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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

I would like to thank everyone for coming to the Access Annual Meeting last week!

It was a great chance to talk to our stakeholders, give updates about Access Services' performance and future plans and honor two individuals who, in their own way, help Access deliver quality and dependable paratransit services to its customers. Board member Theresa DeVera did a great job chairing the meeting.

Attendees heard reports on Access' FY 17 financial results and operational performance as well as the results of our recently concluded Comprehensive Operational Review and the upcoming strategic plan. The meeting also featured a new service vehicle: the Dodge ProMaster (modified by Lone Star, a company based in Tyler, Texas) which was parked outside the doors of the California Endowment so attendees could inspect it and give their feedback.

Overall, it was great to see everyone who contributes to the success of Access as we work on improving the Agency for our customers.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*



## Access Annual Membership Meeting

Access held its Annual Membership meeting on Thursday, November 30 at the California Endowment in downtown L.A. Over 120 guests representing the Federal Transit Administration, Access Board, member agencies, and other stakeholders were present. One of the highlights of the event is the presentation of the Spirit of Accessibility and Jerry Walker Commitment to Quality Service Award.

This year's Spirit of Accessibility Award recipient is Client Rights' Advocate Ms. Terri Lantz. Terri Lantz has worked at United Cerebral Palsy offices throughout Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties for over 44 years. For the past 15 years, Terri has developed, coordinated and facilitated UCPLA's Parent Support & Advocacy Groups, UCPLA adult day programs, and self-advocacy groups; networked and collaborated with national, state and local organizations and agencies; coordinated grassroots legislative advocacy; and provided information, resources and referrals for UCPLA throughout the County. She is an active member of

Access' Community Advisory Committee and her advocacy through the years has led Access to make improvements to provide better service for our customers.

The Jerry Walker Commitment to Quality Service Award was given to vehicle operator Princess Craig. Princess has been part of Santa Clarita Transit's Access service since 2013. During this time, Princess has displayed multiple attributes that have delivered the highest quality of service to Access customers. The management team and her customers know Princess as an exceptional employee. During her tenure with the agency, Princess has maintained good attendance, an exceptional safety record and excellent customer service skills. She has always maintained a positive attitude towards customers, as well as internal team members. Her strong work ethic and dedication have led her to achieve the prestigious Operator of the Month award for the division.

**Matthew Avancena**  
*Senior Manager, Planning and Coordination*

## Access Community Meetings

Access is hosting a series of community meetings throughout the service regions in December. This is a great opportunity to connect with our riders and share what projects Access is working on to improve service quality. For this round of community meetings, we plan to provide riders with an overview of current information technology projects and updates from Operations and Safety. Contractor staff will also be available to discuss their service improvement goals.

Listed below is a schedule of upcoming community meetings.

### **Northern Region**

**Monday, December 11**

10am-12pm (English)

Hubert Humphrey Recreation Center  
12560 Filmore St  
Pacoima, CA 91331

### **Antelope Valley Region**

**Thursday, December 14**

11am-1pm (English)

Lancaster Library  
601 W Lancaster Blvd  
Lancaster, CA 93534

### **Southern Region**

**Tuesday, December 19**

11am-1pm (English)

Mayfair Park Activity Room  
5720 Clark Ave  
Lakewood, CA 90712

**Fayma Ishaq**

**Project Administrator**

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## MV Annual Chili Cook-off competition

In late October, MV hosted their seventh annual chili cook-off competition. Participants competed against each other to determine who makes the best chili and bragging rights throughout the year at MV Division 45. This event also demonstrates MVs appreciation for staff's hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Four employees stepped forward and fired up their pots and pans to prepare their best chili recipes. Access staff members Mike Greenwood, Faustino Salvador, and I were invited to assist General Manager, Nader Raydan with the judging. I have to admit, all four entries were delicious, and I am happy to report that none went overboard with their spices!

This year, James Bustos was crowned 1st place and took home a \$250 Target gift card. Kathy Brandon won 2nd place and was awarded a \$150 Target gift card. Loveda McMillian won 3rd place, and Czarina Mandap won 4th place; the final two contestants scored close. This was indeed a fun-filled event with plenty of laughter and food!

Access looks forward to attending next year's competition.

**Christina Blanco**

**Operations Service Monitor**

## WTS-LA Annual Scholarship and Awards dinner

Access staff recently attended the WTS-LA Annual Scholarship and Awards dinner, which recognized women, men, and organizations who have been leaders in their efforts toward advancing women in the field of transportation. WTS, short for the Women's Transportation Seminar, is an international organization with more than 6,000 members, dedicated to building the future of global transportation through the advancement of women.

Award recipients included: Mott MacDonald, Employer of the Year; LA Metro CEO Phil Washington, Honorable Ray LaHood Award; Los Angeles World Airports, Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award; Liz Ramirez of Athens Services, Member of the Year; LAX Northside Plan Update, Innovative Transportation Solution Award; and Julie Allen, PE, from the Bureau of Engineering, City of Los Angeles, WTS Los Angeles Woman of Distinction Award.

The real highlight of the evening was to hear first-hand from high school, undergraduate and graduate



Board Member Theresa DeVera (third from left) with Access staff.

students about what the award meant to them and their future education and career goals. With over 400 attendees and \$71,000 in scholarships awarded, a new record for the Los Angeles chapter, the night proved to be a big success.

**Melissa Thompson**  
**Data Analyst**



Princess Craig, Jerry Walker Commitment to Quality Service Award Winner.



Terri Lantz, Spirit of Accessibility Award Winner.



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## Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a compliment for Stacy Arronez who has been with Access for a little less than a year. Stacy demonstrated compassion and great care of an elderly couple riding with me on my shared ride. Given her short tenure, I was very impressed with her judgement, technical, and driving skills. She is a very professional and courteous driver. She should be considered a valuable member of our team. She is definitely a keeper. Treat her right!"

**Allan Buck**  
*customer since November 2009*

"I would like to file a compliment for a call taker at OMC and my driver. I was told that a co-worker from my church cancelled my ride. I informed the call taker that I don't work at the church. OMC took care of the issue and driver Elias came to pick me up. He was extremely helpful and tried everything he could to make my situation better."

**Daniel Banando**  
*customer since July 2015*

## Access hosts harassment prevention workshop

On Thursday, November 2, Access hosted a Harassment and Abusive Behavior Prevention workshop that provided training on how to prevent discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and abusive conduct in the workplace.

The course facilitator was Tracey Robinson of HR Solutions and Services. The class was well attended by staff from various transit agencies including

Access. The training is required for staff who fills a supervisory role and complies with state requirements.



This course was designed to assist supervisors and managers with practical tips, tools, and guidelines to comply with their organization's EEO and harassment prevention policies when interacting with others in the workplace. The instructor facilitated the course with participant interaction, actual court case studies, increased knowledge of current trends and themes of workplace diversity, inclusion, and respect. The instructor also discussed manager and supervisor responsibilities to promptly report and respond to potential violations of their organization's policies.

**Sherri Adams**  
*Training and Development Coordinator*