Executive Director’s Report

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is the country’s largest organization and leading force dedicated to advancing public transportation in the United States.

APTA’s largest conference is its Annual Meeting, which this year was held at the J.W. Marriott hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. L.A. Metro served as the host agency for the conference and over 2,500 attendees came from across the country.

As you will see in this edition of Behind the Scenes, Access staff played a big role at the Annual Meeting from participating in various panels to receiving scholarships. All in all, it was a great conference and Access looks forward to continuing its productive relationship with APTA in the future.

Andre Colaiace
Interim Executive Director

APTA Foundation Scholarship Award Recipients

It was a proud moment on the late afternoon of September 13th when three of Access’ own were honored at APTA’s Foundation Scholarship Awards ceremony. After a number of key speakers described the Foundation’s mission and history, and after APTA Chair and Access Board Member Doran Barnes spoke to the audience, scholarship recipients from across the country were introduced and paraded across the stage to receive recognition. Access was well represented among the award winners with Safety Analyst Cynthia Perkins-Stevenson, Operations Service Monitors Faustino Salvador and Jessica Thompson being lauded and being presented with a $5,000 scholarship to help with their continued education.

All three of the scholarship winners are pursuing their Bachelor’s Degree at the University of La Verne. Here’s what they had to say:

Cynthia Perkins-Stevenson - “The APTF scholarship has impacted my life like never before. Opportunities to expand my career professionally and personally have grown much further than I could have imagined. My peers are not only looking at me as a long time pioneer in the transit/paratransit industry but as an educated person as well. As they say in the stock market, my shares are up! The opportunities have grown after receiving the APTA scholarship. The program has not only helped me continue my education, but it has also allowed me the opportunity to meet and network with new faces from the transit/paratransit industry. This year I met a lot of my peers from all over the world! I made a promise to my mother before she died and I told my grandchildren that I would continue my studies until I receive my Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration. I told my grandchildren that you are never too old to learn. As I’ve gotten older, I find myself more focused than ever. For the first time in my life, I feel my self-worth.”

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Faustino Salvador - “The American Public Transportation Foundation Scholarship is helping me work toward a degree in Public Administration at the University of La Verne. The scholarship has allowed me to focus on my academics without the financial burden of tuition expenses. The added pressure for receiving the scholarship is pushing me to graduate much faster. Being an APTA scholarship recipient is allowing me to visualize my transportation career at Access for the near future.”

Jessica Thompson - “Receiving the 2016 APTF Scholarship was such a wonderful experience. Not only will this help tremendously with tuition but it also represents more than just monetary value, it represents hard work and dedication. Before enrolling at University of La Verne I had actively avoided pursuing an education because I doubted my abilities as a student. Receiving this scholarship only solidifies in my mind that I can accomplish the goals I set for myself as well as renew my interest in the transit industry.”

Mike Greenwood, Deputy Executive Director Operations & Safety

Access Board Member Doran Barnes Appointed APTA Chair for 2016-2017

Executive Director of Foothill Transit and Access Services Board Member Doran Barnes was recently elected APTA Chair and head of APTA’s Executive Committee at the APTA annual meeting. Mr. Barnes has been an active participant with APTA most recently serving as Vice-Chair on APTA’s Executive Committee.

In his role as APTA Chair, Mr. Barnes will work with APTA to continue its mission of promoting public transportation throughout the United States and also advocating for improvements in the field of public transportation.

During his speech at the Opening Session of the APTA Annual Meeting, Mr. Barnes set forth the priorities he and APTA will focus upon in the 2016-2017 year: (1) Improvements to transit safety and security; (2) Ensure transit is a key issue with the new presidential administration & Congress; (3) Strengthen APTA’s governance and bylaws and begin the search for a new APTA CEO; (4) Expand APTA’s approach to diversity and inclusion; and (6) Continue to deliver value to APTA members.

