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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

For the first time in 25 years, Metro, through its NextGen bus study, is examining the agency's current bus system and how it could be modified to better serve current and potential customers. Metro's bus system carries 70 percent of Metro's customers.

It is important to note that any fixed-route changes could impact Access' service area given the federal requirement to provide ADA paratransit within 3/4 mile on either side of a local bus route. To ensure this is taken into account in any system redesign, Access has been working closely with Metro staff on this effort through individual meetings, participation in NextGen committees and also attendance at various NextGen workshops around Los Angeles.

I would like to thank Metro staff for their outreach efforts for NextGen and for taking into account the transportation needs of the region's paratransit customers.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

## You can go back home again: Keolis General Manager returns to his roots in the Antelope Valley

A deep well of patience, strict attention to detail and growing up in rural Lake Los Angeles in the 1980s, Wes Kelly found himself frequently in conversations with folks asking, "Is anyone going into town?"

Town was Palmdale or Lancaster, about 20 miles to the West. The Lake Los Angeles of Wes' youth was a small town hardly recognizable to those on the other side of the San Gabriel Mountains in the basin of Los Angeles. There was one grocery

store in town and a single place to rent videos. There was the namesake lake for water skiing and fishing. Transportation, especially that of the public variety, was limited. Eventually, Wes would leave the area, heading to Kern County among other places. Little did he know that in early 2019 he would return to the Antelope Valley as the General Manager of Access' Antelope Valley contractor Keolis and get a chance to make a direct impact in the lives of residents by providing quality and safe paratransit service.

Operating paratransit is always a challenge; every day is different and riders have diverse needs. It is a commitment that Wes and his team of about 90 drivers, mechanics, road supervisors, dispatchers and administrative staff take seriously.



**Keolis General Manager**  
*Wes Kelley*

## You can go back home again: Keolis General Manager returns to his roots in the Antelope Valley *continued*

"You are picking people up at their home. You have to have a certain mindset, a high level of respect. We are taking people places that are very personal to them," he shared. Speaking about customer service, he said, "Without it we can't be successful. It's important in every business. We are here to meet a need."

In addition to the basic challenge of paratransit, where routes are created fresh each day and there is always the chance of unexpected complications, the high desert region occasionally sees some serious weather conditions. A storm in October 2015 brought massive mudflows, which closed Highway 58 and stranded scores of vehicles. Strong gusts of wind sweep across the valley floor and greet arrivals as the 14 Freeway descends into the region from the Escondido Summit near Acton. There is even the occasional round of snow.

Now that Wes is back working in the Antelope Valley, he has set his sights on delivering solid performance. With performance in 2019 of 91.9% on-time performance and a complaint rate of 2.6 per 1,000 trips as of May 2nd, he is on the right track so far.

"We are here to connect people. Build up the community. Help with life. Everyone has a right to go where they want to go. Our goal is to do it safely with the utmost customer service," Wes said. That is a good goal indeed and the residents of the Antelope Valley can rest assured that their paratransit service is being managed by a person who knows the lay of the land and the spirit of its people.

**Alex Chrisman**

## COMTO Southern California Chapter: Women Leaders Awards Luncheon



I recently had the pleasure of attending the 4th Annual Women Leaders of Southern California Transportation Awards. The event took place at The Grand Long Beach Event Center and was sponsored by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) whose mission is to ensure a level playing field and maximum participation in the transportation industry for minority individuals.

Stephone Montgomery, the president of COMTO's regional chapter, greeted everyone and thanked Access, along with other agencies for sponsoring the event. The keynote speaker was

Heather Hutt, the State Director for U.S. Senator Kamala Harris. She is the first African American to serve as State Director in the history of the U.S Senate. She gave a wonderful introduction and was an exceptional host throughout the duration of the event.

While we enjoyed a delicious lunch, Heather announced each award recipient. It was great to see eight women in transit being honored for all their dedication and hard work and contributions in the region. The event was enjoyable and inspiring.

**Megan Mumby**  
*Project Administrator*

## Developing a Transit Emergency Management Plan

Access' CTSA Extension Program recently hosted a course on how to develop a Transit Emergency Management Plan. In partnership with the National Transit Institute (NTI), the class introduced different modules including Transit Emergency Management, Emergency Response Processes, Roles and Responsibilities, Putting the Plan into Action, and Transit Support for Community Emergencies.

Mr. Rich Foerch and Mr. Jim Titcomb were the class instructors and are retired firefighters. The attendees learned the required steps in plan development, and the emergency management cycle. As part of the exercise, attendees gained an understanding on the importance of coordinating agency resources to respond to incidents, and how to prepare and implement an emergency management plan that is practical and up-to-date.



The instructors expressed the importance of continually updating your plan if a major incident occurs, if there is a change in positions within a department, or if the action report finding indicates the plan should change. Attendees expressed gratitude as this class was a great refresher course for some, and for others it opened up their eyes to the importance of managing an emergency.

**Onnika Payne**  
*CTSA Analyst*

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## Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation for driver Ramon Morales. He was very caring, explained every step of the procedure, and made sure my sister and I were properly secured. Some words I would use for Ramon are friendly, respectful, and talkative. He kept us well entertained during the trip. Ramon deserves recognition for his exceptional service."

**Lolita Fong**  
**Rider since March 2014**

"I would like to file a commendation for a driver, Paul. I wasn't thrilled due to the long wait, but my mood changed as soon as Paul arrived. He was a pro at loading my wheelchair. Paul is level headed and a very safe driver."

**Philippe Mooncloud**  
**Rider since January 2003**

## Los Angeles Education Partnership: Mock Interviews at Diego Rivera Learning Complex

I recently participated in a "mock interview" event at the Diego Rivera Learning Complex in Los Angeles, which was sponsored by the Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP).

The mock interviews LAEP conducts provides students with an opportunity to prepare and practice for future job interviews. It gives students the ability to acquire confidence in presenting their qualifications and abilities to an interview panel or hiring manager. While an applicant can have all the qualifications on paper, if they are unable to present how their experiences make them the best candidate, they may not get the job.

Volunteering with LAEP and conducting mock interviews is truly a privilege and allows me to contribute to underserved communities. As a mock interviewer, I am able to give advice to students based on my human resources work experience and as an employee of Access. For anyone interested, Los Angeles Education Partnership is always welcoming new volunteers.

**Elizabeth Zambrano**  
**Human Resources Administrator**

