

November 15th Election

Candidates seek to represent UTWSD and all drivers

this issue

November 15th Election P.1

The first ever Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) drivers' representative election will be held from Tuesday, November 15th through Thursday, November 17th, 9a to 4p at the downtown MTS building at 1501 National Ave. This historic event represents a major step forward in bringing the drivers' voice into the industry.

Drivers who show up to vote will be asked to show their Sheriff I.D. to register and verify eligibility. Then, following the instructions carefully, drivers can vote for two candidates, anonymously on the secret ballot. A voting subcommittee and legal observers will ensure a fair and accurate vote count, protecting democratic

election rules and regulations. The current TAC members and owners have blocked driver participation at every step of the way since 2009, so a full voter turnout from the 2,000 drivers is the only way to shift the inequality.

A Better San Diego Economic Summit P.2

Gas Alerts P.2

Vote for Change! P.3

Advocate Spotlight P.3

Upcoming Events P.4



Hussein Nuur

Berhanu Lemma

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Of all the taxi industry, the most important people are the drivers, whose day to day work is to serve our community, the elderly, tourists, and convention goers; we do a good job and we don't have a voice or respect in the industry. There's a history of intimidation and retaliation at so many levels. But I don't want to talk about problems, rather I would like to talk about solutions. "The solution for the problem is in our hand." Think about

Hussein Nuur is from Africa, and has been driving a taxi more than fifteen years. As a long-time cabdrivers' advocate, Hussein has chosen to be fully aware of different people in society and social problems they face, while tackling issues that many people simply disregard. Hussein looks at every individual as a human being who has rights like any other regardless of their religion, ethnicity, age, sex, race and background, and his principal is to uphold human dignity and treat all with respect by being nonjudgmental. Knowing he will face many challenges, Hussein wants to be the voice and the hope for those who are unable to fight for themselves.

Berhanu "Ben" Lemma is from Ethiopia. After completing high school, he graduated in electricity at Tegbar- Ed (Technical Institute of Addis Ababa). In 1977 Ben came to the US and started a new life. While

working full time, he attended Mesa, City and Miramar Collages, majoring in business, and in 1999 was hired by MTS where he worked for seven years. Ben started driving a taxi in 2007 and came to know the industry. This experience opened a door allowing him to run Silver Cab Inc. for two years as president and General Manager.

ELECTION TIMELINE

- Tuesday, October 25, 2011: **Candidates validated.**
- Friday, November 4, 2011: **Candidates Announced.**
- Tuesday-Thursday, November 15-17, 2011: **Elections at 1501 National Ave.**
- Friday-Tuesday, November 18-29, 2011: **Votes Counted.**
- Wednesday, December 14, 2011: **Election winners notified.**



that! (Participate, participate, and participate!!!!).

As we figure out how to meet the needs of you, the drivers, we need your 100% involvement to do so.

Let's focus on how can we win the TAC election and have a voice in the industry. So far there are nine candidates, four of whom represent the drivers voice and have been pre-selected by drivers to run as candidates.

As for the other five candidates, we don't know their aims and objectives.



UTWSD has endorsed two of the drivers' candidates and entrusts in them the demanding task of authentic driver advocacy. We need your help and support to ensure that advocacy happens.

We're gaining a lot of support from city and state levels. Yes we won five seats. Yes, drivers came together and elected representatives. So from that let's build upon these significant victories and vote. Let's ensure the highest possible drivers turn out for November 15-17.

We hope you will visit our office or call often to stay updated 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!

-Mikaiil Hussein, President

A Better San Diego Economic Summit

In an exciting and extremely successful event, the San Diego County Labor Council partnered with local organizations, including the United Taxi Workers of San Diego, to sponsor an Economic Summit. More than three hundred community and labor activists answered the open invitation and met on Saturday, August 27th, for the all-day economic summit focusing on jobs, quality of life, prosperity, equality and fairness, with the hopes of changing the narrative in San Diego.

Participants in the crowded auditorium were welcomed by Lorena Gonzalez, Labor Alliances Secretary-Treasurer and CEO, and energized by several speakers. 14 break-out workshops were held in classrooms throughout Horace Mann Middle School, including one led by United Taxi Workers dealing with establishing a voice for taxi drivers who, because of their independent contractor status, are traditionally not allowed to organize.

The United Taxi Workers Breakout Session started with an introduction by UTWSD organizer Sarah Saez, followed by testimony by President and CEO Mikaiil Hussein. The panel added Alor Calderon, Program Director at the Employee Rights Center (ERC) for a policy discussion that focused on the drivers' strike in 2009 and the ERC joining the campaign in 2010. The panel presented the issue of equal representation on the Taxicab Advisory Committee with the support of City Council Members Marti Emerald, Tony Young and others. An active discussion during the Question and Answer period showed audience interest and several audience members offered valuable advice about organizing. Finally Sarah and Emily Howe, UTWSD's legal staff, gave a call to action for all those in attendance to attend MTS and TAC meetings or to volunteer to support UTWSD campaigns.

