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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director’s Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on October 21, 2019

The Board approved the Consent Calendar, which included items to approve Access’ Title VI Plans, awarded DBE consulting services, extended contract terms for Access’ transitional voice communication services contract, approved the addition of a deferred compensation provider for employees, approved the purchase of 51 replacement vehicles for the Access to Work program and approved the 2020 Board of Directors meeting calendar.

The Board also took action and approved an extension of term and increase in funds for ADA eligibility and mobility evaluation services contract.

Access to host Community Meetings

Twice a year, Access holds a series of community meetings throughout our service regions to hear feedback from our valued customers. The next round of community meetings starts in November. Please see the schedule below to attend a community meeting near you.

Eastern Region

Monday, November 18
3pm - 5pm (English)
6pm - 7:30pm (Spanish)
Baldwin Park Arts and Recreation Center, Hall #1
14403-B East Pacific Ave
Baldwin Park, CA 91706

Antelope Valley Region

Wednesday, November 20
11am - 1pm (English)
AVTA – Antelope Valley Transit Authority
42210 6th St West
Lancaster, CA 93534

Northern Region

Monday, November 25
11am - 1pm (English)
Balboa Sports Center
17015 Burbank Blvd
Encino, CA 91316

Southern Region

Tuesday, November 26
11am - 1pm (English)
Mayfair Park, Sierra Room
5720 Clark Ave
Lakewood, CA 90712

Santa Clarita Region

Thursday, December 5
11am - 1pm (English)
The Centre
20880 Centre Pointe Pkwy
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

West/Central Region

Saturday, December 7
11am - 1am (English)
2pm - 3:30pm (Spanish)
Mar Vista
Recreation Center
11430 Woodbine St
Los Angeles, CA 90066

Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities 28th Annual Access Awards

The Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities hosts an annual luncheon to acknowledge Los Angeles County residents or organizations who have dedicated themselves to improving services for the disabled.

This year, I am pleased to report that the Commission awarded Access Executive Director Andre Colaiace the Bill Tainter Public Service Award. The Commission cited the development of new Access programs, such as the “Where’s My Ride” App and the new online reservations platform as factors in giving Andre the award. The programs have been well received by people with disabilities.

Who was Bill Tainter? Bill Tainter was the Executive Director for the State of California Department of Rehabilitation Department. He increased the representation of people with disabilities in top-level management positions in the department and was a nationally recognized leader and role model in the disability community. His work also included developing programs and workshops on disability awareness, as well as presentations on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legislation.



Left to right: Commission President Carlos Benavides, 1st Vice President Lourdes Caracoza, and Andre Colaiace

Louis Burns
Community Liaison, Government Affairs and Outreach

International Conference on Women’s Issues in Transportation (WliT) Awards Luncheon

The University of California at Irvine hosted the 6th International Conference on Women’s Issues in Transportation (WliT) in partnership with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) and Women in Transportation (WTS). This year’s theme focused on women’s issues related to transportation.

The WliT conference objective is to advocate for equity and gender inclusion, by fostering an awareness and understanding in regards to safety, technology, infrastructure impacts, and policies that help address gender in transportation. WliT brings together scholars, students, practitioners, policy analysts, and public officials from around the globe to explore women’s transportation perspectives, challenges, achievements, and opportunities.

The Marquee Reception and Dinner hosted an informative panel discussion that focused on conference themes, including how to advance women in the transportation field. Speakers at the dinner included Stephanie Wiggins, Chief Executive Officer at Metrolink; Laura Cornejo, Director of Transportation for the City of Pasadena; and Genevieve Giuliano, Professor at USC Price School of Public Policy and Director of METRANS. During the discussion, each panelist was asked a series of different questions, where they each shared their success stories, challenges, and other inspirational situations in their career. The panelists concluded with words of encouragement to all the attendees at the end of the dinner. It was great to hear the success stories, and network with other women who are advancing in the transportation industry and their careers.

Onnika Payne
Transportation Planner

Access activates Emergency Operations Center for the Saddle Ridge Fire

On the evening of October 10, the Saddle Ridge Fire ignited just north of the I-210 freeway in Sylmar. Due to high winds and dry conditions, the fire expanded rapidly and sent embers flying across the I-210 and I-5 freeways. Access began monitoring the situation within minutes of the fire's ignition and continued monitoring its status throughout the night. Early on the morning of October 11, the decision was made to activate Access' Emergency Operations Center due to closures of many significant freeways and surface streets in the vicinity of Olive View Medical Center.



The Access Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated during significant emergencies to serve as the central coordination hub for Access' emergency operations. The EOC is staffed by personnel throughout the agency who are trained in the federal Incident Command System. The Access EOC maintains situational awareness, works to mitigate impacts to operations, sends emergency notifications to riders, and coordinates the deployment of Access resources to assist with evacuations if requested. During an emergency, the EOC ensures continuity of ADA paratransit service or works to restore service following a disruption as soon as possible.

The Access EOC was activated at 4:30 am on October 11 and continued to operate into the evening hours to ensure operations remained stable. Access deployed Road Safety Inspectors to the Unified Command Post to coordinate in the field with our Fire and Law Enforcement partners and to obtain situational awareness. Additionally, an Operations Service Monitor was deployed to the Northern Region service contractor to coordinate information sharing between the EOC and the contractor.

The Access EOC maintained close communication with our emergency management partners at the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles throughout the weekend. It remained ready to coordinate resources to assist in evacuation or repopulation if requested. Access will continue to train and exercise our emergency operations capabilities to prepare for future incidents similar to the Saddle Ridge Fire.

Matthew Topoozian
Emergency Management Coordinator

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Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a smile for Naomi, my customer service representative. I called Naomi after my driver did not show up. She stayed on the line for 45 minutes to ensure I made my next ride. Naomi's help was truly a blessing at a time of distress as I had just received bad news about a death."

Dorris Scott
Rider since June 2003

"I am filing a commendation for Neil, my reservationist. Simply put, he was one of the best I have had in years. My dad, who was on speakerphone, could not believe how great he was."

Sheldon Gold
Rider since 2012

Mobility 21 - Beyond the Limits Summit

Mobility 21 recently hosted the 18th Annual Beyond the Limits Summit at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California. This year's summit hosted over 1,300 professionals from across Southern California.



Doug Shupe, a Corporate Communications & Program Manager from the Automobile Club of Southern California, served as the Master of Ceremonies and introduced the breakout session topics. The welcome remarks and presenters included various city council members, executive directors, and transportation leaders.

Another concurrent breakout session topic was the Chairman's Roundtable named Mobility Beyond the Limits. The panelists included the Honorable Robert Amparano, Honorable James T. Butts, Honorable Darcy McNaboe, Honorable Manual Minjares, Honorable Tim Shaw, and the Honorable Chuck Washington. The moderator of the breakout session, Darrell Johnson, CEO of Orange County Transportation Authority, asked panelists to discuss upcoming projects in their respective cities and inquired about various innovations and solutions in the transportation community made possible by looking "beyond the limits."

At the general lunch session, Phillip A. Washington, CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Mayor of the City of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti gave transportation updates. During the closing session, Jim Hill, Sports Anchor, CBS Los Angeles was the moderator of the CEO Roundtable on leveraging mobility in Southern California.

Onnika Payne
Transportation Planner