

# UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL SINCE 2008

## UTCC CELEBRATES 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**U**TCC was created on January 2008 by the drivers, for the drivers, to organize and unify all licensed chauffeurs in the Chicago area, so we can collectively overcome oppression and achieve economic and social justice.

After many long meetings at Baba Palace restaurant at the corner of Chicago Ave. and Orleans Street, the leaders of the drivers communities elected Fayeze Khozindar as a spokesmen/ Chairman of the newly formed organization.

Today we are recognizing both past and present all that have aided UTCC in getting to where we are. These include founders, board members, former steering committee members, supporters and anyone who helped us in some capacity.

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### Founding Members

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 Steve Kim  
 Fayeze Khozindar  
 Pankaj Kapoor  
 Syed Khan  
 Stanley Ghen  
 Ahmed Dahir  
 Peter A Enger  
 Pratik Sampat  
 Tracy Luidke  
 Ron Florence  
 Mohammad Qureshi  
 Dian Santacci  
 Ehsan Ghreishi

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 Ifeanyi Finn Ebelechukwu  
 Frank Ola Koku  
 Margaret Jackson  
 Javaid Ahmed  
 Karen Chamberlain  
**Organizations**  
 Resist  
 Crossroads Fund  
 Woods Fund of Chicago  
 The Field Foundation of Illinois  
 In These Times

**W**e are going to have a big party and celebration on May 1st, to commemorate UTCC's 10 years of service to the cab driving community in Chicago. May 1st is celebrated around the world by labor unions and workers. and we will celebrate with an international family festival that honors cultures from around the world. And our diverse population of drivers. Food, music, dancing, & games for the children.

**The celebration will be held May 1st, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Yellow Cab, 3351 West Addison. We will hold elections to choose three new members to the UTCC steering committee. All members are qualified to run. We will also have a Festival Planning Committee meeting on Monday, April 16, from 2 to 4 P.M and 7 to 9 at the Hollywood Restaurant, at North and Ashland, just West of the 90-94 Expressway exit at North Ave. Come join the committee. Free coffee and doughnuts. Free parking on both sides of the restaurant. Help us plan the festivities. (Call 773 342-8822 or 773 292 5055 for more information on the Festival)**

## UTCC AND A DECADE OF POSITIVE STRUGGLE

By Dick Simpson

**I**t was a decade ago that I first met with UTCC leaders and my old friend, Chris Chandler from the Harold Washington days and before. I was impressed as a former aldermen who had dealt with taxi issues back in the 1970s that drivers were finally getting together a strong community organization like a labor union to fight for their rights.

The industry has certainly changed in the fifty years I have known it. Back in the day, Yellow and Checker had pretty much owned the cab industry and drivers were left out to work long hours for too little pay and no control. More medallions changed that and so did the taxi scandal that helped end Mayor Michael Bilandic's tenure along with the great snow of 1979. Now the challenge is Uber, Lyft, and the new technology. But one thing is sure. If drivers don't hang together, you will all hang separately. City hall doesn't have your back. Only a united front can allow you to navigate these difficult times as your industry is disrupted and remade. You have to be at the table setting the rules. Which is why I am impressed that you are still together after that meeting we had ten years ago to strategize how to take on city hall. Together, and only together, will you overcome and I, for one, have faith you can. Ten years from now, you want things to be much better for you, your passengers, and future drivers. Yes, more automation is coming but the important thing is that you control the transformation rather than being its victim.



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Common Sense Corner.....2
- Shameful Story.....3
- Response to Chicago Dispatcher.....4
- Honoring Fayeze Khozindar.....5
- Scam Artist Discovered.....6
- Self-driving Uber car kills Arizona woman crossing street.....7
- Conventions.....8
- Upcoming Events.....9
- Traffic Worse w/Uber, Lyft.....10
- Uber & Lyft blamed for hanging driver hanging.....11

Dick Simpson is a professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois Chicago, and a former reform alderman.

## COMMON SENSE CORNER

### FLASH VS. CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION (CDA)

UTCC is appreciating the opportunity to organize Flash taxicab drivers who comes to cash in their credit card and paying their leases at the facility at 9696 Foster street. During our work over there, one of our workers was praying in the waiting room, when one of Flash managers approach us and told us while smiling not to do that in here. We were apprehended and wondering why and how he may say that to a person doing his daily duty towards God. The man gently waved to us and walk us to a place with two separate clean wash rooms one of them with a foot sink for the faithful to do their "wodu", which is the cleansing process Muslims do before performing the prayers. At the end of the whole- way, the man opened a door and we saw a huge clean carpeted room with few praying rugs on the floor lined up towards the north east



(the direction of Macca). The manager opened his arm and said; "this place is better for you to pray, we care about our drivers". This make me reflect upon our past struggle with the Chicago Department of Aviation when some activists at O'Hare airport advocated for many years to establish and build the two shelters

at the south west corner of the Commercial Vehicles Holding Area (CVHA) lot. The result of that was for us to have a small place to pray, not enough to accommodate 12 to 18 persons at the same time to do their prayer. On the other hand, Flash taxicab company has few Muslim drivers and was able to provides bigger room than what the Chicago Department of Aviation built for hundreds of Muslim drivers frequenting the CVHA lot every day. We demand a bigger place to pray, and we need it now before the Holy month of Ramadan starts at the middle of May. ■

**- FAYEZ KHOZINDAR,  
UTCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



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# UTCC

**UNITED TAXIDRIVERS  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

#### Our Vision

*To organize and unify all licensed chauffeurs in the Chicago area, so we can collectively overcome oppression and achieve economic and social justice.*

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## Shameful Story in the March Chicago Dispatcher

The front page story in the March issue of the Dispatcher is a disgrace to journalism. The cover picture is of the \$10,000 check that Flash Cab awarded to the family of Anwar Syed after he died, and the Dispatcher writes that the company appears to be cheating the family of funds.