Keynote speaker Richie Ross spoke about his experience

working with famous farm worker Cesar Chavez, and the profound lessons he learned. Ross emphasized that Chavez believed he didn't build a movement, but he built a community. Organizing is about respecting the power of each individual and the ways each person can make a contribution. This, according to Ross, helps create an experience around participation, building a collective with opportunities for all. Inclusive language is essential in this, as captured in the message, "Justice is subjective, but Equality is objective." This important message can help UTW members keep focused on the equality work at hand while building the broadest possible membership and support base.

With much gratitude to the San Diego Labor Council, UTW was honored to not only present at this year's economic summit, but also to have been among many like-minded San Diegans for empowering change.

Gas Alerts Save hundreds of dollars annually!

One of the many valuable benefits of becoming United Taxi Workers members is by getting a 'jump on the pump'. United Taxi worker members have been given the opportunity to save hundreds of dollars a year on fuel costs, with the text messaging program, UTWSD Gas Alerts.

The UTWSD Gas Alert program is easy. Once you've signed up a text message is

sent to your phone daily with information from various San Diego neighborhoods from City Heights to Chula Vista, Hillcrest, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, Logan Heights, Mira Mesa, North Park and Point Loma. Members are also encouraged to let us know what other neighborhoods would be helpful in ensuring that drivers can find the cheapest gas stations to fill up.

UTWSD Gas Alerts take the guesswork out of your fill-up by locating the cheapest gas in your vicinity and texting them directly to your phone. Gas alerts have been shown to save the average consumer between \$100 and \$400 in fuel costs annually.

Join United Taxi Workers and sign up for UTWSD Gas Alerts today. For more information please contact the UTWSD office.

Vote for Change!

UTWSD Candidate Platform

UTWSD candidates advocate for all drivers:

- 1) *DRIVERS FIRST* – All drivers, regardless of race, ethnic, gender, age, religion, or tribe experience the same conditions. Act as a driver first, and act for drivers first.
- 2) *UNDERSTAND THE INDUSTRY* – Research and knowledge as foundation. The taxi industry rules and regulations, the procedures of government boards and committees, the web of corruption, and the individual, family and community needs of drivers are the basic things we must understand. Effective strategies for empowerment and social change must have clear understanding at the root.
- 3) *AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION* – A unified voice that includes all drivers is the only one that will be heard. Candidates, along with UTWSD staff, board, members, and supporters will continually outreach into the diverse taxi drivers in San Diego.

Our candidates will fight for:

- Installing mandatory cameras in all taxis
- Lower lease rates
- Ending unnecessary terminations
- When medallions become available from the city, they go to drivers
- More taxi stands
- Demanding receipts for your lease payments
- Safer and more reliable cars for drivers
- Ending TCP and pedicabs illegally taking away our business
- Ending over-ticketing by MTS and SDPD



A huge voter turnout is necessary to protect drivers' voice.

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



Jesse Mills, Ph.D.

United Taxi Workers of San Diego (UTWSD) proudly honors Jesse Mills, Ph. D. for his dedicated and diligent efforts on behalf of UTWSD.

Jesse has been fighting for drivers' rights since the first day of our struggle in 2009. Ever since helping to establish UTWSD, he has been an essential strategist and advisor to our efforts. As taxi drivers have feared retaliation for speaking against unfair policies, Jesse has led lobbying efforts of political and taxi regulatory board representatives by speaking at the San Diego Taxi Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) meetings. His input and energy have been integral in achieving the driver victory on July 14th.

Jesse is one of the first community activists who believed in our efforts for taxi industry reform in San Diego. He has contributed lead articles to the UTWSD Meter, edited countless outreach materials, and serves as lead trainer for the UTWSD Meter's editorial board. Through these significant efforts, he has become a close member of the UTWSD family, well known to us as "our brother."

Highly esteemed as an avid scholar, artist, and activist in the San Diego community, Jesse serves as a consultant for Somali Family Service, anti-racism consultant for the California Endowment, and original composer, musical director, and performer (guitar/voice) in the acclaimed "Hip Hop Saved My Life."

He is a professor at the University of San Diego (USD), who has developed an African American studies curriculum, serves as a resource for campus-wide diversity efforts, and advisor for BSU. He earned his Ph.D. degree and Master of Arts in Ethnic studies at the University of California, San Diego, a Master of Arts degree in Afro-American studies from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Sonoma State University.

Jesse links African American and Ethnic Studies with integral community engagement and has analyzed nonprofit structures of refugee, cultural politics, and youth organizing. UTWSD is privileged to have Jesse as an active member of our team. We are appreciative of his advocacy efforts and his dedication to protecting workers' rights in the San Diego taxicab industry.

Upcoming Events

UTWSD

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

Nov 2– TAC Election

Meeting. 3:00-5:00p.
4061 Fairmount Ave.

Nov 14 – Pre-Election Info

Session. 3:00-5:00p.
UTWSD office

Nov 17 – Election

Celebration. 5:00-7:00p.
UTWSD office

Nov 24/25 – Office Closed

Dec 21 – Information

Session. 3:00p. *UTWSD office*



Taxicab Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Dates for 2011:

- Friday, December 16, 9am

ELECTION

Tuesday-Thursday,
November 15-17, 9:00a-4:00p
1501 National Ave.

Metropolitan Transit System

1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Board Meeting Dates for 2011

- 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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