



NEWS FROM UNITED TAXI WORKERS OF SAN DIEGO, OPEIU LOCAL 1218

UTWSD NEWS

December 2015 | Volume 4, Issue 2

www.utwsd.org



UTWSD Drivers celebrate after the cap was lifted on Nov. 10th, 2014 at Golden Hall.

Our Lift the Cap Campaign One Year Later

Happy One Year Anniversary Drivers!! One year ago we made history by organizing, standing together and lifting the cap on taxi permits!

We want to congratulate all the drivers who have 4,000 series medallions and for those of you who are in the process of getting your permit! Going out to taxi stands and in the neighborhood and seeing the new taxis our members have is a constant reminder of what we are capable of when we fight together.

UTWSD captured just some of the stories of drivers who have gone from leasing their cabs to

becoming owner-operators and they are ones of freedom and inspiration.

This fight was not easy and even now the process, although exciting, has also been very slow and for some intimidating. That's why we need drivers to continue to stand together! We will continue to work toward a more streamlined process for drivers so that permits are released in a timely manner.

Next up is our fight to regulate rideshares. It's impossible to compete when there are three different rules. This is our challenge and also opportunity we look forward to fighting for together!

Strike Anniversary: Celebrating Six Years of UTWSD Success

Almost five years after drivers met at Colina Park to go on strike for a better taxi industry on December 18th, 2009, and with little resources but limitless determination, UTWSD members have been able to make significant impacts in the taxi industry and on the lives of drivers and our community.

After decades of abuse, drivers continue to be empowered to bravely stand up to fight for a better life and taxi industry.

Continue reading on page 7



United Dispatch is Born!

At the request of our members we have started our own nonprofit dispatch! Don't pay for overpriced dispatch companies or dispatch companies that don't give you calls! Join United Dispatch, where your voice matters and we work together to deliver outstanding service and financial freedom for our drivers.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Continue reading on page 8

Continue reading on page 7



Permit Court Ruling Upheld. Judge Denies Claim to Permit Monopoly



Advocate Spotlight: UTWSD's Abebe Antallo Making Change



Drivers Speak: How Has Lifting The Cap Changed Your Life?



UTWSD Affiliates With OPEIU International! NEW Member Benefits Available.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



As another year comes to an end, all of us at United Taxi Workers of San Diego would like to extend our best wishes to you for a very happy holiday season. We had another great year! Some of the major accomplishments from 2015 are:

UTWSD Successful 2015 Goals!

- Building an innovative and affordable dispatch
- New member benefits and growth of membership
- Permit application assistance to support our membership
- Returned the permits to our hard working taxi drivers
- Policy research and industry grievance representation

UTWSD 2016 Goals:

- To continue what we've built so far to make 100% of our driver's small business owners
- Expanding our work to reach all drivers and our supporters to ensure that a high-level of professional services are available to drivers and their families
- Continue to help inform drivers and their families about their rights on the job through educating drivers and the community about the importance of civic engagement and good, living wage jobs!
- Expand our research of legislation and regulation pertaining to local and national taxi cab industries!
- To compete and regulate rideshare like Uber

For the past six years hard work has put us on the map, and we are very proud of all our accomplishments and achievements. I want to thank our hard working team, Board of Directors, friends, allies, brothers and sisters; lastly I want to give a personal thank you to all hard working San Diego taxi drivers, and our new affiliate OPEIU. Whout all of you we could not have done this.

We invite you to join us on our journey to ensure that all taxi drivers are self-sufficient and ready to serve San Diego with dignity and respect.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year!

Remember: We are not alone. We have rights!

In Solidarity,

-Mikaiil Hussein
Executive Director/President, UTWSD

ABOUT UTWSD

United Taxi Workers of San Diego

4265 Fairmount Ave. Suite 180

San Diego, CA 92105

Phone: (619)255-7355 Fax: (619)255-5555

www.utwdsd.org

WHO WE ARE

UTWSD is a multi-ethnic member organization formed in January 2010 immediately following the taxi drivers' strike of December 2009. Since then UTWSD has lead the charge in effectuating real change for taxi drivers here in San Diego.

WHAT WE DO

Advocate - Provide free council concerning the taxi industry and work alongside drivers to advocate for change at the local, state and national level.

Educate - We improve the taxi industry through research and continued advanced training to both our drivers and the general public.

Organize - We believe when we stand together anything is possible. That's why we organize to build our collective power out at taxistands, in the community and down at City Hall.

