Executive Director’s Report

I am happy to report that the first go-live phase for the “Where’s My Ride” system implementation has been successful. The launch took place on December 26 in the Eastern and West Central regions. Since the system rollout, we have received nothing but great feedback from pilot riders as well as recently registered riders regarding the new App updates. Some of the rider comments have been, “The new App update is great!” and, “I like the new look of the “Where’s My Ride” App.”

The next phase is to launch the system in the Northern and Southern regions on January 29, followed by the Santa Clarita region in spring and the Antelope Valley region in the summer. We currently have instructional videos on the Access website to help educate riders during the implementation at accessla.org/wmr.

I would like to thank Bill Tsuei, Ruben Prieto and the Access IT team for their work on this app!

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Taxi drivers’ handbook hits the streets

Eastern Region taxi driver Yegishe Arabyan has performed many trips for Access riders: 2,372 trips between May and October of 2017. When I met him on a recent afternoon on a quiet street in El Monte, he was a bit surprised to hear just how much service he was providing. “I’m number 4...out of what?” he asked.

“Out of the entire system; all the taxi drivers,” I replied. He seemed proud and mentioned his years of service on the Access contract with San Gabriel Transit. Arabyan has been driving since April of 2001.

Given his volume of service to our riders (some taxi drivers in the same period have made less than 50 trips), he was a worthy recipient of the new taxi driver customer service advice handbook. The book, which was the result of a collaboration between Operations, Safety, Procurement, Communications Coordinator Josh Southwick and others in the agency, seeks to provide taxi drivers with helpful advice to improve service to riders. It acknowledges the fact that the cab drivers are independent business people and illustrates how compliance with Access policy can help them succeed in their business.

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Taxi handbook continued

“Your time to shine: Riders won’t get a chance to experience the good customer service you provide if you never pick them up. It’s a good practice to keep a close eye on your 5 minute dwell time. If you arrive early, you still need to wait for the due time before the timer starts,” says one of the 12 tips in the opening pages of the book.

“Thank you for your service to the disabled community of Los Angeles County. You are making a difference in many lives. We wish you success in your business,” it says within the book’s first pages.

The handbook is durable, has a calendar, note pages and a place to write essential phone numbers. The note pages are there to be useful to the drivers, so they are more likely to keep the book around. Hints and tips such as “a maximum of two ambulatory riders are allowed in the rear seat of a sedan” are included at the bottom of the note pages to reinforce the customer-focused message.

There are also high detail stand maps of critical locations such as Cal State Long Beach and Rancho Los Amigos.

Yegishe Arabyan, Bell Cab.

“The book includes photos of taxi drivers in action on the Access contract. One of the drivers in the book is the cousin of Arabyan, who happens to share the same first and last name. I gave an extra copy to Arabyan to give to his cousin.

“I’m going to take a picture of him in the book right now with my phone and send it to him,” Arabyan said excitedly.

The initial run of 350 books is a pilot; if well received, additional copies may be ordered, some of which will be in different languages for maximum understanding of the nuances of excellent customer service.

The books are being given out by the Road Safety Inspectors to the taxi drivers who perform the most trips.

Alex Chrisman
Senior Road Safety Inspector, and Project Administrator
Access visits Easterseals

Access was recently invited to participate in a group function at the Easterseals San Pedro location.

Many of Easterseals clients are Access customers in Los Angeles and surrounding counties. As I talked to the attendees, the response received was nothing less than pleasing when they spoke of the quality of service provided by Access. There was one individual who experienced confusion with her pickups from San Pedro, saying the provider confused her location with the street of the same name in Los Angeles. She was quick to point out that the provider worked quickly to resolve her concerns.

Easterseals in San Pedro.

Easterseals serves 1.4 million children and adults with disabilities and their families, offering a wide range of services at 73 affiliates nationwide. Easterseals is on record for how they have made changes to how the world defines and views disability by making profound, definite differences in people’s lives every day, helping their clients build the skills and access the resources they need to live, learn, work and play. Some of their services include accessibility resources, autism services, camping and recreation, day care, employment and training, in-home care, mental health services, therapy and other resources.

Louis Burns
Community Liaison