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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Director of Governmental Affairs and Outreach Randy Johnson and I recently traveled to Washington, DC for meetings with the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation, House and Senate Committee staff who have oversight over national transit policy as well as representatives from the Federal Transit Administration.

We mainly discussed some of Access' recent technology initiatives, including the accessible autonomous vehicle program, as well as got updates on federal initiatives, including successor legislation to the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Overall, there appears to be a general desire to improve paratransit services for people with disabilities. We offered ourselves as a resource as these discussions move forward.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access visits the Disabled Resources Center (DRC)

Transportation Planner Onnika Payne and I recently had the pleasure to meet with the Disabled Resources Center's (DRC) Executive Director, Dolores Nason, and Outreach Coordinator, Kate Adamson. Dolores Nason is also the Chair of the Access Board of Directors.



Ms. Nason provided a detailed overview of the agency, which included a tour of each department and an introduction to the staff. It was inspiring to see their use of advanced technology and equipment. Established in 1976, DRC is a private, non-profit corporation serving people with all disabilities. Located in Long Beach, California the DRC serves 52 of the city's zip codes including the neighboring cities of Artesia, Avalon, Hawaiian Garden, Lakewood, Signal Hill, Los Angeles and Orange County. The DRC's mission is to empower people with disabilities to live independently in their community.

During the meeting I shared Access' outreach goals for the remainder of 2019. The meeting concluded with Onnika also sharing information about the CTSA Extension program's goals and implementation. The most fulfilling aspect of the meeting was the opportunity to take a photo with the graduates of the DRC's Peer Counseling or Stepping Stones to Employment program. This eight-week program is designed to prepare participants for future volunteer and work opportunities. Upon completion, participants receive a certificate and are ready to begin volunteering.

We want to thank Executive Director Nason, Kate Adamson, and the DRC staff for being so welcoming!

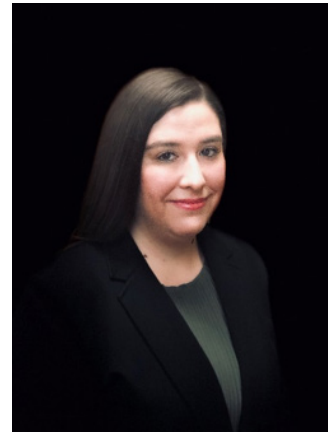
Stephen Wrenn
Senior Mobility Management Counselor

Joe King Memorial Scholarship awarded to Georgina Gomez

We are proud to announce this year's 2019 Joe King Memorial Scholarship Winner, Georgina Gomez from Global Paratransit! As the scholarship winner, she will be attending the 2019 Transit Paratransit Management Certificate Program at Access Services, presented by the University of the Pacific, Eberhardt School of Business.

Georgina started her career in the transit industry nine years ago as a call taker, and advanced to Call Center Manager in 2017. With her dedicated commitment to providing quality service, Georgina displays outstanding knowledge and a strong desire to help Access customers. Her leadership has led to the Global call center consistently meeting its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Georgina is an accessible manager who cultivates a team environment by taking reservations and assisting in dispatch when necessary. Her clear understanding of her operation and hands on approach enables her to lead by example and show her staff that exemplary customer service and high efficiency are not mutually exclusive. Congratulations Georgina!



Onnika Payne
CTSA Analyst

Access participates in San Gabriel Dam Failure Exercise



Last month, I attended an emergency management exercise facilitated by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works simulating a failure of the San Gabriel Dam. Historically, dam failures require rapid and large-scale evacuation efforts. Paratransit agencies play a significant role during evacuations to ensure all members of the community are able to evacuate safely.

Exercises are an integral part of the emergency management process and help emergency management partners practice working with each other in times of crisis. Exercises also help an agency practice using its various emergency plans so that all responders are familiar with their roles and responsibilities before a disaster strikes.

During the exercise, Access simulated receiving a call for assistance from the City of Azusa impacted by the dam failure scenario. The city stated that there were multiple people who use wheelchairs within a mandatory evacuation zone requiring paratransit vehicles to evacuate them to a shelter. I worked closely with city and county partners to simulate sharing and receiving the information Access would need to send vehicles to assist in evacuation operations. The exercise was successful in helping our emergency management partners understand Access' capabilities to provide evacuation assistance.

Access will continue to heavily participate in emergency management exercises in the Los Angeles County Operational Area to practice responding to disasters with our partner agencies. Access will participate in its next major exercise in November!

Matthew Topoozian
Emergency Management Coordinator

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Rider Commendations

"I am filing a commendation for Shirin, my driver in the San Fernando Valley. She was friendly and a joy to ride with. Shirin made my long trip fun with her great conversational skills. She was also very knowledgeable and able to answer all the questions another rider had. I am thankful for Shirin's initiative to go above and beyond."

Brian McGreevy
Rider since October 2001

"I wanted to file a commendation for my driver Maria. I appreciate her overall demeanor and assistance with loading wheelchairs. She was patient and friendly throughout my ride even when dealing with other tardy riders. Maria was able to calm my anxiety as I became worried about arriving late. She assured me everything would be okay, and I am happy to report that it was. Thank you, Maria!"

Geraldine Wyndon
Rider since September 2010

Access presents AV Project at APTATech Conference

Director of Government Affairs and Outreach Randy Johnson and I attended the APTATech Conference in Columbus, Ohio. The APTATech Conference is the new technology conference that replaced the APTA TransITech Conference and Fare Collection/Revenue Management Summit.

This conference focuses on how the public can use innovative technologies to better navigate transit including emerging technologies in fare payment, autonomous vehicles, security, safety, intelligent transportation system application, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) and customer information. More than 500 attendees participated in the conference representing transit agencies, city and state DOTs, and business vendors.

Randy presented Access' Accessible Autonomous Vehicle (AAV) Pilot Project during session 1 of the Technologies for Vehicle Automation and Connectivity (TVAC) Sub Committee Roundtable.



The presentation covered who we are, the benefits of our AAV pilot project and pilot corridor, the vehicles to be built and deployed, various accessible technologies to be deployed, smart infrastructure, and operations. The information was well received, and several questions were asked and answered.

As the Vice Chair of the TVAC Sub Committee, I assist in organizing the TVAC Roundtable sessions, which include inviting guest speakers from Finland and North America to present on more than a dozen autonomous vehicle pilot projects around the world, as well as moderating three different autonomous vehicle technology related sessions.

Bill Tsuei
Director of Information Technology