This ridiculous charge is made by George Lutfallah, editor and publisher of the Dispatcher, and based on his total misunderstanding of the facts. The money came from Flash Cab's "Taxicab Operator Beneficiary Fund," a program set up some 20 years ago where drivers can, if they wish, sign up and give \$10 to the fund. When a cabdriver dies The fund gives his family \$10 per participant

Rather than stealing money from the fund, as the articles suggests, the fact is that the company had only \$3,640 total in the fund when Syed died. The company put up the remainder of the money.

Lutfallah will claim he made an honest mistake, but that would not get him off the hook in this case. The protections of a free press do not apply in cases where the author harbors personal bias. And Lutfallah has displayed a personal bias against UTCC ever since he was not chosen to be the main organizer for us ten years ago.

In his column in the last issue of the Voice Faye Khazinder described the Flash program, and urged all cab companies to establish similar programs. Lutfallah's response was to viciously and maliciously attack the Flash program, and malign Rahul Parikh, the Flash official who presented the check.

That's called libel, Mr. Lutfallah. You are guilty of character assassination, and will lose in court. At the very least you must set the record straight and apologize to Rahul Parikh and Flash Cab.



Flash officials (Rahul Parikh) surrounding Mrs. Asghari as she shows her check



Chicago Dispatcher March 2018 Issue

## Restore Fingerprinting For Cabdrivers!

*We want our fingerprinting back. The fact that we were fully vetted, and drive share drivers were not, gave us a competitive advantage. Now that's been taken away. It leaves us with no advantage and lessens the value of medallions. We are launching a campaign to restore fingerprinting, and we will use every means available, including the courts. Read more about the campaign in our next issue.*

## CHICAGO DISPATCHER THROWS AWAY FREE SPEECH

Our newspapers were trashed at O'Hare We discovered our supply of hundreds of copies of the UTCC Voice at the dispatch area at O'Hare had been destroyed and trashed. We were told by a fellow driver that "someone from the Dispatcher" did it. Really George Lutfallah, try to contain your raging anger.



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE: GOUTCC.ORG**

## A Response to the Chicago Dispatcher

In light of recent pseudo investigative journalism, Flash Cab would like to clear the air on their Independent Taxicab Operator Beneficiary Fund. In the wake of the recent loss of driver, Anwar Syed, his beneficiary received a \$10,000 check from Flash Cab. Flash Cab would like to provide a better understanding of the functionality of the fund.

The fund has been in place for 20 years in an effort to provide some assistance to families of drivers who pass away. First and foremost, Flash Cab would like to thank all the drivers who participate, in doing so they have helped numerous families during their time of grief. This program is executed simply to provide needed funds to drivers' families. The motives for this program are purely altruistic and do not in any way allocate funds to the ownership of Flash Cab.

The Beneficiary Fund allows drivers to voluntarily enroll in the program. The driver pays \$10 upon enrollment and then another \$10 each time another participant passes away to ensure the fund is replenished accordingly. The drivers are informed, via a signed document that their beneficiary will "receive on my behalf a sum totaling the number of paid participants multiplied by the same \$10.00 upon my death." **The funds are not collected until a driver passes away.**

Flash Cab is addressing some inaccuracies that were written regarding how the program is managed. Unfortunately for some, fact checking and verification of information before publication is not maintained. Therefore, Flash



Cab would like to provide some clarity and rectification of false statements as well as assumptions. In fact, there is no "reserve account" and therefore Mr. Syed's beneficiary received more than was in the fund as described above. As of

today, there is \$3,640 in the fund. This means that there are actually 364 participants who contributed upon enrollment as well as replenished the fund for its current balance.

Mr. Syed's beneficiary received \$3,640 from the fund and the difference of \$6,360 was provided by Flash Cab ownership. In the circumstance of the recent publication, the facts were not verified by the writer. Mr. Parikh when providing the Chicago Dispatcher with fund information, was being questioned under the guise of a human-interest piece. Mr. Parikh did not have all the information at his disposal. The "reporter" interviewing him failed to even take a closer look at the paperwork Mr. Parikh was pictured holding in the article. That form clearly states an explanation of the collection and distribution of the funds. Incompetency seems to reign supreme when the article was compiled. So, Flash Cab responds, nothing is odd about the check, but something is awfully odd about the reporting.

**Flash Cab**

### COURT UPDATE

On March 15th, 2018, the mother and sister of our beloved Ismail Abdulle came to attend the court proceedings at Markham court house, where UTCC presented to the family a check for \$3,482 collected from the drivers as a token of support and solidarity. The Stats' attorney told the gathering that they will get a police report and 4 discs of video to be shown next court date on May 8th, at 9:00 AM.



### Batrony Family Found

On January 22nd, 2018, Taxi Town lost a driver and a friend, Fred Baptiste Batrony. We are happy to report that the family of Fred Baptiste Batrony has been found. In our last issue we reported that long time Taxi Town driver Batrony had died of a heart attack, and no one knew anything of his personal life. His family was due some benefits. Now Kevin Knuth of Taxi Town reports that his sister had called in over the weekend, and he thanked UTCC and its readers for our help.

