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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Since March, Access has been providing training to our new Customer Service provider, ALTA Resources (ALTA). This training has taken on many forms. For example, Access invited ALTA to visit and observe the Access Eligibility Center and Global Paratransit to learn and understand more about the operational components surrounding trip reservations and eligibility assessments. The training has also included a paratransit sensitivity training session, which involved a few of our customers to help ALTA understand our riders' essential needs.

On April 1, staff completed the first operational milestone, transitioning customer service calls from Southland Transit (STI) to ALTA. ALTA hired a great customer service team, and spent the appropriate time implementing the technical infrastructure and telephony to meet Access' system needs, which resulted in a successful transition.

We are confident that our new partnership with ALTA will be a success. ALTA is currently working towards meeting the assigned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Access staff will continue to monitor the quality of service as we move to the next phase of the transition scheduled for May 23, 2016.

Shelly Verrinder,
Executive Director

access

Access attends Special Needs Network Conference



Participants at the SNN Conference

purpose of providing participants with cutting edge information and resources related to autism, developmental / learning disabilities, ADHD, mental health, education, and advocacy.

Conference guests included state and local representatives as well as television personalities. Friday's agenda focused on legislative advocacy and included a legislative breakfast, policy town hall, and advocates summit. Bobby DeCastro from Fox LA and Gabriela Teissier from Univision moderated the Presidential Primary Roundtable, which provided a bipartisan space for primary candidate representatives, supporters, and community leaders to share their perspectives and stance on policies which affect the special needs community. The Saturday sessions, held at the Junior Blind of America, included a panel discussion with advocates Holly Robinson-Peete and Tisha Campbell-Martin, on media and the special needs community followed by eight workshops by the country's most renowned experts in intervention strategies, education, healthcare, and advocacy.

Areva Martin, a civil and human rights attorney and well-known television personality, is the President and Co-Founder of Special Needs Network (SNN). SNN is based in Los Angeles and is California's leading grass roots autism advocacy organization. As a nonprofit organization, SNN was established to help families faced with autism and other developmental disabilities. The organization focuses on raising public awareness, impacting public policy, and increasing education and access to resources for families, children and adults.

Faye Moseley, Deputy Executive Director, Human Resources
Stephen Wrenn, Senior Mobility Management Counselor

I recently joined Access Services and Metro staff members at the Special Needs Network's two-day conference, "Tools for Transformation: Protest, Participation, Progress." Tools for Transformation brought together experts in medicine, law, education, and advocacy for the

Access attends and presents at CalACT's Spring Conference



The California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT) held its Spring 2016 conference at the Hilton Torrey Pines in La Jolla, California from Monday, March 28th thru Thursday, March 31st.

The conference brings together transit professionals from across the state of California, offering a unique opportunity for agency leaders to learn from one another. The conference offers a wide variety of educational sessions and vendor forums so that companies may learn what other organizations are doing to tackle problems that all agencies face and what new products or vehicles are available on the market to make providing transit service more efficient.

At this conference, many sessions focused on topics that were relevant to the work that Access performs. There were a series of meetings held on effective ways to determine ADA eligibility. Although Access has been using an in-person functional evaluation method for many years to determine whether an applicant is eligible for Access paratransit, a number of smaller systems across California still utilize a paper application process. Many of these agencies would like to transition to an in-person method and in one session, Gracie Davis, Access TPAC member from the Orange County Transportation Authority, and I were part of a panel on different ways that agencies can provide in-person eligibility, from providing a central eligibility center to establishing satellite eligibility facilities, such as the ones that Access operates in Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley.

Many conference sessions focused on the theme of coordinating transportation with multiple private transportation providers. Discussions focused on opportunities to work with Car-Sharing systems like ZipCar; encouraging the development of taxi-trip apps like Flywheel in the San Francisco Bay Area and the barriers and opportunities to working with organizations like Uber and Lyft for first-mile/last-mile transportation. Lastly, there was even a discussion on the progress associated with the development of autonomous (or driverless) cars and how, in the years ahead, this technology may impact how people get around.

The Spring Conference was a great opportunity to learn how transit is developing in other parts of the state and provides a forum where systems can learn from one another. The next Spring CalACT conference will be held next year in Northern California.

Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner

Update on Access risk management efforts

Access staff recently met with our insurance broker, Mark Nimmo, from the firm of Sullivan Curtis Monroe. Mark and Sullivan Curtis Monroe have been assisting Access with our insurance needs since 2008.