Empower - UTWSD drivers became civically engaged in order to address various issues they face in the taxi industry. We've done this by studying City government, attending meetings and registering hundreds of community members to vote. Government belongs to us and a true democracy can only exist with the participation of the people.

UTWSD Member Meetings

4265 Fairmount Ave. Ste 180

San Diego, CA 92105

Monday Feb 29, 2016 3pm

Monday April 25, 2016 3pm

Monday June 27, 2016 3pm

MTS Meeting:

1255 Imperial Ave. 10th Floor

Third Thursday's of the month at

9:00a.m.



United Taxi Workers OPEIU Local 1218 Executive Board

President

Dr. Jesse Mills

Secretary-Treasurer

Sarah Saez

Board Members

Peter Zschiechie

Sandy Naranjo

Alor Calderon

Our Team

Mikaiil Hussein,
President

Sarah Saez,
Program Director

Abebe Antallo,
Lead Organizer

Emily Howe,
Legal Staff

Abdi Abdul,
Dispatch Manager

UTWSD Info Sessions

4265 Fairmount Ave #180

Monday-Thursday

10am to 3:30pm.

Please come in between the above hours or call for an appointment (619)255-7355.

Taxi Advisory Committee

1255 Imperial Ave. 10th Floor

Meets quarterly

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT: ABEBE ANTALLO



UTWSD Celebrates the Bravery and Dedication of Abebe Antallo

Abebe has been a vital voice in the taxi driver struggle since he joined UTWSD in 2011. Abebe, born in Ethiopian and educated in Russia, came to the United States in 1989 for a better life.

Abebe started organizing with UTWSD in 2011 and was shortly retaliated against after speaking out at the Airport against unfair front of the line privileges and fees for drivers whose permit holders had not purchased hybrid vehicles. Because lease drivers often have no control over what vehicles they drive, this inequitable incentive led him to organize his fellow drivers, ultimately winning and halting the front of the line and the extra fees. This was only the beginning of Abebe's multi-year fight not just for drivers but so much more. Abebe has also been on the front lines of advocating at City Council, MTS, the Taxi Advisory Committee and at the statewide level in Sacramento.

Abebe has time and time again shown his commitment to civic engagement by registering hundreds of people in the

community to vote, helping to pass ballot measures and other legislation into law and ensuring that progressive representatives are elected to represent us.

Abebe is a skilled organizer whether it's hitting the streets out at taxi stands to talk to drivers or at rallies and community meetings, Abebe has been a constant voice for change, motivating others to fight collectively.

Abebe's voice has helped amplify struggles of not only taxi drivers but other marginalized people including immigrants and the elderly and we are so lucky to have him beside us, helping to make San Diego, our state and country a better place.

After helping driver fight to lift the cap on permits, Abebe in now in the process of becoming an owner-operator himself but will continue to stay on as an organizer until we achieve true equity in the taxi industry. Thank you for your service Brother Abebe! We could not have done any of the without you!

POLICY VICTORY: Judge Denies SDTA's Claim To Monopoly.

Congratulations!! Our Lift the Cap campaign has WON! On Wednesday, November 18, 2015, the San Diego Superior Court ruled in favor of the City of San Diego's near unanimous decision to lift the cap on permits.

Through indomitable courage, we faced the Goliath of issues stemming from the archaic permitting system in the taxi industry and WON!!! Our lead organizers faced abuse and blacklisting for their stalwart efforts for the past six years. Together, with you as our members and allies, we have created enormous opportunity for our San Diego taxi drivers to own their businesses.

Judge Gregory Pollack denied the petitioner's request for a writ of mandate and declaratory judgment. In this ruling, the court recognized that the petitioners' claims

arguing concern for environmental quality were unsubstantiated. Previously, the petitioners withdrew its alleged "takings" claims for its unlikely merits based on case law in California.

"Back in 2009, when we organized against numerous incidents of hostility and intimidation in the industry, this was our dream," stated President Mikaiil Hussein. "Everyone said we could not do it but UTWSD built allies and political strength to take on a decades old system."

"Still, there's work to be done. We must ensure that there is not retaliation against those with the new status as permit holders. We, as UTWSD, seek fairness, integrity, and safety in our industry. Together, united, we stand strong."

How Lifting the Cap on Permits Is Changing Lives

Every time we see a 4,000 series taxicab either at taxistands or the drivers who have proudly come to the office to show us their new small business, it makes us feel grateful for all the hard work of UTWSD and our allies for making it possible. We have changed over 120 drivers lives and are planning to help over 1,000 more in the near future. These are the stories of just some of the drivers whose lives are forever changed after going from a lease driver to an owner-operator.



