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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

I recently had the pleasure of serving as a guest speaker for COMTO's 1st Annual Women Leaders of Southern CA Awards Event. I was extremely proud to participate in this event, which honored a number of women for their contributions to public transit. (You can see Faye Moseley's write up on page 3.)

I spoke about how I started out as a bus driver, graduated from UC Davis and drove a commuter route for Yolo County for a dollar more than minimum wage. And how, for the last 20 years, I've watched Access, which started with 200 riders a day, grow to where it is now providing over 11,000 trips per day to over 170,000 registered riders. I also spoke about the challenges of providing paratransit in Los Angeles. As I like to say, we have to reinvent ourselves every night, based on who calls us the day before and where they want to go.

I enjoy working in transit and paratransit because we really make a difference. And I appreciate organizations such as COMTO because they make a difference to those of us in the transit industry. Because of COMTO, we are able to take advantage of training, education and professional development to improve not only professionally, but personally as well.

Shelly Verrinder,
Executive Director

Five Star Bus Roadeo



On Saturday, March 19th, Gardena Transit (GTrans) hosted the "Five Star Bus Roadeo" at their bus yard in Gardena, CA. Five agencies participated: Torrance Transit, Norwalk Transit, Gardena Transit, Culver CityBus, and Montebello Bus

Lines. Over 50 drivers participated in the event and there was a great deal of camaraderie amongst all of the participants. Access staff who served as judges included Rogelio Gomez, Project Administrator; Steve Montes, Risk Management Analyst; and me.

The weather did not deter agency staff, judges, drivers, colleagues and families from cheering on operators competing in the hopes of representing the region at the Roadeo National Championship. Obstacles were strategically placed at the GTrans bus yard for drivers and included pulling up at a simulated bus stop, right and left turn reverse, serpentine, and diminishing clearance. All of the obstacle courses were timed from start to finish with speed and safety in the scoring process as well.



The competition concluded with a BBQ lunch and was followed by an awards ceremony. Each transit agency awarded their top scoring driver from the pre-trip inspection with a plaque. Then the top three drivers with the highest scores from each transit agency received a trophy.

Access congratulates all the participants in the "Five Star Bus Roadeo" and wishes the best to all the bus drivers going to the national competition later this year!

Fayma Ishaq, Project Administrator



Driver Safety Recognition Program- Safe Miles Driven on the Road

Access is in the process of honoring vehicle operators for their safe driving efforts as part of the Driver Safety Recognition Program. Drivers who have no preventable collisions or incidents, no valid safety complaints, and no significant SmartDrive events are eligible to receive prizes based on the number of safe miles driven. This program serves as a small token of appreciation for Access drivers who transport our customers all over Los Angeles County in a timely and safe manner.

On Friday, March 18th, Access staff traveled to Van Nuys to visit MV Transportation, contractor for the Northern region, to distribute great prizes to their drivers. Over 40 drivers received prizes according to the number of miles they have driven without a disqualifying incident. These prizes included Access backpacks at 25,000 miles; Access jackets at 50,000 miles; flat screen televisions at 75,000 miles; Disneyland Park tickets at 100,000 miles; and large flat screen televisions, a computer and printer bundle, or Universal Studios or Knott's Berry Farm tickets at 150,000 to 200,000 safe miles. The event was a genuinely positive experience for both Access staff and the drivers, many of whom were ecstatic to receive their prizes.

The Access team appreciates all the drivers and associated staff who make safety a priority each day. To our drivers, keep up the good work!

Christina Blanco, Operations Service Monitor
Fayma Ishaq, Project Administrator

Transit System Security Training

I recently had the opportunity to attend the Transit System Security training held at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority headquarters building in Los Angeles from March 14 - 18. The training focused on providing participants with the knowledge and skills to successfully implement the fundamentals of Transit System Security within their organizations.

While safety is described as freedom from unintentional danger, security is defined as freedom from intentional danger against passengers, employees, and the transit system. System security is comprised of people, procedures, equipment and the environment and uses operating, technical, and management principles to reduce the threats and vulnerabilities of a transit system to the lowest practical level. Some characteristics of Transit System Security include an emphasis on crime prevention, the use of crime/incident data collection and analysis to allocate appropriate resources, as well as playing a role in the manner in which passengers and employees move to the transit system, and the vulnerabilities that may exist within policies and procedures, plans, and property.

The training was attended by 26 representatives from 11 different public agencies as well as private-sector organizations in the transportation industry. Joe D. Acosta, Steve Dallman, and Hubert J. M. King with the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) facilitated the 5-day training.