## TAXI TOWN



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## TAXI TOWN

Ten Years of Service

# Honoring Fayeze Khozindar, UTCC Director

By **CHRISTOPHER CHANDLER**

**F**ayeze Khozindar was born in Majdal, and raised in Khan Yunis, a 3,000 year old town in Gaza, just a 15 minute drive south of Gaza City, where Sampson brought down the temple.

One event in his childhood made a lasting impression. In 1948, when the Israelis drove the Palestinians out of much of Palestine, families arrived in Gaza, with only the belongings they could carry with them. Suddenly their were families camping out on vacant land near his house, in dire need of help.

Then mysterious vans appeared, bringing boxes of food and supplies, and then tents, and each family pitched its own tent on that vacant land.

"Who are these people who are helping these families?" he asked his grandmother.

"The Quakers, my son, the Quakers," she replied. They were from the American Friends Service Committee, the social justice arm of the small pacifist religion, the Quakers.

Fayeze would not encounter the Quakers again for another 60 years, but when he did he knew who they were. \*\*\*\*

Fayeze' father was a policeman in Khan Yunis, and he was second oldest of his eight children. When Fayeze was ready for college there were no universities functioning in Gaza, and he

He is blown up by the Mujahideen at Al Gasbah

Fayeze was enjoying life as a student when the head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Yassar Arafat, arrived in Algiers and proclaimed that all Palestinian students, some 20,000 at the time, must become teachers, not students. They were to help spread the Arabic language.

The life of the teachers was difficult with late pay and poor living conditions. And he was longer able to study, so he was determined to move on. He would not return to Gaza, where there as no opportunity, but he found that by joining the International Students Union he could gain pas-



**A medical student in Algiers at the time, Fayeze was asked to play a French paratrooper in the film "The Battle of Algiers." Here he is relaxing with fellow actors playing paratroopers. That's Fayeze in the middle. Fayeze had learned fluent French on his trips to Paris. In the movie he hurls an insult at the Algerian revolutionaries, and is blown up by them.**

sage to America, and once in New York he took the bus to Chicago, where he had family, so he arrived in Chicago on August 17, 1972. He was 27.

He worked in construction, and then as a part time cab driver, able to support himself and attend classes at Northeastern Illinois University, where he finally was able to earn his degree in 1979. By 1984 he was a full-time driver making a good living. While visiting family in Kuwait that year, he met his wife to be, a schoolteacher, and they were married that year. He and his wife raised four sons, two of which went to college and two are in the trades. He sold his medallion in 2012 and was able to buy large family home.

It was in late 2007 that Fayeze ran across "The Quakers" once again. He was head of the "O'Hare Prayer Committee," which was fighting to gain safe prayer space for the Muslim drivers at the O'Hare staging area. The American Friends Service Committee was launching a new social justice project, to help Chicago cabdrivers, mostly foreign born, who were being exploited by the city and by the cab companies. They were expert at respecting and working with many different cultures, and the cabdrivers found it difficult to work together because most came from 80 different countries.

In early 2008 they called a meeting of all cab



**The King Barkook Fortress, in Khan Yunis. The fortress withstood a siege by Alexander the Great for six months in 332 B.C.**

driver organizations at the restaurant at Chicago and Orleans, and Fayeze was invited as head of the O'Hare committee. He was elected chairman at that first meeting of what was to become the United Taxi drivers Community Council (UTCC). He spent the next two days working with AFSC to set up the bylaws and non-profit status for the new organization.

He has headed UTCC ever since. There are many people who have played key roles for UTCC. Michael McConnell of the American Friends Service Committee first envisioned the organization. Peter Ali Enger long served with distinction as our chief organizer. Rocky Mommo has given long service as our chairman. Bhairavi Desai of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance has been an inspiration. Also dedicating long hours over the years have been Javaid Ahmed, Karen Chamberlin and Diane Santucci, Bill Burns and Clark Falcon.



**Fayeze plays with his nephews on the beautiful white beaches of Gaza near Khan Yunis, on a trip back home. The nephews are Alaa, Omar and Imad.**

But it is Fayeze who has served as chairman and executive director since the very beginning, going months without pay through difficult times. We would not be here today except for his dedication. And we are stronger than ever, with over 300 dues paying members.

Fayeze is first and foremost a devout Muslim, but he has also been inspired by the social justice programs of "The Quakers."



**Some members of the Khan Yunis high school graduating class of 1966. That's Fayeze second from the left.**

sought out a means of earning his degree. He saved his, money, and travelled to France and then Spain in search of a means to support his education.

Finally he found the Algerian government was offering full scholarships for Palestinians, and he began his studies to become a doctor in Algiers, and worked in a lab. He was grateful for finally finding support for his education.

Italian filmmakers were shooting scenes -"for what became the classic movie of revolt against colonialism, "The Battle of Algiers."

Fayeze plays one of the bad guys, a French paratrooper who taunts the Algerians: "Allez, Allez vite, rats!" or "Come on, come on fast you little Rats!"

