

Taxicab Driver Recognition Event Proposal

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To:	Licensing and Standards Committee
From:	Jim Hart, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards
Wards:	All
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise the Licensing and Standards Committee of the Taxicab Driver Recognition Day to be held in June 2009, and annually thereafter.

The taxicab industry and other stakeholders will be invited to participate on the planning committee to garner support from the industry for the event.

An Awards Sub-Committee will be formed to choose the award recipients from the candidates that are recommended by the City of Toronto and the industry.

The segments of the industry that are to be recognized will include:

- Standard Driver of the Year
- Ambassador Driver of the Year
- Accessible Driver of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget. Every attempt will be made to secure sponsorship and donations from strategic partnerships and industry stakeholders to offset the incidental costs associated with holding this event.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Prior to amalgamation, the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto recognized taxicab drivers in an annual event held in conjunction with the TOP (Taxis On Patrol) program run by the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department. Drivers were recognized and honoured for their service to the community above and beyond the call of duty.

In 2000, as part of the Millennium Project, the City of Toronto's Municipal Licensing and Standards Division held a Taxicab Appreciation Event. The Taxicab Appreciation Event included a "Taxi Rodeo" which was held at Ontario Place and granted taxicab drivers and their families free admission to the park.

Further to this throughout the years, there have been various restaurants in the downtown core providing free bag lunches and other refreshments to Toronto's licensed taxicab drivers in appreciation of their service to the City.

COMMENTS

Taxicab Driver Recognition Programs in Other North American Jurisdictions

Research has shown that Taxicab Driver Appreciation and Recognition events are held throughout North America.

Washington, DC

- Various hotels offer driver's free coffee during morning rush hour

Syracuse, NY

- Free lunch and refreshments are provided at the Jefferson Clinton Hotel

St. Louis, MO

- Coffee and donuts provided at the Convention Centre (driver's names are entered into a draw for a free tank of gas)

San Francisco, CA

- Coffee and donuts at the Westin St. Francis Hotel (driver's names are entered into a draw for a free nights stay)

Atlanta, GA

- Week long appreciation event involves donations from local businesses such as hotel stays, restaurant vouchers, tickets to the aquarium, etc.

Windsor, ON

- Taxicab Industry Excellence Awards are presented annually for Community Service, Customer Service and Excellent Vehicle
- A committee comprised of Brokers and Enforcement Staff select the nominees

Chicago, IL

- Recognizes two drivers a year who have provided outstanding services to passengers with disabilities
- Each driver is provided a medallion, enrolment in a college business course and up to a \$15,000 grant to convert a van into an accessible vehicle

New York, NY

- Celebrated annually for the past seven years
- Held on top of the Rockefeller Center with catering and door prizes
- Individual drivers are rewarded for excellent customer service, heroic deeds and acts of compassion

In order to augment their Taxi Driver Recognition Days, New York City has implemented an “Operation Secret Rider” program and the Massachusetts Convention Centre Authority provides taxicab driver evaluation forms to convention attendees in their convention package.

Planning

The taxicab industry and other stakeholders will be invited to participate on the planning committee to garner support from the industry for the event. Stakeholder members to be included on the planning committee are as follows:

1. The Chair of the Licensing and Standards Committee, or designate.
2. One representative from the Toronto Police Service
3. One representative from Toronto Transit Commission Wheel Trans program
4. Two taxicab brokerage representatives
5. One Independent Taxicab Owner/Operator Association member
6. One representative from Taxi News

The diverse membership of the committee will assist in providing the client base (Licensed Taxicab Drivers) and the residents of the City of Toronto with a well planned and marketed event.

Awards Sub-Committee

An Awards Sub-Committee will be formed to choose the award recipients from the candidates that are recommended by the City of Toronto and the industry. The selection criteria will be established and strictly adhered to by the Sub-Committee. The Awards Sub-Committee will consist of:

1. The Chair of the Licensing and Standards Committee, or designate
2. One representative from the Toronto Police Service
3. Two City of Toronto employees
4. One taxicab industry stakeholder representative

Implementation of a “Caught You in the Act” Appreciation Program

As a continuation of the Taxi Driver Recognition Day, Municipal Licensing and Standards advises that a new program similar to recognition programs operated in the retail and hotel/restaurant industries be implemented. Municipal Standards Officers who witness taxicab drivers providing exceptional customer service will enter the driver’s identification into a quarterly draw for appreciation awards. Names of winners will be published in industry newspapers.

CONCLUSION

The intention of the Taxi Driver Recognition Day is to recognize and reward the exceptional service provided by licensed taxicab drivers in the City of Toronto. In doing so, the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division will improve customer relations with one of its largest client groups. The media coverage of the event will show a positive side of the taxicab industry to the general public that is often overlooked and the “Caught You In the Act” program will promote customer service within the industry on an ongoing basis.

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SIGNATURE

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