

NELA December 2021 Quarterly Meeting Recap

On Thursday, December 16th, the NELA held its holiday quarterly meeting at the Kowloon Restaurant in Saugus, MA. Approximately 70 people attended, including some who traveled a distance to be there, like Chris Przybylski of LBC Fleet and David Eckstein of Valera Global.

DJ Gregory Plowman of Entertainment Concepts played the tunes, and NELA Executive Director, Rick Szilagyi played MC. NELA board members made presentations, including NELA President Joe Cardillo of AOT Global, Brett Barenholtz of Above All Transportation, and Mark Kini of Boston Chauffeur.

Rick thanked the members of NELA's Quarterly Meeting Committee, Joe Puleo of Dav El/BostonCoach, Tina Benson of LA Limousine, Britt Bogar of All Points Limousine, and Liz Molleur of Lexian Management.

Joe Cardillo thanked Rick and the team at Lexian Management for all they do to support the association, and all the attendees for making a very strong showing, especially considering the current state of the industry, where both vehicle and staff shortages make it a challenge to meet the increased demand. Joe reminded everyone of the mission of the NELA, focusing on how the NELA assists both operators and vendors by strengthening the industry, supporting both sides to continue our mission. Joe also asked for members to show their support by considering a board seat or working on a committee. Joe closed by reminding everyone of the great programs the NELA has rolled and will continue to roll out with TIEF funds.

Joe and Rick had Teale Smith of Maine Limousine Service come up to the podium, where Teale was presented a plaque, and thanked for over eight years of service on the NELA Board of Directors, including as Treasurer.

Brett Barenholtz had attendees give themselves a round of applause for soldiering on during the extreme challenges the pandemic has inflicted on the industry. He then asked for a moment of silence in memory of NLA board member and friend, Ken Carter, who passed recently, at the young age of 40.

As a board member of the NLA, Brett discussed measures taken by the NLA, especially those through Cornerstone Government Affairs, the lobbying firm retained by the NLA. Brett pointed out that we were also fortunate to have the best lobbying firm in Massachusetts, retained by the NELA, and the importance of operators maintaining membership in both their local association, as well as the national association.

NELA board member, Mark Kini of Boston Chauffeur, talked about the ongoing work of the NELA and keyed in on the huge opportunity that operators have relative to the ERTC, and shared his personal experiences with that opportunity. The magnitude of the opportunity was highlighted by Mark, and he recommended that MA operators take advantage of all the benefits currently on the table.

Brett, Mark and Rick discussed their recent meeting at Logan Airport. During that meeting, new traffic patterns were reviewed, and each of the four terminals were visited. Brett pointed out that once the construction is completed, terminal exits impacting on each other, will be a thing of the past. During the terminal visits, Mark and Brett identified areas where improved limo signage was needed, and those requests were made of Logan Airport management.

Rick recapped the 2016 TNC legislation penned by the NELA, which resulted in the TIEF fund, and the benefits to date, as well as those soon-to-be-realized. He identified HR opportunities through MP, as well as personal improvement through Billy The Coach. Rick discussed marketing by Curtis Gabriel and The LMC Group, and thanked Kato Murray and Lucas Dionne of The LMC Group who attended that evening. Current marketing efforts are focused on securing applicants for chauffeur positions. MP which offers HR benefits to businesses, has established a microsite, puts on webinars, and offers MA operators the opportunity to submit questions. Soon-to-be-launched benefits will be DOT training by LBC Fleet, and defensive-driver-training through The Smith System.

Rick thanked Tina Benson of LA Limousine who came up with the idea for the ugly Christmas sweater contests for the evening, and Rick reminded everyone that Tina and her brother Carl were responsible for the appearance of past Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, about two years ago at a breakfast meeting at the CD Show in Boston.

Meeting sponsors for the evening were Lancer Insurance and Research Underwriters. Steve Crispo of Research Underwriters, and longtime Vendor Director on the NELA board, thanked members and wished all attendees a happy holiday season. Kevin Cronin and Brett Barenholtz of Above All Transportation were thanked for serving as the evening's Entertainment Sponsor. LBC Fleet served as the Cocktail Sponsor, and Chris Przybylski was thanked for attending. The numerous Raffle Sponsors were thanked, including Amela and Brion Svenson of Four Star Limousine, Deb Rourke of Avery Insurance, Joe Puleo and Matt Green of Dav El/BostonCoach, Richard Tessier, Karrine Tessier, Stephanie Allen, and Ric Dasilva of Great Bay Limousine, Center Insurance Agency and Chauffeur Driven. Mitch Guralnick and Joan Libby of Prevost attended, and Mitch addressed the group. Rick thanked Corky Renzi of Transport The People, and several attendees were present of new member and sponsor, Sky Coach & Transportation. That group included Cody Belanger, Jeffery Pruyne and Kelsy Townsend. Also sponsoring was United Private Car, and both Jason Dornhoffer and Terry Murtaugh attended.

Dorian Conga and Marinela Gjika of new member Boston Lane Limousine were in attendance and thanked for their membership. There were two prizes awarded, one for ugliest and one for most original Christmas Sweater. Prizes went to Terry Murtaugh of United Private Car, and Greg Hawes of Boston Chauffeur.