# “SCAM ARTIST” DISCOVERED

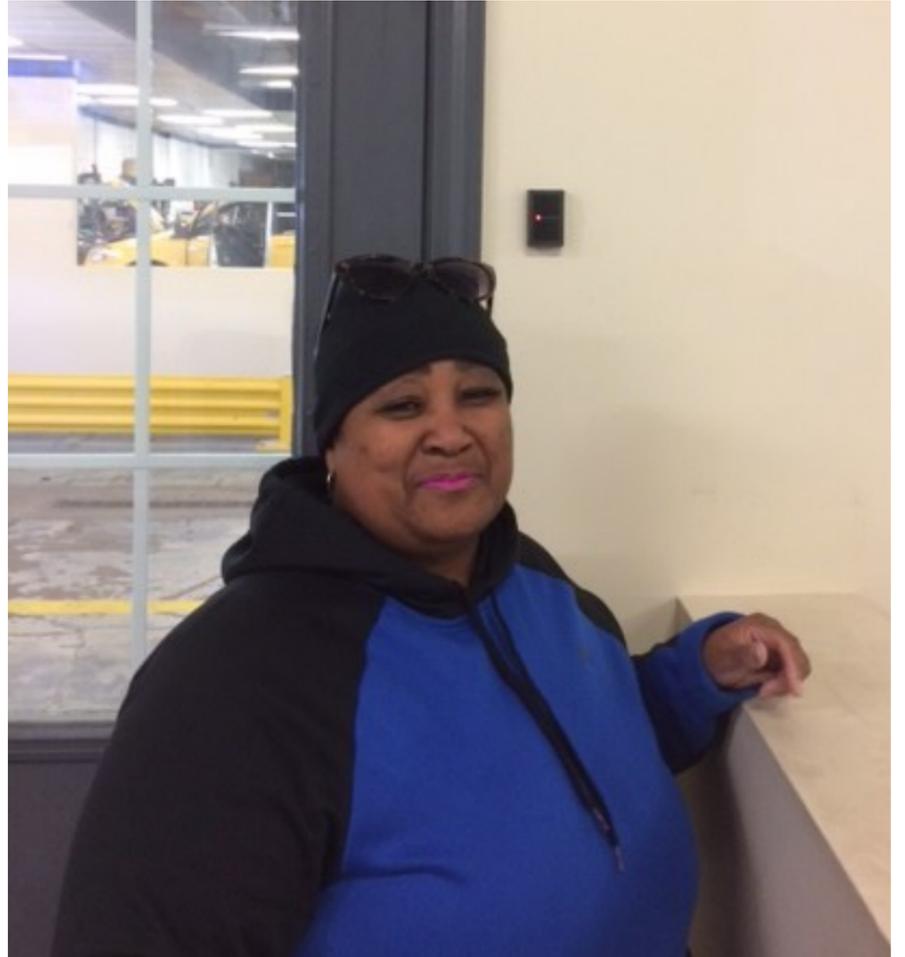
I have encountered the “scam artist” who rob taxi drivers! Shirley Plummer said:

On Thursday evening, UTCC received a call from Shirley Plummer who drives a Checker taxicab # 3800, she told us that she has a suspicious passenger in her taxi while driving down town and want to retrieve his image from her cab camera, so we may publish it in UTCC Voice to alert other drivers. We decided to meet next morning at Yellow taxicab company to ask for help. Unfortunately, they don't have the right soft-ware to retrieve the image and advised us to go to the Business Affair and Consumer Protection office (BACP) on Ogden, so we may get an over-ride permission before we go to the inspection facility. At Ogden we have met with inspector Kevin, who listened to Shirley saying that the passenger pretended that he lost his phone and it might be under the driver's seat, and how she told him to look for it himself and at the end she took her belonging and asked him to leave. Inspector Kevin told us; since there was no crime committed and we don't have a police report, he can't approve this and let us get the image for the scam artist to publish it in the Voice, but he will order retrieve it and keep it in file for a future need. From there, Shirley was in her way to do just that.

UTCC salute Shirley Plummer's scarifies and dedication to the public safety, and we raise our hats to her courage.

Thank you Shirley. ■

**By FAYEZ KHOZINDAR,  
UTCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**Shirley Plummer, the Driver That Encountered the Scammer**

## How the Scam Works

The scam artist hails a taxi in heavy traffic during downtown rush hour. He will get in a vehicle and ask the driver to go to a destination; he will then ask if the driver can pick up his mom and then take both of them to a second destination. Then he will claim that he dropped his credit card and ask the driver to move their seat so he can look under it. He will then ask the driver to look in the space between the driver's seat and the driver door. As soon as the driver is looking in the opposite direction, he will steal valuables and exit the vehicle with the driver unable to do anything as they are in slow moving traffic.

The individual is described as African-American between 17 and 22 years old. He is a male, 5 foot 7 inches with a slim build. He wears sunglasses and a hat or hoody to disguise his face.

This Scam has been going on for over two years.

Drivers Beware! ■

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PEACE & JUSTICE  
is a *marathon* not a  
*sprint*  
-Michael McConnell**

## Peace Taxi Association

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# Self-driving Uber car kills Arizona woman crossing street

By Sydney Maki and Alexandria Sage on March 18, 2018

An Uber self-driving car hit and killed a woman crossing the street in Arizona, police said on Monday, marking the first fatality involving an autonomous vehicle and a potential blow to the technology expected to transform transportation.

The ride services company said it was suspending North American tests of its self-driving vehicles, which are currently going on in Arizona, Pittsburgh and Toronto.

