

UTASA BULLETIN



Fifth Edition

29th October 2009

Apology

Hi Guys!! One must apologize for this very late edition. We are relocating to new premises and are caught up in this process. After this experience I do not relish the idea of moving house unless forced to do so by circumstances absolutely beyond my control. It should be another two weeks before we are finished and finally settled in with Telkom being the chief culprit in the delay.

Oom Koos witnessing all this cannot fathom the reason for the move despite all explanations'. One has to be sympathetic with the aged gentleman, what with having trekked from the platteland to the city; all this activity brings back painful memories of that upheaval and subsequent adjustment to city life. Oom decides to leave us to our packing and makes his way from the office to his apartment on the fourth floor of the building where he and his son are tenants. One of those rare moments when one is glad to see the back of him as there is much to do.

Phones, faxes and the internet are still on until Telkom decides to oblige and transfer to the new premises. Fortunately we can still communicate from the old office otherwise we would have missed what seems to be surprising news.

Department of Transport Communiqué.

It seems like the “chickens have come home to roost” for the towing community. The National Consumer Council, press, motorist, Insurance Industry, repairers, car hire companies and hell even Oom Koos have long complained about the tactics of rogue elements within the towing fraternity. So what came through e-mail from the Department of Transport’s Acting Chief Director Road Traffic Regulation, Mr. Ngwako Thako’s desk, should not have come as a surprise. A letter of Intent of Law Making, regarding amongst other issues point 6 in this letter quote;

“TO REGULATE THE TOW TRUCK AND ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE SERVICES BUSINESS, THE RELEVANT SERVICE PROVIDERS AND THEIR OPERATIONS BY INTRODUCING THE TOW TRUCK DRAFT BILL TO CABINET”.

And point 6.d)

“THE DEPARTMENT INTENDS TO REGULATE AND IMPROVE THE STANDARDS OF THE TOW TRUCK INDUSTRY AND THE OPERATION OF THESE MOTOR VEHICLES ON THE PUBLIC ROAD.”

So it is with some amusement that one reads the “newsflashes” doing the rounds within the towing community. The “Newsflashes” reflect the mentality of an organization desperate to retain and regain membership. Pathetically this also reflects the mentality of the individual disseminating the information. No mention is made of the one tonner sling in this communiqué received from the department of transport. We have from a reliable source learnt that the main objective is to address the ridiculous rates levied and root out the rogue elements within the industry. One hopes that the role players in the towing industry will join hands and cooperate with the department on this issue rather than engaging in childish mudslinging.

That the department took so long to react to this problem is deplorable. That the department of transport is considering doing something is commendable. However as past experience has taught this may come to naught. Consider also that this has still to be lodged in the government gazette. The drafting of a white paper, sending out for public comment and the parliamentary process will also take a while if this process goes all the way. So it may be some time before we see any action resulting from the Letter of Intent. One has to remember though that the towing industry is not very popular with the motorist, insurers and repairers and should there be any movement regarding this letter of intent the towing fraternity is in for a hostile response.

OOM KOOS PONDERERS

As much as I was glad to see the old geezer go, I feel that the communiqué from the department of transport, together with the nonsensical “Newsflashes” needs his insight. I subsequently make my way to Oom anxious to get his opinion.

Oom’s Engels is not so good so one has to read and explain then wait for him to digest, ponder and comment. Oom goes through his pipe filling, lighting and sucking routine before expressing an opinion. Must I add that regret creeps in as Oom takes his time, what with having to get back to the office and help with relocation process Oom under the circumstances really tests one’s patience. However having committed one just has to wait.

Oom referring to the “newsflash” asks “wie is Bazil?” (This is going to be a session!!) In reply I pop into Oom Koos’s video machine a copy of the Carte Blanche interview and inform him after viewing as to the identity of “Bazil”. The old geezer coughs and lets out a loud Afrikaner hearty laugh. Bliksem!! So die skrywer maak gek van die leser van die “Newsflash”. I cannot help but chuckle yes Oom Koos has it right the author of the seemingly idiotic “Newsflash” was just either too lazy to establish the identity of this entity or as evident has malicious intent and is deliberately misleading. Very interesting and shrewd!! One must compliment the author of these “Newsflashes”

Unfortunately for the author, says Oom, the towing community of today is not so easily misled and fittingly treats these faxes as junk mail. Had too many of them to take them seriously and the intent is obvious.

On the Department of Transport’s Letter of Intent, Oom Koos feels that this is just an attempt to pacify the disgruntled motorist and consumers who have flooded the department with complaints. The DOT has enough on its’ hands with the taxi industry, BRT, cross border negotiations, rail freight and the upcoming world cup to bother with a few motorist who may be the victims of their own recklessness. Should the department attempt though to implement regulation on the towing fraternity it would not be soon enough. Oom reckons self regulation has been a dismal failure leading to self enrichment, abuse of power discarding the interest of the smaller players in the industry and side lining of towers views. Regulation may in the end be to the benefit of the smaller players and the consumer.

At this point I decide to take my leave of Oom and head back to the office pondering over his utterances. Make a mental note “need to address and investigate seriousness of transport department letter of intent.”

AGM

UTASA will be conducting its annual general meeting on the 14th November 2009 Saturday at Gold Reef City, giving its members the democratic right and opportunity to return the same executive committee, elect a new committee or make selective changes based on performance.

This is commendable as it keeps the membership in control of the organization and does not lead to the organization becoming the sole preserve of any one individual. It is in the members’ interest that they attend in numbers.

Check our website www.utasa.co.za for previous editions.