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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on February 26, 2018.

The Board approved the Consent Calendar, which included items adding data network services and extending information technology consulting and software licensing agreements.

The Board also took action and awarded a contract for Travel Training services along with a contract for a new legal services service firm.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is on March 26, 2018 and will be at Access Services' office in El Monte.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

## Access attends annual Abilities Expo

Talk about an exciting weekend. The Annual Abilities Expo was just that!



Numerous Access staff volunteered to participate in this year's Abilities Expo which was held from February 23rd to 25th at the Los Angeles Convention Center. This is a yearly event where you will find many types of assistive devices, which, in turn, yield expressions of "wow" and general wonderment.

Those in attendance move from one display of technological wizardry to another, uttering, "What does that do?" or "How does that work?" There were many assistive devices on display at the Expo and they were aimed at people with a broad range of disabilities. These devices include wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, as well as other devices such as bionic exoskeletons and eye-gazing technologies that were found only in science fiction just a few years ago.

As it always does, Access had its own table and staff were able to address questions such as how to apply for Access,

renew expiring Access eligibility, apply for standing order service and file commendations or concerns. Customers were also able to view information about the agency and its work on a monitor. For some, we were able to speak about alternative transit options when Access would not be their first option. There were numerous positive comments made about Access, some of which I personally received while I walked the floor. Access staff Kyra Williams met a family of four that told her Access is awesome and that they simply love the agency and our work!

This year's Expo set a record with 6,927 adults and 1,500 children in attendance. Access provided 317 trips to this three-day event which customers could track using our Where's My Ride App, which was also being shown.

**Louis Burns**  
*Community Liaison*

## Hoping for the best; ready for the worst

### Access staff participates in emergency preparedness exercises

January 17, 1994 is a day that people living in the Los Angeles area will never forget. At 4:30am, residents were jolted out of their beds due to a magnitude 6.7 earthquake with its epicenter in Reseda, California, in what is part of Access' Northern service region. The quake damaged state route 14 in Sylmar, destroyed a large apartment complex in Northridge and was one of the most costly disasters in the history of the United States, taking 57 lives and costing up to 50 billion dollars. Incidentally, Access started that same year, on March 31, 1994.

Staff from Operations, Safety, Procurement, Finance, IT and Planning spent the afternoon of January 18, 2018 partially reliving the event through a table-top exercise facilitated by First On Compliance. Scenario events, known as injects, kept the team on its toes. There was a convalescent hospital to evacuate, a large medical center to assist, as well as a disgruntled adult day healthcare center among other challenges.

There was a morning exercise as well, dealing with the unfortunate possibility of an active shooter at one of Access' contract operations. Both exercises required activation of Access' Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and mobilization of a cross-section of staff to respond.



**Project Administrator Rogelio Gomez served as EOC Director**

First On Compliance has provided this type of training more than once for Access, and was complimentary of the team. The firm has had the chance to see our growth over the years and has heard about our recent real-world activations, such as our response to recent Los Angeles County wild fires, where we put our emergency preparedness skills into practice. This training is a practical example of Access' continued commitment to be there for our riders and community.

**Alex Chrisman**  
**Senior Road Safety Inspector and**  
**Project Administrator**

**Access Services  
Consolidated Transportation  
Services Agency**  
PO Box 5728  
El Monte, CA 91734

Tel: 213.270.6000  
Fax: 213.270.6055  
Email: [info@accessla.org](mailto:info@accessla.org)  
[accessla.org](http://accessla.org)

## Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation; I wanted to express my appreciation for the customer service delivered by both drivers I received today. The outbound trip the driver attended to the needs of all the riders and made sure everyone was picked up and dropped off as safely as possible and, on the return, the driver provided information that helped us determine our arrival time, and she made sure we were secured and displayed a helpful attitude."

**Donna Vega**  
*Customer since April 1997*

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver. I was outside waiting after I missed my first ride and I saw him. I asked if he would be able to take me home, and he called dispatch to ask if a trip was possible for me. Thank goodness the driver managed to arrange a ride. This driver went above and beyond the call of duty to assist me in my time of need."

**Constance Walker**  
*Customer since February 2015*

## Access attends SCLARC event

On Thursday February 22, Access staff attended a meeting at the South Central Los Angeles Regional Center (SCLARC) offices on Western Ave.

As with many outreach events, staff provides a picture of what Access is about

and its history. Staff touched on how to apply, how to appeal and how to use the service once one becomes eligible. Other key components were on booking one day in advance, the window for scheduling pickups, waiting at the curbside, the 20-minute window for vehicle arrivals and the 5-minute dwell time.

At the start of this meeting, it was clear to me that most of those in attendance were unfamiliar with key parts of how the service works. The group was delighted to hear about the Where's My Ride (WMR) application, something they felt will be useful.

SCLARC works with individuals who have autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, developmental delays, infant development and numerous other types of disabilities. The caseworkers wanted to know as much as they can about Access and had many questions about the service, and they were pleased with the answers staff provided. I directed SCLARC staff to Access' website and the Rider's Guide for additional information.

**Louis Burns**  
*Community Liaison*

