive industry. Our policy makers don't know the drivers' role in the community. This is why UTWSD advocates for all drivers and educates our city and state officials.

In the current crisis, permit holders, taxi companies, MTSTA, and police officers make it hard for drivers to operate in the city with professionalism, dignity,

pushed to support the "staff recommendation" of John Scott to add two new driver seats without otherwise disrupting the composition of the board. None of these proposals came close to Councilmember Marti Emerald's principle of *equal representation*. After more than one year of pushing for fair representation, UTWSD supported Emerald's proposal, offered well reasoned and sound research and arguments on behalf of all drivers, and won a **5 driver-5 owner structure** by an 8-2 vote. The hundreds of drivers who represented UTWSD at dozens of committee and board meetings downtown for the past year and a half deserve the highest credit for this victory!

An election for two driver seats is planned for January 2012. All five driver seats will then be voted on in the regular election in 2013.

We have several priorities leading into the election:

- Ensuring the highest possible driver turnout for the January elections
- Protecting drivers who stand up from retaliation, harassment, and firing
- Educating drivers and potential driver representatives on the needs of drivers
- Educating elected officials on the needs of the drivers
- Monitoring the criteria for eligibility to ensure fair opportunity for those who want to represent drivers and for those who want to vote

Let us build upon this significant victory. We can only go forward together, so please continue supporting UTWSD and reaching out to all drivers.



President's Message
Continued from page 1

and respect. They drown our voices into the drain. This is an enormous burden! But, the permit to operate in the city belongs to the city. And we are always reminding the city that the use of it has to be mandated by the city, not a small number of influential permit holders. That's why we have to attend all MTS meetings and express our concerns.

We will continue to identify our challenges and strategize on how we can meet the needs of you, the member, and all drivers! We will have meetings, trainings, and work-site visits. We will be asking for you to be involved. Respect is for all, not just a chosen few. We will spread our resources to bring justice.

UTWSD could not have been realized if the Employee Rights Center and individual educators had not contributed their time to help us move forward. The next few months, we will be publishing a series of reports that provide greater clarity about and suggestions for improving our drivers and the state-local government relationship. Our drivers' survey will be real-time resources about the perceptions and policy changing our taxi industry.

We hope you will visit our office or call often to stay up to date with our work at UTWSD. Remember "If we fail to participate, we plan to fail." We welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions.

We are not alone. We have rights!

-Mikail Hussein, President

Sacramento Immigrant Day 2011

On May 24th, UTWSD President Mikail Hussein and Abdirashid Ali joined a delegation of nearly 40 people from San Diego's Immigrant Rights Consortium for the statewide policy forum at the state capitol. With the theme "One California: Many Peoples, One Future," Immigrant Day showcased more than 10 state Assembly and Senate Bills that benefit Immigrant workers and families in areas of education, health and human services, public safety,

and workers rights. Among the key bills are AB130/131 the California Dream Act, and AB 889 the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. Mr. Hussein and Mr. Ali lobbied on behalf of the San Diego taxi drivers and our challenges, working conditions, and need to organize. UTWSD will continue to gather in unity and join others in our shared struggles for worker and community empowerment for the benefit of everyone in the Golden State.

AB 130/131 – CA Dream Act
•25,000 high school grads can't go to college or work legally
•Equal opportunity for education and employment
•Investment in CA's educational and economic future.

AB 889 – Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights
•Long hours, non-livable wages, no workplace standards can lead to sickness or injury caused by exhaustion.
•Basic rights and regulations for health and safety for positive impact on employers and workers.



UTWSD with San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium Delegation, in Sacramento, CA for Immigrant Day 2011

Save \$\$\$ With Credit Card Wireless

Your own credit card device can save you \$800 every year.

As you all are aware taxi drivers are self-employed or independent contractors. For your protection you should use your own wireless terminal machine. It is the ideal solution for your business, the most effective way to accommodate all of your mobile credit card and debit transaction needs. UTWSD will provide members with this high-tech equipment free of charge!

UTWSD's investigation showed that most credit card processors we use charge 6.25%, 7%, 8%, or as much as 10%! Why should you have to pay such a high amount and wait weeks to get your money from credit customers? We recommend you use a wireless terminal and cut your effective rate to 4% or less. This can put more than \$800 back in your pocket every year. (Actual savings depends on

amount of credit card business you do, and the current higher rate you pay).

Furthermore you receive funds within 48 hours on all sales. The Nurit 8020's wireless functionality and dependability cannot be matched by any other wireless terminal.

For more information please contact the UTWSD office.

