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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Randy Johnson, Bill Tsuei and I recently traveled to Washington, DC for a series of meetings.

Our first stop was to meet with staff from the FTA's Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation which is headed by Associate Administrator Vincent Valdes to discuss a potential autonomous vehicle project.

We then met with staff from the FTA Office of Civil Rights to get clarification on some of the outstanding items from last year's ADA Compliance Review. We had a constructive conversation and we will be sending FTA a formal response in the next week or two.

We then had several more meetings both Thursday and Friday with Congressional offices as well as with staff from the major transportation committees in the House and Senate to update them on Access initiatives as well as to discuss paratransit policy in general.

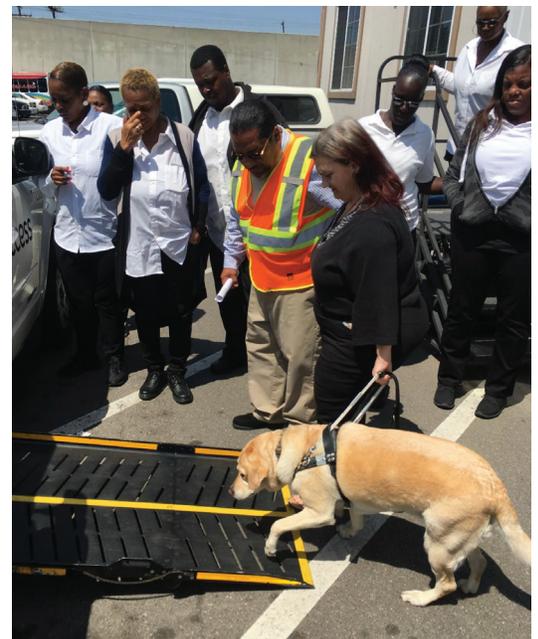
As always, I would be happy to provide additional information.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Global Paratransit promotes Service Animal Training

On Friday, April 27, Global Paratransit Inc. (GPI), Access' Southern Region provider, hosted a service animal training session at their facility in Gardena. The Global management team reached out to the service animal community in the Southern Region to participate in the new employee service animal training session.

Access Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members Michael Conrad, Rachele Goeman, and rider Aisha McKinney participated in the training session and provided advice on how to interact with passengers with service animals. The dialogue between the guest speakers and the 13 employees was a success because they received answers on the spot and interacted with service animal riders in the system. This session also allowed GPI staff to utilize the opportunity to modify their training curriculum to meet the community's needs and



Access Customer Rachele Goeman with her guide dog, Denali.

promote the safety of service animals in vehicles.

Access will be encouraging our other contractors to hold similar sessions on a regular basis to ensure our customer with service animals receive quality paratransit services.

Fayma Ishaq
Project Administrator

Access attends CTSI Enhanced Public Information Officer Course

Last week, I attended the California Specialized Training Institute (CTSI) Basic PIO and JIC/JIS training course, held at Camp San Luis Obispo. The training emphasizes the tools and skills necessary to be an effective Public Information Officer (PIO), and, if necessary, serve as part of a PIO team at a Joint Information Center (JIC) using Joint Information Systems (JIS). Topics discussed included:

- > Conducting News Conferences
- > Legal Issues and the PIO
- > Today's Media Environment
- > Crisis Communication Skills
- > Joint Information Centers
- > Developing News Releases



Participants engaged in simulated public speaking exercises and media interview sessions, similar to what you would see in breaking news when there is a crisis event such as a flood, earthquake, wildfire, or active shooter. Classroom and individual training sessions were designed to be intensive, to help participants apply principles and techniques that are learned in the sessions. Attendees were able to work with actual reporters and other agencies involved in crisis communications.

One of the exercises I participated in was about a hazardous materials spill on the freeway. I played the role of the Mayor of San Luis Obispo who had to

answer questions from the local and national news media on the steps of City Hall. Several crisis events were injected into the exercise: three people died after inhaling the fumes; a child was injured; and the 101 freeway was shut down for hours. Several hostile reporters accosted me with microphones and bright camera lights in my face. I had to react and respond using the communication skills and techniques learned in the training. It was very intense but I was able to call on the training to handle the situation effectively.

Randy Johnson
Manager, Government Affairs and Outreach

American Planning Association's Annual Conference

The American Planning Association held its National Planning Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana from Saturday, April 21st to Tuesday, April 24th.

The conference was an opportunity for planners from across the United States to discuss many emerging topics and trends that may have impacts on the future of development, transportation, and overall city planning in the years to come.

The conference hosted dozens of education sessions. Two major themes came up at some of the most popular sessions: emerging technology and equity. In the area of emerging technologies, the most popular sessions were on what the impact autonomous vehicles would have on cities in the years ahead. Speakers from consulting companies, academia and city planning departments spoke of the wide variety of impacts that may come from autonomous vehicles. Some of the many impacts identified included improved mobility for persons who currently have limited transportation options; the impact autonomous vehicles could have on either helping or hurting transit services; and the future of major developments and what the need for parking may be once autonomous vehicles are frequent sights on city streets.

Another major theme of the conference was the topic of equity and the role that the planning



Opening Conference of the American Planning Association

profession will pay in ensuring that, as new technology is introduced, the benefits can be shared with all communities.

The American Planning Association organized an impressive National Planning Conference which allowed for many discussions on the role of planning in the years ahead and the potential impacts from new technologies planners should anticipate in the near future.

Eric J. Haack
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Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver. I really hope I recorded his name correctly, because he is a great person. A careful (and smooth) driver, so kind and helpful with getting me settled – told me where we were going next (I always find that helpful). He was so thoughtful, intelligent and perceptive – diplomatic too. I have had this driver before and he is very consistent with the service he provides. Thank you."

Sheri Saperstein
Rider since July 2013

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver. I apologize that I didn't catch his name. This driver was excellent at his job. He was extremely courteous. He came around and opened the door, and assisting me with the seat by lifting it up to get my leg in and even he even helped to lift my leg up. He was a very safe driver."

Christine Stewart
Rider since August 2013

Access hosts MMF Planning Intern

My journey as a Millennium Momentum Foundation intern began at Access when I was assigned to work with Strategic Planner, Eric Haack. Although I was not aware of what Access truly did, I knew I had seen a variety of white vans with the Access logo on the side of the vehicle. For the past 9 months, I have truly learned and evolved as an intern at Access Services. Starting with my first day here, I have learned a lot about the type of transportation services Access provides to riders.

Eric and I worked collaboratively on Access' five-year draft Strategic Plan, where I had the ability to be a part of daily meetings, conduct research, and help develop the first draft of the strategic plan.

In the beginning of 2018, I learned even more as I worked with Alvina Narayan, Manager of Training and Compliance. With Alvina's guidance, I helped coordinate and plan the 2018 Professional Development Workshop schedule. This project helped me understand the CTSA program and allowed me to become more involved with other transit professionals.

As my internship is now at a close, I am grateful to Access staff for my development. Although Access is a small agency, the hearts of the staff and the work done every day is big. Thank you to Access for the positive affirmations and words of encouragement. I am forever thankful.

Onnika Payne
Access Intern