



# FORE TIMES

News for the Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association (WWTCOA) - Teamsters Local 117

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## TEAMSTERS AND TAXIS UNITE AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

WWTCOA member addresses Teamsters Union at Unity Conference in Las Vegas, NV

"Before we joined with the Teamsters, we didn't have any control over our working conditions," said Salah Mohamed, as he addressed hundreds of fellow union members at the Teamsters Unity Conference in Las Vegas, NV.

Mohamed, a 13-year driver with Yellow Cab and an elected member of the Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association (WWTCOA) Leadership Council, was one of several immigrant workers who spoke at the event about how the Teamsters have helped improve their lives.

"Now, with the help of our brothers and sisters at Local 117, we lobby to change laws, we've met with the mayor, the city council, and state legislators to discuss critical issues, and we're working together to lower our insurance rates. We couldn't have done that without the Teamsters," he said.

### ORGANIZING = POWER

Change starts when workers get organized, and that is exactly what Puget Sound taxicab operators have done. Since June of last year, over 500 taxis have joined the WWTCOA, with new members signing up every day.

In less than a year, the association has achieved a number of important victories. With the support of Local 117, the WWTCOA has:

- Won a settlement with the Pan Pacific hotel that improved conditions for taxi operators;
- Stopped proposed changes to the City

of Seattle's municipal code that would have increased fines for taxicab operators;

• Won permanent access by Teamsters' representatives to visit taxicab operators at the airport;

• Met with numerous public officials to discuss critical issues facing taxi operators;

• Testified at public hearings in support of taxi operators;

• Lobbied in Olympia in support of legislation that would lower taxi operators' Labor & Industries rates;

• Secured WWTCOA representation on the Seattle-King County Taxicab Advisory Commission.

Most recently, the Teamsters have been working on helping association members save money by reducing their overhead costs.

Local 117 has achieved discounts for WWTCOA members on batteries, oil and fluids as well as tires. Local 117 is also working with the drivers to secure savings on insurance rates for association members.

We are also working on strategies to get the City and the County to enforce existing laws



Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer Tracey Thompson and WWTCOA Leadership Council member Salah Mohamed address the Teamsters Unity Conference in Las Vegas, NV on May 13.

that regulate all forms of taxi transportation in the region. Watch for more information on this critical fight.

### STRONGER TOGETHER

Thanks to the success in Seattle, Teamsters and taxis are looking to partner elsewhere in the country. At the Las Vegas conference, taxicab operators met with Teamster Business Representatives and other Union officials to develop a strategy for organizing thousands of taxis in cities across the country.

"When workers are organized, they are powerful and can stand up for their rights and make changes that improve their lives," said Leonard Smith, Director of Organizing at Teamsters Local 117. "That is exactly what Seattle-area taxi operators have done." ●

# WHEELCHAIR OPERATORS HELP ACHIEVE CHANGES TO MUNICIPAL CODE

**W**WTCOA wheelchair operators (WAT) have been meeting with City of Seattle councilmembers and other city officials to affect positive changes to the city's municipal code. The new regulations state that wheelchair license requirements will expire

after 3 years, and operators will be subject to the standard 30-hour-per week, 30-week-per-year requirements that other taxicab operators meet, which will give WAT operators the chance to retire, lease, or sell their licenses. ●



# THE RACE FOR MAYOR

## WWTCOA participates in mayoral interviews

**E**lected members of the WWTCOA Leadership Council took part in recent interviews of candidates in this year's mayoral race for the City of Seattle as a part of Teamsters Local 117's candidate endorsement process. Biniam Demie of Orange Cab and Salah Mohammed of Yellow Airport joined Teamster officials in the interviews, which took place on May 9 and 10.

## MAKING TAXIS A PRIORITY

The Leadership Council representatives had the opportunity to ask mayoral candidates, Senator Ed Murray and Seattle City Councilmember Tim Burgess, what their plans are for improving working conditions, fairness, and governmental interactions with taxicab operators if they are elected as Seattle's next mayor.

Both candidates pledged to work with the Association and noted that the voice of workers is being heard thanks to the work of the WWTCOA.

Incumbent candidates in the race for Port of Seattle Commissioner, Courtney Gregoire, John Creighton and Stephanie Bowman, were also interviewed. The Port candidates discussed their plans for improving conditions for taxicab operators at the sea and airports in the coming year.

The Teamsters' political endorsements will be announced in the coming weeks. Visit the Teamsters Local 117 website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org) for more info. ●



## Tire, battery, and oil discounts for WWTCOA members

**W**orking with Teamsters Local 117, the WWTCOA Leadership Council has successfully achieved cost-saving discounts on tires, batteries, and oil for WWTCOA members.

GCR/TDS Bridgestone in Seattle will be offering the discounts. Tires will start at \$85 each; batteries with installation are \$180; Prius batteries with installation are \$327.

To obtain the discounts, visit GCR/TDS Bridgestone at 6311 Corgiat Dr. S. in Seattle or call 206-762-3180 for more information. These discounts are eligible for WWTCOA members in good standing only. Members must show their WWTCOA membership Card to receive the discounts. If you do not have your membership card please contact Dawn Gearhart at 206-441-4860 ext. 1254

## New insurance premiums for WWTCOA members

**T**he WWTCOA is working to achieve lower insurance premiums for association members. Sign-up for the new rates will be announced as soon as we have a confirmed date. These insurance discounts like all other discounts will be available for WWTCOA members only, and only if they have a membership card.

## EVENTS

**May 23** - City Council hearing on taxis, limos, for-hires - 2 p.m. at City Hall

**June 4** - WWTCOA Leadership Council Meeting, 4 p.m.

**July 13** - Annual WWTCOA Membership Meeting.