"I've been a driver for 9 years. I worked many hours, seven days a week. I had no time with my family. It was like 21st century slavery. Everything has changed now. There is a lot less stress. I get so much more time with my family and time to go to church. Now when I pay for my car in the end it will be mine. I will always be grateful to UTWSD, you have changed my life and so many lives forever. This is just beginning we have to work together and support each other. Happy Holidays! – Teshale, Teshale Cab



"I want to thank UTWSD and the city of San Diego, for giving me this opportunity to have my own taxi cab. It makes a huge difference in my life. Now I'm a small business owner myself, and I'll take it very serious to provide decent service to San Diegan's. Again I want to thank UTWSD for standing up for what's right, and for making thousands of people small business owners. The fight is not over, we have to regulate Uber because they are taking our business."
- Yashpal B. Singh, Vatinet Cab



"Since I first started driving taxi, I leased it from people. All the money I used to lease these cabs, I could've used to buy a house for my family. Now that I got this cab with the help of UTWSD and Marti Emerald. I'm very happy and content. I don't have the stress I used to have when I was leasing cabs. Mainly because my payment is much lower and income is much higher. Now I could provide for my family easily. Thank you UTWSD for giving myself and everyone a voice and say in their workplace."

-Gebeyehu Bogale, Pluto Cab



Owing and operating your car gives you a peace of mind but when you lease the cab you have a lot of pressure and stress although you make some money everything goes to the permit holder, so the end of the week you don't have enough money for your family. But now whatever you make is yours, if you wait 2/3 hours for a fair you are happy and if customer comes to you and asks you to take a short fair you are not stress and worried.

would like to thank the Union UTWSD and Marty Emerald (she is very nice person) also drivers who come out and stand with UTWSD. – Kidane Hailu, Diamond Cab



"Thank you UTWSD for giving me and my family this opportunity. I'll always grateful."

- Mr. Aboye, U.S. Miracle Cab



"Thank you UTWSD and Marty Emerald for opening this door of opportunity which is huge step for me and my family to provide. We need to stay united to regulate rideshares, they're taking our traditional taxi industry." - Mumin, Budul Cab



"There's big morale after the cap was lifted. I'm very happy! Thank you taxi union for helping me get this medallion!" - Mohamed Woldegiorgis, MHH CAB



"I'm very content because the lease I used to pay was very high. Now I only pay insurance and radio service. Thank you to the union for working on this effort for the last five years. And all the drivers who support the union." - Ahmed Shire, Aisha Cab



"Having my own medallion means independence. It means freedom. Everything I make I get to put back in my pocket. Thank you for everything you've done." - Kidane Weldemichael, Loop Cab



"Everything is good now. Everything is open and money is back in your pocket. Thank you Sarah and UTWSD." - Faras Cab



"I don't have a lease payment. Everything I work for is going to my pocket. I have enough time for my family. Thank you for UTWSD for bringing this opportunity and helping me get this permit. Next we need to fight to regulate Uber. They are not regulated. Taxi is over regulated." - Eyob Dubrie, Cheerful Cab

Congratulations Again All New Owner-Operators! When We Fight Together Anything Is Possible!

In Solidarity, UTWSD



All New Owner-Operators Lined Up At Hyatt Hotel!



UTWSD Affiliates With OPEIU International

The United Taxi Workers of San Diego (UTWSD) and Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU), AFL-CIO, jointly announced an affiliation between UTWSD and OPEIU.

The executive boards of both organizations approved an affiliation agreement that will add to the more than 2,500 taxi drivers in Las Vegas, Nevada, that are represented by OPEIU, an organization of more than 105,000 members.

UTWSD and OPEIU are in the process of developing plans to increase the strength of taxi drivers in San Diego to become a model for taxi drivers throughout the United States.



UTWSD's Abdi Abdul and Mikail Hussein with OPEIU Local 30 President Walter Allen and OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin taking a tour of Union Dispatch in Colorado with General Manager, Mohamed Ward.

"This affiliation strengthens OPEIU's representation of taxi drivers, a group of workers who usually don't have the advantages of union membership and who traditionally work for substandard wages and benefits," said OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin. "Now the drivers in San Diego will have the strength of OPEIU and the 12 million members of the AFL-CIO behind them."

