

# Duo's on the road, and their business is picking up

BY MATT JACHMAN  
STAFF WRITER

A father-and-son-team with more than 60 combined years in the taxicab business is opening up new territory in Redford and Westland. ABC Cab, based in Livonia, has long served other suburbs west of Detroit. It was recently awarded bond plates for Redford, township officials said.

"We were turning down probably close to 20 calls a month" from would-be fares in Redford, said Bob Waite, president of ABC.

With its new Redford bond plates — the small metal plates the township issues when it licenses taxis — ABC drivers can legally pick up passengers in the township. ABC drivers also have township public vehicle licenses, and its cabs passed a police inspection.

ABC also moved into Westland within the past year, Waite said.

Waite and his father, Charles, have been trying to improve the business since buying ABC in 2001.

The fleet has been modernized, cabs have been painted with a new ABC logo and drivers use checklists during inspections at the beginning of every shift to make sure their cabs are safe and neat.

"No one drives a vehicle until all those checks are done," Bob Waite said. Courtesy and a professional attitude are stressed to drivers, he said.

ABC has 40 drivers, who are independent contractors, and a fleet of 18 cabs, five unmarked sedans and two vans, each with a wheelchair lift (sedan and van rides are charged at flat rates).

Business is growing, Waite said.

"Once (customers) get in our car and they have that safe feeling and they have a driver that they're comfortable with," negative attitudes

some may have about taxis change, he said.

ABC moved in July to a nearly 10,000-square-foot facility off of Livonia, south of I-96. The facility has a spacious garage, where ABC's two mechanics work.

The company had been in a cramped 2,500-square-foot building on Amrhein, with the dispatch center in a hallway.

"It was a tough deal. ... Now we have lots of room to grow," Waite said.

In addition to Redford, Westland and Livonia, ABC is licensed to pick up passengers in Farmington, Farmington Hills, Plymouth, Northville and Novi, and Canton, Plymouth and Northville townships.

"We're going to concentrate in those areas and try to build up clientele," Waite said.

The company has a dial-a-ride contract with Farmington and Farmington Hills and works with Mothers Against Drunk Driving each New Year's Eve to give holiday imbibers safe rides home.

Waite has spent 18 years in the cab business; he and his father used to have an interest Checker Cab in Detroit, which they sold.

Charles Waite started in the cab business in 1958; his father was also in the business. He said he's noticed the same strong sense of community in the western suburbs that he felt in Detroit years ago.

"I grew up with cabs, there's no doubt about that," Bob Waite said.

ABC is the third cab company to become licensed in Redford in the past year. Before that, the only company licensed had let its bond plates lapse; they must be renewed annually. ABC Cab can be reached toll free at (800) 563-4222 (or 563-4ABC).

mjachman@home.com | (734) 953-2105



JIM JACOBFIELD / OBSERVER

ABC Cab, which provides service in the Farmington area, is owned by Charles Waite (left) and his son, Bob Waite. Together, they have more than 60 years of experience in the taxi business.

## Final registration for OCC is Jan. 2-4

Final walk-in and telephone registration for Oakland Community College's Winter 2003 semester is scheduled for Jan. 2-4. Registration hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Jan. 2; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Jan. 3; and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Jan. 4.

Classes begin Monday, Jan. 6. Prospective students may apply, see an academic adviser to work out their class schedules, and enroll during the final registration period. There is no charge to apply, but payment for classes is due the same day that the student enrolls. Michigan residents who are

60 years of age or before the first day of classes are eligible for a 20 percent discount on OCC credit classes. Applicants must complete and file a Senior Citizens Tuition Discount Verification Form, with proof of birth date, at the campus of their choice prior to registering. The discount does not apply to registration or other course fees.

Registration for the winter semester will take place at the following sites:  
■ Auburn Hills Campus, 2900 Featherstone Road, Auburn Hills. Call (248) 232-

4100.

■ Highland Lakes Campus, 7350 Cooley Lake Road, Waterford. Call (248) 942-3100.

■ Orchard Ridge Campus, 27055 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Call (248) 522-3400.

■ Royal Oak Campus, 739 South Washington, Royal Oak. Call (248) 246-2400.

■ Southfield Campus, 23322 Rutland Drive, Southfield. Call (248) 233-2700.

Oakland Community College is closed for the holidays through Jan. 2.



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER / OBSERVER

### Audience participation

Kids gathered Thursday evening at SWOCC studios to sit at Santa's knee for the annual Santa call-in show. Four-year-old Maria Peralta sat on Santa's knee and received a cute little stuffed doggie.

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