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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Every September, Access paratransit enters its busy season, which generally lasts through the middle of December.

With the start of school and the end of summer, paratransit demand and traffic congestion increase which can lead to challenges meeting Access' on-time performance standard of 91 percent. For example, last September our OTP was 89.5 percent.

I am pleased to report that OTP this past September came in at 91.9 percent, which is the Agency's best September performance in ten years. I would like to thank our providers and their employees for delivering improved, quality service to our customers.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access Attends APTA 2018 Annual Meeting

Public transportation's premier event, APTA's Annual Meeting, recently took place at the historic Music City Center in Nashville, TN. The 2018 APTA Annual Meeting focused on several topics affecting the public transportation industry including new and evolving mobility options, safety and security, federal legislation, technology, and diversity and inclusion.

Executive Director Andre Colaiace, Director of Information Technology Bill Tsuei and Manager of Government Affairs and Outreach Randy Johnson attended the meeting, along with more than 1,700 professionals from around the world.

The highlights of the conference included the announcement of new members of APTA's Executive Committee and Board of Directors. The new APTA chair is David M. Stackrow Sr. from Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), Albany, NY. Stackrow succeeds Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. who will serve as Immediate Past Chair. The opening general session featured a thought-provoking keynote address from Daymond John, founder and CEO of FUBU and star of ABC's Shark Tank. Daymond shared his life story and career paths to success, the importance of having an entrepreneurial spirit, and the value of innovation as a strategy for success in today's environment.

Other event highlights included a number of award ceremonies honoring various transit systems. In addition, the American Public Transportation Foundation (APTF) celebrated its 30th year by presenting a total of \$205,000 in scholarships to 33 recipients. The total marks the largest amount since the foundation's inception. Congratulations are in order for two Access Scholarship recipients: Darwin Brown, who received the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 25th Anniversary Scholarship and Jessica Volanos, who received the Devin Roy APTF Scholar Ambassador Scholarship.

Randy Johnson
Manager, Government Affairs and Outreach



APTA 2018 Scholarship Award winners, Darwin Brown and Jessica Volanos (center) are joined by Access Executive Director Andre Colaiace; Access Board member Kim Turner (Torrance Transit), and Access Manager of Government Affairs & Outreach, Randy Johnson.

Margaret "Margie" Morales helps keep CTI on the road to success

The phone rings and an unexpected problem arises. Margaret "Margie" Morales knows what to do without hesitation. Her nearly 22 years of experience guide her.

Paratransit professionals will tell you that the job of Operations Manager is not for the faint of heart. There are new problems to solve nearly every day and they seldom present themselves one at a time. Margie started with Access' West-Central region contractor, California Transit (CTI), back in 2007, where she was instrumental in the contract start-up process. Before that, she worked with San Gabriel Transit, CTI's sister company, starting in 1996. During this long span, she has served as a Call Taker, Communications Supervisor, Call Center Manager, Community Relations Manager, and Operations Manager. Today, she works on the team of General Manager Mike Fricke from CTI's facility in Central Los Angeles.



Part of the job of an Operations Manager is to address observations made by Access staff regarding driver performance. This communication is vital to ensure quality and safe service is delivered to our riders on a daily basis. Margie has taken the task seriously from the start. During her career, CTI's Fricke believes she has coached approximately 2,500 drivers.

"She is very prompt in her responses to the driver's observations. I appreciate that about her," said Colin Obeso, Access's Senior Road Safety Inspector. This responsiveness has been well documented over the years in formal observation response reports.

Colin is not alone in his praise.

"She has always been willing to have an open line of communication directly with Access riders, as I have heard in the past from riders that they have spoken to her directly over the phone regarding different aspects of the service, whether it be [service] concerns or lost and found issues. She has always been approachable, helpful and willing to work with Access staff to achieve the common goal of providing superior paratransit service to our riders," wrote Operations Service Monitor Anthony Santiago.

Given her consistent service to our riders that is not always visible but impacts many lives, it was no surprise when she was named as a runner-up for the Jerry Walker award. She will be honored at the November Community Advisory Committee meeting.

"Margie works tirelessly, around the clock, always ready to answer a call from CTI staff, Access staff, or our riders, and then tries to resolve any issue in order to provide better service. As someone who worked closely with Jerry Walker for many years, Margie learned from the best what "Commitment to Quality Service" really means and what this award stands for. All of us at CTI and SGT would like to congratulate Margie for being honored as the runner-up for this prestigious award," said Mike Fricke, CTI General Manager.

Alex Chrisman
Project Administrator

Access attends APTA Enterprise Cyber Security Working Group Meeting

Last month, Director of Information Technology William Tsuei attended an APTA-hosted Enterprise Cyber Security Working Group (ECSWG) meeting at the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Denver, CO. ECSWG was formed by APTA three years ago in an effort to raise cyber security awareness in the transit industry. The ECSWG members have a virtual on-line meeting every two months and have an in-person meeting annually. The goals of the working group include:

- > Leverage the expertise of private and public agencies engaged in cyber security trainings and research.
- > Create recommended practices and white papers to help APTA members define and implement effective cybersecurity practices and programs.
- > Use the group's knowledge to define other related efforts.

Recommended practices authored and approved by the ECSWG currently out for public comment are:

- > Enterprise Cybersecurity: Involving the Board of Directors and the Executive Suite
- > Enterprise Cybersecurity Training and Awareness
- > Supply Chain - how to cyber secure it
- > Organization Structure - how to organize for an effective cybersecurity program

During the two-day in-person meeting, the ECSWG worked to define purpose, the users and audience and content for each recommended practice.

Bill Tsuei
Director of Information Technology

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Rider Recommendations

"I would like to file a smile for my driver Luis Rivera. There was a computer system error which left me behind on a trip I scheduled. I called, and dispatch sent me a new driver to take me home. The driver was so gracious and kind. I was not in an excellent mood due to the mix-up, but Luis made me feel better. I felt like I was in good hands while riding with Luis."

Jean Ferris
Rider since July 2016

"I would like to file a smile for the Southern Region Reservationist Karen. She provided superior service. She spoke her name, suggested my request be worded a certain way in her notes to the dispatcher, plus asked if she could place me on a brief hold when she went to confirm my time. Karen was so friendly that I could actually hear a smile in her voice. I just wanted to finish by telling Access that they have made another great hire! Thank You!"

Queen Kujichagulia
Rider since November 2006

Access launches web booking pilot

On September 19th Access invited a small group of customers to attend a demonstration of the Web Booking App, which began its pilot phase within the Eastern and West Central regions in September 2018.

The Web Booking App is an exciting new program that will allow customers to book their trips via web browser, using devices such as a smartphone, computer or tablet. Customers can log into the Web Booking App to book a trip, edit an existing next day trip, or cancel a trip.

Attendees of the demonstration were thrilled to be the first to book a trip using the app, and expressed their excitement to have an alternative to calling the reservation line. Over the next few months, Access will be working closely with pilot participants to identify opportunities to enhance the overall user experience.

If you would like more information about the app, or would like to participate in the pilot, please send an email to webbooking@accessla.org or call (213) 270-6098.

Melissa Mungia
Business Analyst