

GLOBAL NEWS



Dollar Per Ride Fuel Hike For Chicago

In a move that many London taxi drivers have been asking for, Chicago's Mayor Daley is about to announce that cab drivers in the windy city can now add a fuel surcharge to the fare – in their case of up to \$1-per-ride whenever prices “equal or exceed” \$3.20-a-gallon for seven straight days. Taxi Globe understands the next comment of those same London drivers: if only our fuel went down to \$3.20 (£1.70) a gallon! But to US drivers with their heavily subsidised fuel prices, that price is horrendous.

However, the Chicago drivers are still unhappy. Many say they are working 12-to-16-hour days just to eke out a living and that the Mayor's plan was “too little, too late.” Long time Chicago driver Arnie Kast told us: “I paid \$3.79 the other day. What about when prices go above \$3.80? What about \$4.10? We're already way above what Daley is offering. He's giving us a sliding scale but the scale is already broken. It's just a joke. It's not even an appeasement move!”

However, George Kasp, who claims to do around 30 trips each day, said that the \$1 surcharge would help but predicted that around half of his passengers would deduct the surcharge from the tip. “If I get \$10 or \$15 more in revenue out of that \$30, it will help. It isn't great but if that's what's on the table, I'm not going to kick it away,” said Mr Kasp.

With US industry analysts predicting \$4-a-gallon by the summer, Mayor Daley argued that the \$1 surcharge would allow struggling drivers to re-coup some of their costs “without over-charging” riders. We can but wonder what those Chicago drivers worrying about a possible £2 a gallon price at the pumps would make of London drivers with their £5 a gallon!

Chinese Cabbies Hoaxed Into Loans – Via The Carwash!

The Criminal Investigation Bureau in Taiwan announced recently that it had successfully cracked down on an underground loan-shark operation in Taipei that had operated for years behind the semblance of being a legitimate carwash!

The CIB discovered that a group of cab drivers had been coaxed into debt before being forced into work to pay off their debts. According to the CIB, seven of the victims had committed suicide after being faced with such a hopeless situation and felt they would never be free of it.

The police raid on the car washes released 15 cab drivers, who said they were forced to drive their cabs by day then report back to the crime boss' car wash headquarters before 7 pm every evening to start a gruelling night's work in the car wash's 'slave-like' conditions.

The investigation into the loan-shark crime ring had taken police a year before they were able to arrest the 27 suspects who have now been taken into custody after being caught with huge debt receipts and other financial evidence of their misdeeds. When asked how they had fallen into the predicament, the cabbies said they had borrowed money from the underground organisation, which was set at such a high interest that it accumulated faster than they were able to pay off. Banks had refused them any loans because they were not considered to be good risks as cabbies.

One of the victims said he had been forced into the business after being in a form of financial slavery for five years. Police said the case is still under investigation and they are hoping to find other drivers who may be subjected to similar mistreatment by the crime syndicate.

The End Of The Oil Change?

At a recent forum in San Francisco, New York-based SOMS Technologies made the amazing announcement that its new engine filter would extend the life of engine oil by 30,000 miles, enabling drivers to use 75% less oil and save hundreds of pounds in car maintenance. SOMS CEO, Miles Flamenbaum told us: “Some might think that good news for the motorist is bad news for car servicing establishments, but we don't look at it that way. The new filter would allow them to charge a little bit more, take more of a margin from oil change costs while doing it less often.”

Mr Flamenbaum hopes that the filter will help to reduce oil demand and help cut pollution from waste engine oil, which contaminates groundwater when improperly disposed of. Engine oil usually passes through conventional filters in one swoop, but SOMS Technologies' system diverts some of the oil flow from the main filter into a finer filter.

“That makes it more passive,” Flamenbaum said, “we're just taking a little bit of the oil and treating it separately without affecting pressure in the engine.”

He added that the filtered oil comes out as clean - or even cleaner - than new engine oil. It will cost around \$15 (£8) and work with any combustion engine, including those in petrol, biofuel, biodiesel and hydrogen cars.

STOP PRESS DRIVERS THANKED FOR THEIR PATIENCE AT TERMINAL 5

Although the early days of Terminal 5 have not gone as smoothly as ABA would have liked, the taxi has been thanked for their patience in helping deal with passengers. It has been a difficult start for the new Terminal with news headlines full of the problems being encountered, but the taxi rank is working and the marshals have been working hard to help the situation. The taxi trade has been pulling together despite the problems and the rank should be even busier once the second phase of moving flights to Terminal 5 takes place on 30th April.

When we visited Terminal 5 before it opened, the baggage check-ins were being tested and a sea of cases could be seen. Little did we know when we took this image that baggage would be one of the main issues causing problems when the Terminal opened to flights.



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