Jack Garate, Operations Administrator



Access Attends WTS-LA METRANS Event at USC

Access Services staff members recently participated in the WTS-LA, USC and METRANS event, *Boots on the Ground, Flats in the Boardroom: Transportation Women Tell Their Stories*, held at the Doheny Memorial Library on the USC campus. *Boots on the Ground, Flats in the Boardroom* is a new book that details the rise of 18 pioneering women in transportation by telling their stories in their words. The spring Practitioner Speaker Series event brought together industry, agency, academia, and the next generation to inspire and motivate all levels of the workforce.

The event was moderated by BART general manager Grace Crunican, co-author of the book. Panelists included Dana Hook, Vice President at CDM Smith; LaVerne Francis Reid, former Airports Division Manager of the Federal Aviation Administration; Mengzhao Hu, Senior Transportation Planner with KOA Corporation and Jim Moore, USC Viterbi School of Engineering, Vice Dean of Academic Affairs and WTS-LA Director-at-Large. Jim is a staunch advocate for women in transportation. He provided compelling context and advice from his years of experience and advocacy.

Stories have power, but only if people know them. The lessons shared in the book are extraordinary. From remarkable leadership to monumental challenges to outrageous feats, the experiences of these pioneering women provide an invaluable perspective that can help inspire the next generation of transportation leaders. Access was proud to provide copies of the groundbreaking book for students attending the event.

WTS-LA is the Los Angeles chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar or WTS. An international organization with more than 6,000 members—both women and men—WTS is dedicated to building the future of transit through women's advancement.

Access attends COMTO's Women Leaders of Southern CA Awards Event

In observance of Women's History Month, the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) recently honored six women in Southern California whose public service contributions have significantly benefitted the surrounding communities and the transportation industry. On Tuesday, March 22, Access Executive Director, Shelly Verrinder served as a Guest Speaker, and I acted as Mistress of Ceremonies at the 1st Annual Awards Event. Access Boardmember Kim Turner and other Access staff were in attendance.

The Honorable Hilda Solis, Supervisor, 1st District, Los Angeles County received the Distinguished Society Lifetime Achievement Award; Leilia Bailey-Leahy, received the Distinguish Transportation Lifetime Achievement Award; Gwiin Correa, Chief Equal Employment Opportunity, California Department of Transportation, District 7 received the Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Award; and Outstanding Transportation Executive Leadership Awards were presented to Debra Johnson, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Long Beach Transit; Beth McCormick, General Manager of Orange County Transportation Authority; and Stephanie Wiggins, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Arthur T. Leahy, Chief Executive Officer of Metrolink, also served as a Guest Speaker at the event.

COMTO's goal is to become the premier organization for the training, education and professional development of minority transportation professionals. COMTO invites everyone to become a member and attend events hosted by the Southern California Chapter. COMTO brings together transportation professionals, executives, and decision-makers at all levels to discuss initiatives, policies and legislation. The collective partnerships support efforts for affordable and reliable transportation options to improve the quality of life through greater access to education, business and job opportunities in the transportation industry.

Both stories by Faye Moseley, Deputy Executive Director, Human Resources

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Rider Comments

Rocio Robledo
(customer since July 2014)

"The driver Marco was a total gentleman. Very professional. He was helpful and kind. He is an exceptional person and a great driver."

John Jones
(customer since July 2007)

"CSR Lupe from GPI was very articulate had a wonderful joyful attitude, and was very professional. It was very nice speaking to her for the short amount of time, it was like speaking to a friend."

What's happening in our service regions

From its humble beginnings in a small Mayflower Transportation bus yard in Pomona in the early 1990s, Access has grown dramatically over the years to be the second largest paratransit operation in the United States. Today, Access' service area is broken into six regions:

- Southern
- West/Central
- Eastern
- Northern
- Antelope Valley
- Santa Clarita

From early on, breaking the service area into regions was Access' goal for many reasons, including:

- Location of contractor yards
- Trip patterns of our riders
- Minimizing deadhead

Over the years, the size and shape of the regions has changed. The most recent change occurred in 2011, when the Southern Region was made larger at the expense of the West/Central region. At the time, the West/Central region was considered too large due to trip demand and traffic congestion. The new balance was successful in smoothing out performance.

Did you know?

- The largest region for trip demand is the Southern Region
- The largest region geographically is the Eastern Region
- The most challenging region for traffic congestion is the West/Central
- The Santa Clarita region is the only region contracted through a transit agency (Santa Clarita) and then to a private sector provider (MV)

Access' largest ridership generators are:

- The Braille Institute in Los Angeles
- Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Downey
- Daylight Adult Day Care Center in Los Angeles
- Olive View Medical Center in Sylmar
- VA Hospital in Westwood
- Access provides more than 32,000 trips a year to dialysis centers