Access Services provides auto liability insurance for our vehicles as well as vehicles that are 100% dedicated to our service (825 vehicles in all) through a so-called Self-Insured Retention (SIR) program. Through this program, we manage all claims under \$100,000 in partnership with our Third Party Administrator (TPA) CorVel Corporation, and incidents above this amount are covered by various layers of insurance up to a total of \$51 million.

The good news is that through the first nine months of this fiscal year, our insurance claims are substantially under the projections for every single contractor. This translates into savings over the next two years should the claims rate remain at current levels and hopefully reduced insurance rates in the future. Kudos are in order to Access and provider staff for their dedicated focus on ensuring safety for all of our patrons, drivers, staff and the entire public of Los Angeles County!

Hector Rodriguez, Director of Finance

“Speaking with One Voice” - The 2016 DOT Civil Rights Virtual Symposium



From Tuesday, March 8th to Thursday, March 10th, the Department of Transportation (DOT) hosted its annual Civil Rights Virtual Symposium. Over a dozen one-hour sessions over the three days were presented by DOT Office of Civil Rights staff. Representatives from various transit agencies from across the country also participated and gave real-world examples of recent civil rights issues.

A major theme of this year’s Civil Rights Virtual Symposium was for transportation system agencies to consider civil rights at every stage of a project. The first sessions spoke to how important it was to ensure that community members are included in discussions on project planning from the start of a project. On large projects, such as light rail route construction or station design, it is easy for project developers to focus only on the project and not see how some community members may not benefit from a project by, for example, planning the route or stations in an area inaccessible to some segments of a community. The Symposium gave tips as to how transportation systems can ensure that they include community members in all stages of development.

Sessions also included best practices on how agencies should reach out to communities with non-English speaking populations to ensure that community groups are not ignored and are covered by all parts of an organization’s outreach. The Symposium had many sessions on ADA accessibility issues, from looking at individual bus stops in a system to ensure all stops can be used by persons with disabilities to designing properly accessible websites.

Overall, DOT provided some solid tips to assist agencies in incorporating civil rights matters in their planning processes as they work on developing and improving programs for their customers.

Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner

Access attends “Coffee with the Mayor” in Lynwood



Mayra Perez-Calderon

On April 5th, Access mobility management and operations staff attended “Coffee with the Mayor” in the City of Lynwood. Mobility Management Partners (MMP), a contractor for Access which provides travel training services, was also in attendance. The event was sponsored by the City of Lynwood and was coordinated by Recreation Superintendent Rozie Carrillo.

Access staff was introduced by Lynwood Mayor Edwin Hernandez and addressed over forty seniors who were in attendance. Staff discussed who is eligible for Access, how to apply for the service, and where to obtain referrals for additional transportation options. The highlight of the event was the Q & A period where a number of questions were asked about gaining eligibility for Access and how to use the system. Access Mobility Management Counselor Mayra Perez-Calderon answered all questions from the Spanish-speaking senior citizens in attendance.

Mayor Hernandez was extremely appreciative to have Access come to his city. As with any outreach event that Access participates in, we always do our best to educate Los Angeles County citizens about their transportation options.

Stephen Wrenn, Senior Mobility Management Counselor

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Rider Comments

"Elisa was very helpful and followed through with what she said she was going to do. She returned my call promptly and walked me the steps that I needed to get through to have my situation taken care of."

Mel Hafenfeld
 (customer since July 2015)

"Daniel the driver is a very caring person. He is very kind and courteous. He was a great driver. He is a very professional person. I appreciate his service."

Guadalupe Ramirez
 (customer since July 2015)



Access attends the Foothill Transit Bus Roadeo

Foothill Transit hosted their 21st Annual Bus Roadeo on Saturday, March 12, at their Arcadia/Irwindale Operations and Maintenance Facility. The bus roadeo included a bus obstacle competition and a maintenance competition. Access staff members Colin Obeso, Bridgett Harvey, Christina Blanco, Mike Greenwood and I participated as course judges for the bus obstacle competition.

The enthusiasm of the participants was evident from the start of the competition and continued throughout the day. Drivers and maintenance personnel could be seen making mental adjustments after taking part in their competition walk-throughs and judges could be observed looking over their assignments and making sure all obstacle cones were in place.

A total of 35 bus operators and four road supervisors participated in the bus obstacle competition while four teams (3 mechanics per team) participated in the maintenance competition. A trophy was given to the winning maintenance team and for the highest scoring road supervisor in the bus obstacle competition. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place individual finishes were awarded to drivers on two levels, a local category and a national category. Those who placed in the national category will be participating in the 2016 International Bus Roadeo.

I was happy to participate in such a fun and well-organized event. Congratulations again to the winners and good luck at the national competition!

By Jack Garate, Operations Administrator