UTWSD Speaks at Police Meeting

The City Heights Division of the San Diego Police Department held a community meeting on May 19, 2011 ostensibly to respond to concerns publicly voiced by East African community members, leaders, and elders. The concerns included racial profiling, entering and searching homes without a warrant, asking about clan and political affiliations, arbitrarily accusing community members of chewing *gat*, and more. Six high-ranking officers, including Assistant Chief of Police Boyd Long attended and ran the meeting, presenting the basics of community policing policy rather than addressing the community's grievances.

UTWSD President Mikail Hussein was among the community members and representatives who spoke following the

presentation, presenting the plight of the taxi drivers and the ways officers can make things worse. Mr. Hussein's main points included:

- Health and stress conditions for drivers
- Drivers deserve appreciation and recognition for service to communities
- SDPD is non-responsive to complaints and belittling to drivers
- Drivers are abused and treated unfairly by MTS regulators (officers)
- MTS coaches police
- Curb pick up/drop tickets
- UTWSD reviewing more than 100 "excessive" tickets

UTWSD urged SDPD to treat drivers and community members fairly and with equity and respect. Better communication and relations with police officials are needed.



Better communication and relations with police officers are needed.

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



Monisola Kehinde, ESQ

United Taxi Workers of San Diego is proud to honor Monisola Kehinde, Esq. for her extensive work on behalf of UTWSD.

"Moni" (as she is commonly called) is a graduate of the University of San Diego School of Law and holds a Master of Science degree in Public Affairs from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where she also earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and International Management.

During her third year of law school, Moni worked as an intern at the Employee Rights Center (ERC) and was assigned to UTWSD to assist with the various legal issues facing the new organization. Moni has continued her work with UTWSD as a Post Bar Fellow and as a Volunteer Attorney upon passing the California Bar.

Moni's focus has been to understand the complex legal framework of our taxicab industry, to ensure that workers' rights are protected within that framework, and to advocate on behalf of drivers in areas that require policy and regulatory reform.

Her responsibilities have included reviewing and

analyzing the lease agreements to better understand the leases, reviewing the MTS Ordinance 11 and its accompanying Penalty Guidelines to ensure compliance by drivers and enforcement officers, conducting workshops to educate drivers about their rights and responsibilities under their contracts and the applicable regulations, filing driver complaints and handling their grievances, and advocating on behalf of UTWSD at meetings with city officials, the MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee, and the MTS Board of Directors, among various other roles.

Moni's efforts were instrumental in the recent policy reform by the Sheriff's Department to limit the authority of law enforcement officials to confiscate taxi drivers' Sheriff's Licenses and to ensure due process. As a result of her efforts, the new Confiscation Policy ensures our workers' constitutional rights are not being infringed upon.

United Taxi Workers of San Diego is happy to have Moni as a member of our team and we salute her for her advocacy efforts and her dedication to protecting workers rights in the San Diego taxicab industry.

Upcoming Events

UTWSD

7364 El Cajon Blvd. Ste 108
San Diego, CA 92115

**Jul 4 – Professional
Advisory Board Meeting.**
11:00a.

**Jul 11 – Advisory Board
Meeting.** 4:00p.

**Jul 18 – Advisory Board
Meeting.** 11:00a.

**July 27 – TAC Victory
Celebration and
Information Session.**
4:30-6:30p. East African
Cultural Center, 4601
Fairmount Ave.

UTWSD

7364 El Cajon Blvd. Ste 108
San Diego, CA 92115

**Aug 30 – Information
Session.** 4:00p.

**Sep 13 – Information
Session.** 3:00p.

**Sep 28 – Information
Session.** 3:00p.

Taxicab Advisory Committee

1255 Imperial Ave,
10th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Meeting Dates for 2011:

- Thursday, July 7, (Special Meeting on TAC Composition)
- Friday, September 23, 9am
- Friday, December 16, 9am

Metropolitan Transit System

1255 Imperial Ave,
Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Board Meeting Dates for 2011

- Thursday, July 14, 9am
- Thursday, August 18, 9am
- Thursday, September 15, 9am
- Thursday, October 13, 9am
- Thursday, October 27, 9am
- Thursday, November 10, 9am
- Thursday, December 8, 9am



Mission:

The mission of UTWSD is to unify taxicab workers, to improve working conditions through direct advocacy and empowerment, to increase education and civic participation by taxi drivers and their families, and to improve professional transportation services for San Diego communities and visitors.

Vision:

We envision a driver-led taxi industry that provides exceptional, efficient, and safe service for residents and visitors, and that meets the comprehensive and diverse needs of taxi drivers and their families. We envision a professional working environment free from humiliation, intimidation, discrimination, and exploitation. We envision UTWSD providing strong and representative leadership in this healthy, productive, and inclusive taxi industry.

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