So-called robot cars, when fully developed by companies including Uber, Alphabet Inc and General Motors Co, are expected to drastically cut down on motor vehicle fatalities and create billion-dollar businesses. But Monday's accident underscored the possible challenges ahead for the promising technology as the cars confront real-world situations involving real people.

U.S. lawmakers have been debating legislation that would speed introduction of self-driving cars.

"This tragic accident underscores why we need to be exceptionally cautious when testing and deploying autonomous vehicle technologies on public roads," said Democratic Senator Edward Markey, a member of the transportation committee, in a statement.

Elaine Herzberg, 49, was walking her bicycle outside the crosswalk on a four-lane road in the Phoenix suburb of Tempe about 10 p.m. MST Sunday (0400 GMT Monday) when she was struck by the Uber vehicle traveling at about 40 miles per hour (65 km per hour), police said. The Volvo XC90 SUV was in autonomous mode with an operator behind the wheel.

Herzberg later died from her injuries in a hospital, police said. "The pedestrian was outside of the crosswalk. As soon as she walked into the lane of traffic she was struck," Tempe Police Sergeant Ronald Elcock told reporters at a news conference. He said he did not yet know how close Herzberg was to the vehicle when she stepped into the lane.

Elcock said he believed Herzberg may have been homeless. The San Francisco Chronicle late Monday reported that Tempe Police Chief Sylvia Moir said that from viewing videos taken from the vehicle "it's very clear it would have been difficult to avoid this collision in any kind of mode (autonomous or human-driven) based on how she came from the shadows right into the roadway."

Moir told the Chronicle, "I suspect preliminarily it appears that the Uber would likely not be at fault in this accident," but she did not rule out that charges could be filed against the operator in the Uber vehicle, the paper reported.

The "Tempe Police Department does not determine fault in vehicular collisions," the department said in a statement late Monday, in reply to questions from Reuters about the chief's comments. "Ultimately the investigation will be submitted to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for review and any potential charges."

Tempe authorities and federal officials are still investigating the incident. Canada's transportation ministry in Ontario, where Uber conducts testing, also said it was reviewing the accident.

Volvo, the Swedish car brand owned by China's Geely, said the software controlling the car in the crash was not its own.

Video footage will aid the ongoing investigation, and the case would be submitted to the district attorney, Elcock said.

"Our investigators have that information, and they will be using that in their investigation as well as the Maricopa County Attorney's Office as part of their investigation," said Elcock. "They are going to attempt to try to find who was possibly at fault and how we can better be safe, whether it's pedestrians or whether it's the vehicle itself."



## WILD WEST

Uber and Waymo on Friday urged Congress to pass sweeping legislation to speed the introduction of self-driving cars into the United States. Some congressional Democrats have blocked the legislation over safety concerns, and Monday's fatality could hamper passage of the bill, congressional aides said Monday.

Safety advocates called for a national moratorium on all robot car testing on public roads.

"Arizona has been the wild west of robot car testing with virtually no regulations in place," said Consumer Watchdog, a non-profit consumer advocacy group, in a statement. "That's why Uber and Waymo test there. When there's no sheriff in town, people get killed."

Arizona has opened its arms to companies testing self-driving vehicles as a means to economic growth and jobs. Republican Governor Doug Ducey reached out to Uber in 2016 after California regulators cracked down on the company over its failure to obtain testing permits.

Self-driving cars being tested routinely get into fender-benders with other vehicles. Last week, a self-driving Uber crashed with another vehicle in Pittsburgh, local news reported. There were no injuries.

A year ago, Uber temporarily grounded its self-driving cars for a few days following a crash with another car in Tempe. The company has been the subject of a number of complaints about its autonomous vehicles, but the company has said the cars were being driven by a human driver at the time of the incidents.

## ESSENTIAL TO UBER'S SUCCESS

Uber has said its ability to build autonomous cars is essential to its success in the rapidly changing transportation industry. The company envisions a network of autonomous cars that would be summoned through the Uber app that would supplement - and eventually replace - human-driven cars.

Uber has logged 2 million self-driving miles (3.2 million km) through December. The company has more than 100 autonomous cars testing on the roads of the greater Phoenix area, the company's prime testing ground due to the state's loose regulations and hospitable weather. Rain, snow and ice are particularly challenging for autonomous cars. The company also tests in Pittsburgh and Toronto.

Concerns over the safety of autonomous vehicles flared after a July 2016 fatality involving a Tesla Inc automobile with a partially autonomous system that required human supervision. Safety regulators later determined Tesla was not at fault.

(Reporting by Sydney Maki and Alexandria Sage; Additional reporting by Dave Shepardson in Washington, Tina Bellon in New York, Heather Somerville in San Francisco, David Schwartz and Andres Guerra Luz in Phoenix, and Allison Lampert in Montreal; Editing by Jonathan Oatis and Lisa Shumaker)

