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Vancouver ranks top with hybrid cabs as Appleton Foundation launches national program to reduce emissions

By Terry Hadley
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Yellow Cabs' driver Diamond Shivji is one of the reasons Vancouver is ranked as one of the world's most progressive cities in cutting back fuel emissions.

One of the first cab drivers to convert his Toyota Prius over to a hybrid model, Shivji has covered the \$35,000 conversion cost through fuel savings in less than three years. "It has been no problem and is very reliable — I would never go back," he said at a press conference during last week's Young Global Leaders Annual Summit hosted by Vancouver for the first time.



Around 48 Vancouver cabs are now hybrid and the number is only set to grow following the launch of GreenApple, a new \$1-million public education and research program run by the Appleton Foundation to encourage Canadian cities to reduce emissions.

(top) "Vancouver ranks amongst the best in North America because of its embracing of catalytic and hybrid technology," said Appleton; Vancouver cab driver Shivja (left) with Rezac

"Vancouver ranks amongst the very best in North America because of its embracing of catalytic and hybrid technology — it really is one of the best cities to live, work and play," said Young Global Leader Barry Appleton, chairman, the Appleton Charitable Foundation and national director of the new GreenApple program.

To bring attention to the issue, GreenApple will produce a national report ranking 20 Canadian cities according to air quality control measures implemented. "This is a public health issue and it is an immediate issue," Appleton said.

An integral part of the program is a new partnership between GreenApple and SmartTransportation.org, a

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not-for-profit U.S.-based organization recognized recently by the William Clinton Foundation for leading legislation reform to allow the conversion of more than 12,000 New York cabs to hybrid vehicles.

The two organizations aim to promote the conversion of taxis and public transportation to hybrid and alternative fuel use across Canada.

"One in eight kids in New York suffered from side effects from car emissions and from power plants. Now cities like San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles... city by city is taking the initiative, and it's making a difference," explained SmartTransportation.org chairman Jack D. Hidary.

"Not everyone realizes hybrid cabs are illegal in some cities. It was illegal in New York because of the large specifications for cabs and the legislation had to be changed. That's why Vancouver is very progressive and is one of the top one or two cities dealing successfully with these issues."

Darcy Rezac, Vancouver Board of Trade managing director and one of the Young Global Leaders session presenters, thanked and congratulated GreenApple and Vancouver's taxi business for promoting sustainable transportation in the city.

For more information, visit www.appletonfoundation.org, www.smarttransportation.org and www.younggloballeaders.org.



Tara Boatness of Leaders of Tomorrow learns about the advantages of hybrid technology from SmartTransportation.org chairman Jack Hidary (centre) and executive director Todd Sigarty (right)

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