UTWSD President Mikail Hussein said, "We are very excited about our affiliation with OPEIU and the AFL-CIO and we look forward to working together to accomplish great things for our members."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ UNION BENEFITS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SERVICES

- Representation before MTS or Airport (619)255-7355 Call our office and schedule an app.
- Auto Buying Service
- AT&T Wireless Discounts (Save up to 10% on cell phone service)
- Dell Computers Discounts
- Goodyear Tire & Service Discounts (Up to 10%)
- Health Savings, Reduce out-of-pocket health care expenses
- Legal Service, Free & discounted legal assistance and traffic tickets
- Towing/Service Calls, Up to two towing/service calls per year valued at up to \$100 each
- Discount Accident Chiropractor and Attorney

INSURANCE

- Auto Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Accident Insurance
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit \$2,500
- \$5,000 Death Benefit
- \$5,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit
- \$300 Disability Benefit

PUBLICATIONS

- UTWSD Newsletter, OPEIU White Collar Newsletter, San Diego Labor Council Labor Leader

MONEY AND CREDIT

- OPEIU Credit Card
- Credit Counseling
- Credit Score, Union member discount 15% on all my FICO credit score & online credit reporting products. Free consumer credit education.
- Union Made Checks, Union-printed feature your union's logo- customization available
- Secure Retirement Solutions
- Seniority Recognition Payments based on membership.
10years/\$250 | 15years/\$500 | 20 years / \$750

EDUCATION

- Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship (\$1,325 part-time to up to \$6,500 for full-time)
- John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship (Up to \$3,250)
- Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Scholarship
- Summer Camp" program age 13 - 16.

TRAVEL/ENTERTAINMENT Discounts at:

- San Diego Zoo, Disney, Six Flags, Sea World
- Car Rentals: Avis, Budget, Hertz
- Discounts through Union Plus Travel Center: Vacation Tours, Union Hotel Discounts, RV Rental, Cruise Savings, Flights

STRIKE ANNIVERSARY



Continued from page 1

The anniversary of the 2009 strike will be a constant reminder of the collective power of drivers. We, the public, own the taxi industry and just like we have the power to make it run, we also have the power to take direct action while on the job or while on strike to change the industry for the better.

It is because of the work of UTWSD and our members that the City of San Diego recognized December 18th as United Taxi Workers Day. We look forward to celebrating with you!

UNITED DISPATCH

Continued from page 1

Our United Dispatch is here to help you in every way possible and we are proud to introduce our one-stop-shop dispatch! program to help you realize your dream of becoming an owner-operator

One-Stop-Shop

We are happy to announce the latest updates to our One-Stop-Shop for prospective owner operators! Here are just some of the services we offer to our members for free!

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE - We'll help you every step of the way with your questions and concerns! Translators are also available who speak your language!

LOANS - We work with trusted community loan providers to help you get a loan for what you need to start your business from your car to your permit.

TAXI EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATION - Meter, Credit Card Machine, Taxi light and more! We have referrals for everything you need for your taxi!



Proclamation signed by the City Council and Mayor proclaiming December 18th United Taxi Workers Day in San Diego.



DISCOUNTED AND FREE PAINT JOBS - UTWSD has worked with a detail shop that is offering discounted paint jobs and have worked to secure free paint jobs for drivers who buy from selected Toyota dealers.

CAR INSURANCE - Affordable insurance for single or multiple drivers. Sign up in our office.

BUSINESS TRAINING - UTWSD offers business training's that can help you take your business to the next level! Earn a certificate through our interactive customer service training and more!

Get in touch with us TODAY and JOIN United Dispatch Stop by 4265 Fairmount Ave. Suite 180 or Call us at (619)255-7355

OUR MOVEMENT

"The victory by UTWSD comes five years after drivers, improperly classified as independent contractors and without NLRB recognition, came together and organized a strike to protest their wages, benefits and working conditions. Despite constant harassment, retaliation and intimidation by permit holders and dispatch companies over the last five years, and despite obstruction by public agencies, these workers stuck together, fought back against injustice, and prevailed. It reminds and teaches all of us that a union is not formed by formal government recognition, it is formed by workers standing together to fight for justice and a brighter future for their families. The UTWSD path, although creative and relevant to modern times, is the path that built not only the labor movement, but every movement in the history of our country that has pushed us closer to our American ideals."

- Richard Barrera, Secretary Treasurer San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Scenes from the Lift the Cap Campaign



THANK YOU FOR FIGHTING! In Solidarity, UTWSD