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# Convention Schedule

EVENT NAME	VENUE	START	END	ATTENDEES
SSO 2018 CANCER SYMPOSIUM	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	3/21/2018	3/24/2018	1500
BOA 2018 SHAMROCK SHUFFLE	McCormick Place North	3/23/2018	3/25/2018	20000
2018 CONGRESS ON HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP	Hyatt Regency Chicago	3/26/2018	3/29/2018	4000
GLOBALSHOP 2018	McCormick Place West	3/27/2018	3/29/2018	12000
TESOL 2018 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPO	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North	3/27/2018	3/30/2018	6500
2018 CHAPTER	Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel	4/2/2018	4/8/2018	325
END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INTERNATIONAL - INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND STALKING	Hilton Chicago	4/2/2018	4/5/2018	700
MIDWEST POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION 2018 ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE	Palmer House Hilton	4/5/2018	4/8/2018	5200
AMERICAN BURN ASSOCIATION - 50TH ANNUAL MEETING	Hilton Chicago	4/10/2018	4/13/2018	2200
POLICYLINK SPRING 2018	Hyatt Regency Chicago	4/10/2018	4/13/2018	3500
AACR 109TH ANNUAL MEETING 2018	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	4/14/2018	4/18/2018	22000
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018	Sheraton Grand Chicago	4/16/2018	4/22/2018	4000
2018 ANNUAL MBAA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE	Palmer House Hilton	4/18/2018	4/21/2018	500
OTA RESIDENTS COMPREHENSIVE FRACTURE COURSE 2018	Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel	4/18/2018	4/21/2018	200
2018 NCAA MEN'S GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS	Palmer House Hilton	4/19/2018	4/21/2018	6000
NARUC 2018 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REGULATORY ATTORNEYS	Warwick Allerton Hotel	4/22/2018	4/25/2018	100
SPRING MEETING 2018 APPNA	Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile	4/26/2018	4/28/2018	450
2018 AMERICA'S BEAUTY SHOW	McCormick Place West	4/28/2018	4/30/2018	80155
LIGHTFAIR INTERNATIONAL 2018	McCormick Place South	5/6/2018	5/10/2018	25000
AWEA WINDPOWER 2018 CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION	McCormick Place West	5/7/2018	5/10/2018	7500
2018 NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION RESTAURANT HOTEL-MOTEL SHOW	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	5/19/2018	5/22/2018	70216
NCA'S 2018 SWEETS AND SNACKS EXPO	McCormick Place West	5/22/2018	5/24/2018	18000
2018 ACPM ANNUAL MEETING	Sheraton Grand Chicago	5/23/2018	5/26/2018	600
NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CATECHETICAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION	Hyatt Regency O'Hare	5/30/2018	6/4/2018	1000
ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY ANNUAL MEETING	Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza River North	5/30/2018	6/4/2018	500
2018 ANNUAL MEETING	Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center	5/31/2018	6/2/2018	100
KEHE HOLIDAY SHOW 2018	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	6/13/2018	6/14/2018	4500

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# Upcoming Events/Meetings

*Upcoming Aviation Public Passenger Vehicle Meetings:*

O'Hare International Airport

- ▶ Meeting Time: 10:30am
- ▶ Meeting Location: Aviation Administrative Building, 10510 W. Zemke, Chicago
  - ◆ March 28, 2018
  - ◆ May 16, 2018
  - ◆ July 18, 2018
  - ◆ September 19, 2018
  - ◆ November 21, 2018

*Midway International Airport (Meetings are 3rd Thursday of every month)*

- ▶ Meeting Time: 10:00am
- ▶ Meeting Location: 5050 West 55th Street, Level One of the Economy Garage
  - ◆ 3/15/2018
  - ◆ 4/19/2018
  - ◆ 5/17/2018
  - ◆ 6/21/2018
  - ◆ 7/19/2018
  - ◆ 8/16/2018
  - ◆ 9/20/2018
  - ◆ 10/18/2018
  - ◆ 11/15/2018
  - ◆ 12/20/2018

*Upcoming Chicago Police Department (CPD) Taxicab Driver/ Industry Meetings:*

- ▶ Meeting Time: 11:00am
- ▶ Meeting Location: Community Policing Room, 1st District, 1718 S. State
  - ◆ May 29, 2018
  - ◆ Sep 25, 2018

*Upcoming Taxi Driver Fairness Task Force Meetings:*

- ▶ Meeting Time: 11:00am
- ▶ Meeting Location: BACP - 2350 W. Ogden, 1st Floor, Chicago, IL
  - ◆ May 9, 2018
  - ◆ August 8, 2018
  - ◆ November 14, 2018

\*Note: Listed meeting dates are subject to change.\*

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## What's making traffic worse in Chicago? Signs point to Uber, Lyft.

BY MARK GUARINO ON March 16, 2018

As a driver for a messenger service downtown, John Forbes knows the streets backward and forward. In recent years, he says, his job has become more dangerous, not just because of the increase in cars on the road, but because of ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft, which he says are clogging busy intersections with cars that appear to be lurking aimlessly. "It's anarchy," he says. "Every time I'm driving, there's always some kind of close call. They'll stop suddenly for no reason or poke along because they don't know where they're going."

Data suggests the frustration is real. Gridlock in Chicago is getting worse, according to a traffic analysis performed exclusively for Crain's by the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University. Based on traffic data provided by the city, the analysis finds a citywide vehicle slowdown of 2.4 percent between 2013 and 2017. In 2013, the average speed was 24.65 mph; it was 24.07 in 2017. The slower speeds impacted 27 of the city's 29 traffic regions last year, and in some areas the slowdown was more than double the city average. "The drops in speeds are spread out citywide. It seems that more people are on the road driving," says Chaddick Assistant Director C. Scott Smith, who performed the analysis.

Smith finds that over the past five years, only 12 regions of the city had less gridlock than the city average. The areas where congestion is greatest are South Deering, Rogers Park, Douglas Park, West Town, North Park/Albany Park/Lincoln Square, the Southwest Side, Bridgeport and Humboldt Park.

