



TAXICAB, LIMOUSINE &
PARATRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Representing taxicab, limousine, sedan, airport shuttle, paratransit, Medicaid & non-emergency medical fleets worldwide.

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Bill Yuhnke, President, Liberty and Yellow Cab Companies, Buffalo, New York Is Named TLPA 2004 Taxicab Small Fleet Operator of the Year

Yuhnke Strives to Promote Positive Image of the Taxicab Industry Through Community Service
'By doing good, it has come back to me so many times,' he says

KENSINGTON, MD — Bill Yuhnke, president of Liberty and Yellow Cab Companies, Buffalo, New York, has been named the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association's 2004 Taxicab Small Fleet Operator of the Year. He was presented with this award on Thursday, November 4, at the Opening General Session of TLPA's 86th Annual Convention & Trade Show in Orlando, Florida. With over 1,000 member companies from which to choose, TLPA's Awards Committee selected Yuhnke to receive this prestigious annual award for his dedication to his companies, his community and the taxicab industry as a whole.

When he was 14, Bill took a job pumping gas for Yellow Cab of Buffalo, never dreaming that he would one day own the taxi company. In 1987, after serving his country for nine years in the U.S. Army Reserves, Bill was running a restaurant and working as a radio station account executive when he observed that Buffalo's taxi service was not sufficient to serve the community. He bought two taxicabs and started Liberty Cab. Since then, he's driven taxicabs, dispatched them, answered the phone and worked in maintenance to ensure that customers received proper service.

While working in radio promotions, Yuhnke became keenly aware of the importance of how a company presents itself to the community. He uses his taxicab operation to promote a positive image of the taxicab industry and the city of Buffalo. "When you're a tourist or a visitor to our city, the first and last person you're going to see is going to be a taxi driver," he says. "One of my goals is to have my customers view the taxicab industry as a vital part of the image of Buffalo."

At his first TLPA Annual Convention & Trade Show in 1987, Yuhnke visited the Anheuser-Busch Alert Cab booth and forged a relationship that has endured. Since then, every Christmas-to-New Year's week, Liberty Cab has provided taxicab rides home for people who are too intoxicated to drive. The rides are paid for by the local Anheuser-Busch distributor, Try-It Distributing. The service is heavily promoted by Anheuser-Busch and in the local media, thus getting Liberty Cab's name out before the public.

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After the local Red Cross began using Liberty Cab for emergency blood runs, Bill asked them if there were other services his company could provide. "They told us that they were having problems getting people to blood donation sites, so I jumped on it," he says. In 1988, Bill established the "Liberty Ride for Life" program, in which the company provides free taxicab rides to blood donors to and from Red Cross donation centers. The company still provides free rides to blood donors, and the Red Cross has nominated Bill for various awards for his contributions. More recently, Liberty also began providing free rides to voters who have no way of getting to the polls on Election Day. For the blood drive and voter programs, drivers submit vouchers, and Bill covers the cost of reimbursing them out of his own pocket.

These programs receive extensive news coverage, and have created immeasurable goodwill for Liberty Cab in the Buffalo area. Knowing that Liberty is a community-minded company, people feel good about calling them when they need transportation. "I wanted to change the image of our industry," Bill says. "By doing good, it has come back to me so many times."

"We set the standards for the taxi industry in our city that other companies try to meet," Bill says. He emphasizes customer service, a willingness to listen to the people who work for you, commitment to the community and the use of technology to improve the way you do business. Bill installed computer-aided dispatch service in November 2002, and in May 2003 he bought Yellow Cab, the company for which he pumped gas as a teenager. He personally owns 15 taxicabs between his two companies, and leases dispatch service to an additional 32 independent taxicab owners and drivers.

In response to winning this year's award, Bill says, "I'm excited and stunned. My daughter, Lisa, had nominated me and I was unaware." Lisa Yuhnke is vice president of Liberty, and Bill hopes that she will take over running the company when he retires.

The Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is the industry association representing taxicab, limousine, sedan, airport shuttle, paratransit, Medicaid, and nonemergency medical fleets worldwide. In existence since 1917, the association makes its headquarters in Kensington, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C. TLPA has over 1,000 corporate members that operate over 100,000 passenger vehicles and transport over 2 million passengers each day. TLPA's Annual Operator of the Year Awards recognize excellence and exemplary practices among its membership.

Trade Press: Please note we have this press release in several formats, as well as a high-resolution photo of Mr. Yuhnke, available for download on our web site at www.tlpa.org.

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