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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

As we "spring" forward this weekend, things are hopping at Access. Moving into the last quarter of the fiscal year, there are a few exciting projects that are in the pipeline. Here is a brief outline of a few of those projects:

- Customer Service - We have been very impressed so far with our new contractor and expect the transition will go smoothly.
- "Where's My Ride" - We kicked off this project by meeting with our developer recently. We plan to start registering customers in the coming months.
- Eligibility - Staff is considering a new location for its eligibility center and new satellite locations. In addition, enhancements will be made to some of the current sites.
- SmartDrive - Access will be upgrading its on-board camera system to ensure that we have the footage we need to keep our customers safe.
- Access Brand - We are seeking a design firm to help us maintain our positive reputation in the community.

Shelly Verrinder, Executive Director

Access Staff Recognizes Contractor Personnel

Over a three week period, February 8 - 26, Access Operations staff and Road Safety Inspectors visited each of the six contractor call centers, dispatch offices, and operating locations to recognize every contract employee for their dedication and hard work in providing quality service to our riders. A total of 2,100 Access goodie bags were awarded to employees of the six contractors. During this time, Access staff had the opportunity to personally thank about 1,500 contract drivers, call-takers, dispatchers, mechanics, and administrative personnel that range from newly hired drivers to ten-year veteran dispatchers.



Darwin Brown Sharan Jones

The Access goodie bag award consisted of a pen with a stylus, tire gauge keychain, hand sanitizer spray, and a portfolio with a notepad, all inside an Access duffel bag. Smiles were in abundance as contract employees were delighted to be recognized for their contributions to the overall delivery of service to our Access riders. "Some drivers, upon receiving their awards, moved their belongings to their new Access duffel bags to proudly display these bags before leaving the yard. Other drivers and contractor staff, came up to Access staff to thank them for recognizing the work they do. It is because of the dedication and hard work of these individuals that Access is able to provide valuable service to our riders each and every day."

Jack Garate, Operations Administrator

Shark Tank: Trapeze Style

Have you ever watched the show SharkTank? I'm proud to announce that I was selected to participate in Trapeze's version of Shark Tank at the upcoming 2016 Trapeze Users Conference. Trapeze, a leading public transportation technology firm that is best known for its transit routing software, is offering attendees a chance to pitch ideas for a new product or feature for inclusion in their demand response product suite.

I will be pitching a cost-effective ADA paratransit certification process that will improve the likelihood that prospective customers receive the correct eligibility determination. I think a software-based interactive eligibility application that creates a predictive eligibility score would significantly enhance the effectiveness of the eligibility process and lead to more accurate determinations. The Trapeze User Conference will take place in Austin, TX, April 3-6, 2016. Wish me luck!



Sarah Boden, Chief Operating Officer

LAUSD's 1st Annual Special Education Parent Summit



On March 3rd, Access Mobility and Operations staff traveled to the California Endowment Center downtown to participate in the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) first annual special education parent summit. The summit was coordinated by La Shun Washington of LAUSD and their theme was, "Parents as Partners. One Team, One Mission." This summit, sponsored by the LAUSD Charter Operated Programs Division of Special Education, proved to be a positive event for parents, education administrators, teachers and social workers who were all in attendance.

Along with Access, there were a number of other health care and social service resource professionals for parents and other attendees to take advantage of. They all sought information on Access eligibility and how the service operates. Staff also assisted attendees with transportation-related alternatives that may be a good fit for them. The parent summit provided individual sessions as well with presentations on topics such as Parent and Student Rights, Transitions to Life After High School, and Understanding Disabilities. The event closed with a question and answer session.

Access is looking forward to attending the next summit, and continuing our work educating the community about Access and other transportation related alternatives always serves our community well.

Steve Wrenn, Senior Mobility Management Counselor



APTA Marketing and Communications Workshop

I recently had the opportunity to attend the APTA Marketing and Communications Workshop in Phoenix, Arizona. The workshop lasted four days and offered a variety of informative sessions. Some of those topics include Branding, Campaigns for Customers, Creating a Partnership Between Public Transit and App-Based Ridership Services, and the Social Media Landscape.

Out of all the topics, the Social Media Landscape was the most interesting to me. I had several questions going into the session:

- What public agencies are using social media?
- What social platforms work best? Why are they successful?
- How is social media improving the dialogue between agencies and the customer?

I learned from Kevin Lee, Marketing Manager for Long Beach Transit, that social media is most successful when it teaches the user more than it tries to sell to the user. An interesting approach is the 80/20 rule, which simply states that 20% of the time you should create content that deals directly with your agency's services while the other 80% of the time should be spent engaging the user in an entertaining and informative way. Kevin said an example of this would be using "Throw Back Thursday" to post historical information about Long Beach rather than talk directly about services offered by Long Beach Transit.

In the next couple of months, I will be looking at ways to use social media to further Access' mission and engage with our customers. While Access isn't focused on gaining ridership like a traditional fixed-route agency, we should use social media to engage with the customer to inform them of Access and the services we provide.

Josh Southwick, Marketing Coordinator

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Rider Comments

David Mejia (Customer Since 2010)

"Customer Service Representative Armando was very helpful and I appreciate his professionalism and he deserves a big smile."

Lynne Nishihara (Customer Since 2015)

Juanita CSR - "The customer states that this reservation agent is excellent and provides excellent service."



Access Board of Directors Meeting

The Access Services Board of Directors met on March 7th at Metro.

The Board approved the Consent Calendar and also approved a modification to the Agency's procurement policies.

In addition to these action items, staff made a number of informational presentations to the Board which included:

- A status update on the Agency's real estate plans for the coming year;
- A presentation on vehicle operator recruitment and retention;
- A FY 16 mid-year financial update.

For the full agenda, please go to the Access website at www.accessla.org.

Andre Colaiace, Deputy Executive Director, Planning and Governmental Affairs