Speeds in the Loop fell 1.6 percent between 2013 and 2017. From 2016 to 2017, however, the average drop in speed nearly doubled to a slowdown of 2.3 percent, suggesting worsening traffic downtown is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Another takeaway by Smith is that while falling gas prices in recent years contributed to an increase in driving, last year's surge in prices—jumping nearly 9 percent since February 2017—did nothing to stop speeds from grinding down, which supports the idea that other factors are driving the gridlock. "The conventional relationship between gas prices and congestion may be changing because now you have more people on the road despite the gas prices going up," he says. Of course, in a booming economy, a 9 percent rise might not be enough to affect decisions to drive.

The conclusions are supported by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which focuses on traffic on surrounding interstates.

Not only did travel times on downtown expressways increase in the final quarter of 2016 by 15 minutes compared to the



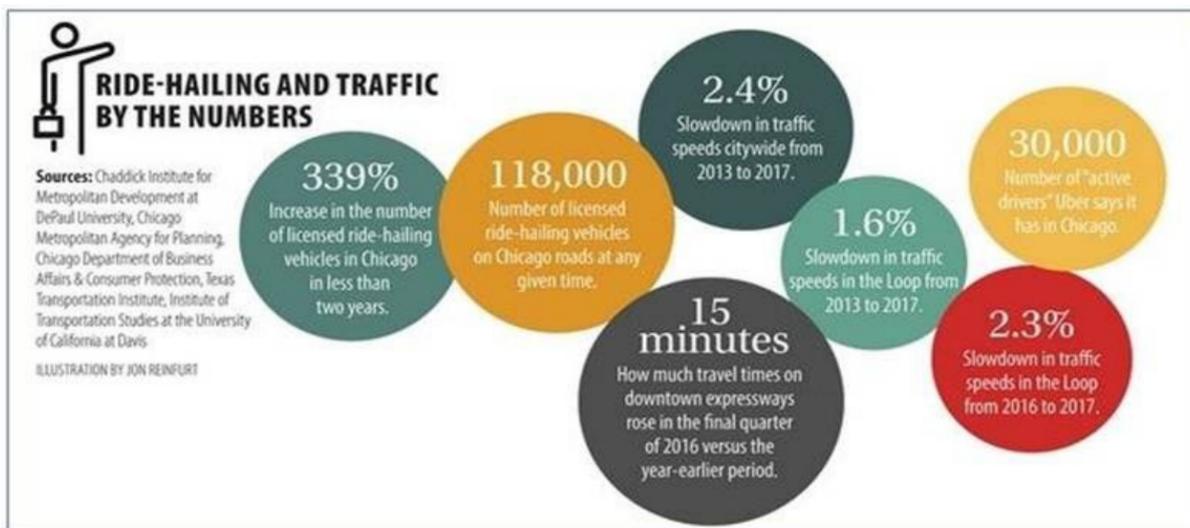
same period the previous year, but road congestion is costing the region \$7 billion a year in lost time and wages, according to the Texas Transportation Institute. That breaks down to a personal loss of \$1,445 per driver.

"There is more congestion and more people on the road," says CMAP Senior Planner Tom Murtha. He says the data is approaching the pre-recession peak years of 2006 and 2007, when congestion in Chicago was at a historic high.

CMAP says the gridlock can't be blamed on a single factor. Cheaper gas and increases in personal income and road construction are common culprits, but according to data recently gathered by Chicago Tribune, the city's congestion problem also happens to correspond to the astronomical rise in ride-hailing vehicles on its streets.

In less than three years—from March 2015 to December 2017—the number of licensed ride-hailing vehicles in Chicago increased an astonishing 339 percent to nearly 118,000 on the road at any given time, according to data from the city's Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protection. Uber and Lyft would not provide those numbers to Crain's; the Tribune obtained them after filing a Freedom of Information Act request.

Uber spokeswoman Molly Spaeth says the company has only 30,000 "active drivers," or those who complete four or more trips a



month. Lyft did not respond to a follow-up request asking for specifics on numbers.

As ride-share companies have taken off, the conventional cab industry has suffered. There were 4,000 cabs on the streets in March 2017, down from 5,800 in March 2014, says David Kreisman, spokesman for Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500. So while there may be, say, conservatively, 40,000 "active" ride-share drivers on the streets, there are just 1,800 fewer taxis, making for a net gain in vehicles on the roads.

Andrew Payne, a senior commercial credit analyst at Community Bank of Oak Park River Forest, commutes from Lincoln Park to work in his own car. He says the "stop-and-go flow of traffic" in the city is exacerbated by the lack of geographic knowledge of typical ride-share drivers who hesitate or stop to get their bearings. Likewise, he says Uber Eats and other ancillary ride-share delivery services add to traffic woes when drivers park on narrow streets.

### IDLING FOR FARES

Both Uber and Lyft insist their mission is to prevent gridlock because their services are intended to complement public transit by getting people into shared cars.

They cite a recent study that found use of their services is highest during weekend and evening hours and not during rush hour, when public transit use tends to be highest. The study is from the Shared Mobility Center, a nonprofit research organization in Chicago and Los Angeles that focuses on alternative transportation.

