



# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on October 27, 2025.

The Board approved the consent calendar which included a contract award for managed IT support services and the renewal of various Agency insurance policies.

The Board also heard an update on the Free Fare program along with legislative updates from its local, state and federal lobbyists.

Access' Annual Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 24, 2025 and the next full meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for December 8, 2025.

**Andre Colaiace**  
**Executive Director**

## Antelope Valley Region General Manager takes a balanced approach to success

The Antelope Valley Region of Access's sprawling service area is both literally and figuratively far removed from the majority of Los Angeles County. It is behind a mountain range from the San Fernando Valley, which itself is distant from Downtown Los Angeles. The high desert of Lancaster and Palmdale is where Victor Garate and his Transdev team work tirelessly to provide "reliable and innovative [transportation] solutions that serve the common good," as the company's mission statement promises.



Operations can be a challenge, as the Antelope Valley has the greatest variety of weather-related events in the entire Access service area. Snow, ice, sandstorms, fierce winds, intense heat and floods all impact the region. Preparedness is a significant priority to ensure that the team and its fleet of accessible vehicles are ready for whatever may come. "We get all the

seasons," Garate explained. It is a different world from East Los Angeles, where Garate grew up as part of a family of six.

Garate, who is the General Manager of the Antelope Valley service region, has always been interested in helping. He taught children for a time in East Los Angeles and once aspired to be a teacher full time. He has two children with disabilities himself, so he understands why Access is important for the community. "We all might need paratransit one day," he explained.

Garate has been deeply involved in paratransit and the disability community for a long time now. He served on the Long Beach Citizen's Advisory Commission on Disabilities and worked for Global Paratransit in a wide variety of roles before taking on the General Manager position in the Antelope Valley with Transdev. He works to deliver the "best service possible" with "safety and reliability" at the forefront. He uses a balanced management approach, giving people the space and opportunity to shine while providing needed managerial support. Operational performance for the last full quarter has been solid, with the

contractor meeting every single key performance indicator that is used to measure service quality, including an impressively low complaint rate of 1.1 complaints per 1,000 trips as well as 94.4% on time performance.

When it comes to the Antelope Valley, it is advantageous to have a local resident serve as General Manager, given its comparative isolation from the rest of Los Angeles County. Garate lives in the area, giving him a good perspective on the needs of the community and the unique challenges of the region which helps him and his team continue to provide great service for Access customers of the Antelope Valley.

**Alex Chrisman**  
Emergency Management Coordinator

## Light the Path: 2025 NEOGOV Ignite Conference



What does it take to spark real change in public sector HR? At this year's NEOGOV Ignite Conference, the answer was clear: innovation, resilience, and a willingness to light the path forward. As a leader in HR, payroll, talent management, and compliance solutions for the public sector, NEOGOV set the tone with this year's theme, "Light the Path", a call for leaders to embrace innovation, navigate change, and pursue new opportunities with purpose and vision.

The conference brought together over 1,200 HR professionals, public safety experts, and education leaders for three days of hands-on training, thought

leadership, and networking. Each session was designed to spark new ideas, foster collaboration, and inspire attendees to lead their organizations forward.

The keynote speaker, Dominique Dawes, Olympic gymnast, business owner, and advocate, shared her journey of resilience and leadership. Her story was a reminder that true progress comes from overcoming obstacles and lighting the way for others. Additional keynote speakers included Sasha Larkin, retired Assistant Sheriff of Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, and leadership expert Adam Mendler, each offering unique perspectives on leading through change and building strong, inclusive teams.

I attended workshops focused on employee engagement, leadership development, and the future of HR technology. NEOGOV unveiled new AI-powered workforce management solutions, promising to help public sector organizations work smarter and serve their communities more effectively. A key takeaway was the importance of leveraging technology to streamline workflows and create environments where employees feel valued and empowered.

The conference also provided opportunities to connect with peers, share best practices, and explore the latest trends in public sector HR. I left the conference feeling energized and equipped with actionable strategies to help our organization adapt, innovate, and thrive.

**Melissa Lucero**  
Human Resources Administrator

## Commendations

### Northern Region

"Arturo was so polite and patient. He was very nice and respectful, I give him a 10 out of 10."

***Nicole Griner***

***Rider since December 2006***

### Eastern Region

"I would like to file a smile for Amy, whom I spoke with to book a ride for tomorrow. Amy was kind, patient, and an active listener. She was very good at understanding my needs. She is a great example of customer service and a very nice person."

***Jenny Yoon***

***Rider since January 2022***