In his new role as APTA Chair, Mr. Barnes will work to promote the need for public transportation nationwide and as board member of Access Services, continue to support the need for paratransit improvements. Access is happy to congratulate a member of its own family for receiving such a high honor.

Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner
APTA Focuses on Accessible Fixed Route Service and Paratransit in Los Angeles

Dan Levy, L.A. Metro’s Civil Rights Officer, and I provided presentations on the public transportation systems in Los Angeles. Mr. Levy provided a detailed presentation on the great variety of improvements that Metro has adopted to reduce barriers to fixed route service for persons with disabilities, while at the same time not taking away from system reliability or timeliness. Improvements ranged from improved and expanded mobility device securement locations on buses to better lighting at rail stations.

Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner

Access Weighs in on APTA Panel on Mobility Management

On Wednesday, September 14th, APTA hosted an educational session at their Annual Meeting titled, “Strategies for Integrated Mobility Management.” Members of the panel included representatives from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Easter Seals, Project Action who discussed different grant programs and approaches to providing innovative options to meet the various transportation needs of transit customers.

Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer of Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority of St. Petersburg, Florida spoke of an approach her agency had recently launched in which the agency partnered with Uber so that customers could use that service during hours that bus service was suspended in the community. It was an example of how some systems are partnering with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber to meet transportation demands that traditional bus agencies may not be able to meet.

Andre Colaiace, Interim Executive Director of Access Services, provided a perspective on the barriers and opportunities for paratransit to work with TNCs. Mr. Colaiace stated that paratransit agencies need to look at as many options as possible to meet future demand, including taxis and TNCs. However, current federal legislation and regulations impede paratransit systems like Access from partnering with programs like Lyft and Uber. Mr. Colaiace concluded his presentation by describing opportunities for the FTA to be a little more flexible with its rules associated with partnering with TNCs. He also suggested that TNCs could accept some regulation in order for them to participate in the multi-billion-dollar paratransit market.

Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner

Mr. Haack provided an overview of Access’ eligibility process and how Access and its contractor C.A.R.E. Evaluators determine an applicant’s needs with respect to ADA paratransit eligibility. Mr. Haack concluded his presentation with an overview of the initial results of a national on-line survey that Access launched in May of 2016 trying to learn from other paratransit systems as to how they approached of paratransit eligibility.
Access Services’ own Director of Administration F. Scott Jewell graduated from the prestigious Leadership APTA program at APTA’s Annual Meeting on Tuesday, September 13th. Leadership APTA is APTA’s premier professional development program designed to develop and support experienced managers and leaders aspiring to hold senior and executive leadership positions.

Leadership APTA focuses on growing future leaders in the public transportation industry, giving participants the opportunity to learn from industry executive leaders as well as other colleagues from across the country. The 2016-2017 class of Leadership APTA marked the 20th year of this program. This year’s 25 individuals took part in an intensive year-long program that included skill-building workshops, executive roundtables, team leadership projects, on-line meetings and web-based events.

At the APTA Annual Meeting, F. Scott presented the results of an extensive research project on, “A New Playbook for Transit - The evolution of publicly funded transit in an age of technological advancement and high customer expectations,” on which he worked with Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer - Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority; Kristin Essner, Principal Government Relations Representative - Orange County Transportation Authority; and Raymond Mui, Director of Planning and Scheduling - Alexandria Transit Company who were also part of the 2016 Leadership graduating class. Access congratulates F. Scott Jewell for his achievement in completing the rigorous year-long program!

Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner
Rider Comments

"Karen D. was very compassionate and was able to calm me down. Karen provided excellent service and I appreciated her help."

**Estrella Santiago**
(customer since February 2014)

"I called OMC and spoke with Stephanie V. and she was very kind. She exceeded my expectations in helping me book a different pickup time. Because of Stephanie I was able to meet my son on time. Thanks Access."

**Jon L. Mann**
(customer since December 2013)