Yet in New York, which could hold lessons for Chicago, a recent study shows that the sudden explosion of ride-hailing vehicles—to a total of 68,000 currently in that city in about three years, according to the New York Times—is contributing to what is described as unnecessary density. One-third of ride-hailing vehicles are empty at any given time during weekdays in New York's main business district. In fact, the report shows that ride-share cars tend to be empty longer than conventional taxis—11 minutes of idling time compared to eight minutes for taxis. Overall, idling taxis in New York's central business district were unoccupied for 29,000 hours last year, which represents a 15 percent decrease from 2013; ride-hailing vehicles totaled 37,000 unoccupied hours.

Bruce Schaller, a transportation policy consultant in Brooklyn who wrote the December report, says that while there is

clear evidence people use ride-share vehicles from Uber and Lyft as a substitute for their own car, the numbers aren't high enough to see much of a difference on the streets.

It's time, he says, for cities and states to start requiring ride-hailing services to limit the time their drivers spend waiting for their next trip request. "Their numbers are growing in every city. There are just more cars out there. They are having an impact on congestion, and that needs attention," he says.

### CTA HIT HARD

Public transit ridership is suffering with the growth of ride-hailing services, too, which may end up causing more gridlock. The Chicago Transit Authority reports that total ridership has been falling over the past 10 years. In 2016, ridership fell to 498 million, a nearly 9 percent drop from the decade's peak in 2012 of 546 million and nearly identical to 2006, when ridership reached 495 million. Uber's Spaeth says ride-hailing is helping strengthen the CTA because of the millions it will receive from a 20-cent fee hike the City Council approved last year. The fee is now at 50 cents per ride and will increase steadily to 70 cents in 2019.

Despite those fees, ride-hailing is "skimming" from the money that otherwise would be dedicated for transit use at a time when those aging systems need ridership income most, says Regina Clewlow, a researcher at the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California at Davis. In a report published in October, she finds that ride-hailing leads to a 6 percent reduction in transit use among Americans in major cities.

"One of the challenges for cities like Chicago is that the rise of these services occurred at the same time U.S. infrastructure is aging. (Ride-hailing) has contributed to the perfect storm to create a drop in ridership,"

Steven R. Strahler contributed.

READ MORE AT CHICAGOBUSINESS.COM

# Cabbie blamed Uber, Lyft for financial woes before hanging himself

**BY Danielle Furfaro and Max Jaeger ON March 16, 2018**

A yellow-cab driver hanged himself because of financial ruin that he blamed on ride-hail apps such as Uber and Lyft — the fourth such suicide in the last four months, authorities said Wednesday. Nicanor Ochisor, 65, was found in the garage of his Maspeth, Queens, home by his adult son on Friday, according to Richard Lipsky of the Taxi Medallion Owners and Drivers Association. Ochisor is the first medallion owner to end his life over the flagging industry, he said. Ochisor backed his home mortgage on his medallion, and planned to use the license to finance his retirement — but his dreams faded as the value of medallions plummeted from \$1 million to around \$180,000 over the last five years. Modal Trigger Nicanor Ochisor Ochisor made no secret he planned to end his life, according to friends. “He said, ‘I’m old, I’m tired, and I’m not going to make it,’ ” fellow driver Nino Hervias, 59, recalled from a conversation with Ochisor last week. “He talked to me about it [suicide] and said that’s the way he’s going to end,” friend and fellow medallion owner Dan Nitescu, 65, told The Post. “I told him to wait and it will get better.” Ochisor got his medallion in 1989, according to the Taxi and Limousine Commission. He drove nightly, and his wife took fares during the day, Nitescu said. “They were working like that for about 25 years to raise family and save for college,” the grieving friend said. But Ochisor had struggled for fares lately, Hervias said. “He was only making \$200 a day working 10 to 12 hours,” he said, adding that’s barely enough to cover overhead. “He was devastated.” Ochisor planned to finance his retirement by leasing the medallion out for \$3,000 a month — a reasonable rate five years ago, but now he’d be lucky to get \$1,400 a month, Nitescu said. To make matters worse, the couple used the medallion as collateral on their home mortgage and would have been on the hook if the bank called in its debts and the medallion didn’t cover what they owed. “It used to be that you knew that even if you weren’t making it on a day-to-day basis, the equity in your medallion was going up,” Hervias said. “Now we have no backup. The psychological effect is terrible.” Taxi and Limousine Commission officials sent their condolences to Ochisor’s loved ones. “We are deeply distressed to learn that longstanding medallion operator Nicanor Ochisor took his own life,” said TLC Commissioner Meera Joshi. “To all that he has left behind, his family, friends and his brothers and sisters in the industry, our heartfelt condolences — we mourn with you.” Ochisor is the fourth TLC driver to commit suicide in as many months. Broke livery driver Douglas Schifter killed himself with a shotgun outside the gates of City Hall on Feb. 5. “I don’t know how else to try to make a difference other than a public display of a most private affair,” the driver wrote in a suicide note posted to Facebook. Livery driver Danilo Castillo penned a lengthy suicide note lamenting the “disastrous” state of the industry on the back of a TLC summons before leaping to his death out of his Manhattan apartment window on Dec. 20. A fourth TLC driver killed himself in February, according to the New York Taxi Workers Alliance. His name was not released. Bronx Councilman Reuben Diaz Sr. has proposed a bill aimed at leveling the playing field in the taxi industry by charging app-based companies the same fees livery firms and drivers pay & limiting the number of vehicles that can operate. ■



(Nicanor Ochisor’s cab sits covered by snow in his driveway in Queens. Ellis Kaplan)

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