



**In this issue:**  
Rancho Los Amigos recognition .....2  
Management Leadership Program .....2  
Parents with Disabilities Program .....3  
Rider Commendations.....3

# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

Access is excited to announce that Susanna Cadenas, Customer Relations Administrator, was accepted to the 2018 Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Mid-Career Leadership Program taking place in October in Alexandria, VA! WTS was founded in 1977 by a group of pioneering women in transportation who realized that women's careers would benefit from professional development, encouragement and recognition to support their advancement in transportation professions.

Susanna joined Access in 2004 and has over over 14 years of experience in customer relations, analytics, project management, and finance. She is excited to enhance and develop additional leadership skills that will help her be an innovative and effective leader in the transportation industry.

Congratulations, Susanna!

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

## Access attends Autonomous Vehicle Symposium

In July, I had the privilege to attend the four-day Autonomous Vehicles (AV) Symposium in San Francisco with Access' Director of IT, Bill Tsuei. During the conference, we visited the San Ramon Bishop Ranch campus where autonomous vehicle vendors like BaiDu and Lilee Systems set-up their AV demonstrations.



*Bill Tsuei (left) and William Kim*

One session we attended was called, "Autonomous Vehicle: Driving Employment for People with Disabilities." The session addressed concerns about autonomous vehicle accessibility for persons with disabilities and access to employment. There were exhibitors who showcased their AV software platforms, simulators, and various test equipment.

On the second day, we attended the general session and listened to various speakers from Lyft, Texas A&M University, U.S. Department of Labor, and the Federal Highway Administration. The keynote speaker was U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Elaine L. Chao. Secretary Chao discussed how the U.S. Department of Transportation is committed to the implementation of autonomous vehicles. There was an emphasis on working with states and local jurisdictions to ease regulations across state lines, and how autonomous and non-autonomous vehicles can co-exist on the road.

On the third day we visited Baidu's office for a test ride in their autonomous vehicle, which was a converted Lincoln MKZ. Next, we visited Lilee Systems to meet their team and learn about their onboard camera system and AV project development.

**William Kim**  
*Fleet Maintenance Analyst*

## Rancho Los Amigos recognition

In late July, Global Paratransit Inc., (GPI) in collaboration with Rancho Los Amigos (RLA), acknowledged Vanessa Angel, Rancho Los Amigos Starter/Coordinator, for her positive efforts and contributions. Vanessa was given this award because of the commendations she received from Rancho Los Amigos staff and Access customers.

The role of the starter is to facilitate trips of Access customers who are leaving or going to the facility. Vanessa greets all customers at Stand 1, Building 100 and has a great rapport with staff and customers.

Her level of customer service and great communications is the foundation to her success and Global Paratransit truly appreciates her service.



*Louis Burns, Luis Garcia, General Manager of Global Paratransit, Carlos Benavides, Patient Advocate at Rancho and Global Starter Vanessa Angel.*

**Louis Burns**

**Access Community Liaison**

## Access COO completes Emergency Management Leadership Program

Last month, I graduated with 44 other southern California emergency managers from the National Emergency Management Advanced Academy (NEMAA). The program is overseen by the United States Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Emergency Management Institute.

The program was led by three FEMA instructors with extensive emergency management experience from around the country (the states of Florida, Massachusetts, and Washington) and included students from all over the region including several of Access' member agencies. I was the only student representing the transit industry and one of two representing the interests of the disability community. Over four one-week sessions in a seven month period, I was able to share with my classmates the importance of public transportation in disaster evacuations, as well as the importance of inclusive emergency planning prior to disasters.



*Mike Greenwood poses during graduation with CalOES' Tina Curry and Alex Cabassa*

NEMAA's curriculum focused on four key areas: (1) assessing the individual, (2) building teams, (3) developing the emergency management organization, and (4) developing the emergency management profession. The program included four exams, a research paper, group activities, and a number of individual and team presentations. Discussions explored a number of non-traditional emergency management issues including the homeless crisis, the opioid epidemic, and the impacts of the rise in global temperatures.

Graduation from the program had its highlights as well; we were treated to a backlot tour of Universal Studios and we took a group photo at one of Hollywood's biggest disaster scenes: the realistic plane crash movie set from the 2005 Steven Spielberg film War of the Worlds. The movie production trucked in a full-sized Boeing 747 and disassembled it to make it appear as though it had crashed in a residential neighborhood. The best part of the program, however, was the many personal connections I was able to make with local emergency managers as I shared the importance of Access in the community.

**Mike Greenwood**

**Chief Operations Officer**

**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 smile for my Yellow Cab driver. I suffered a panic attack and started getting very sick, and I asked him to take me back home. The vehicle was just down the street from my home. He tried to calm me down which I appreciated. I was having a hard time that day, and my driver understood this and acted professionally and sympathetically. I want to say thank you to the driver that went out of his way for someone in need."

**Edna Rios**  
**Rider since September 2015**

"I would like to file a smile for driver Mark Walker. Mark is courteous, professional, and the safest driver I have ever been assigned. I appreciate his level of safety as I often sit in the front seat, and I take comfort knowing Mark is my driver. Mark is a professional driver who was pleasant, outstanding, and kind. I'm very thankful for drivers like Mark, and I hope to ride with him again."

**Sonara Barber**  
**Rider since August 2013**

## Parents with Disabilities Program: Customers and staff discuss program future

The Parents with Disabilities Pilot Program was a grant-funded program designed to make paratransit easier to use for Access-eligible parents trying to travel for and with their children. The program has operated for four and a half years since late 2013, and for most of that time a Federal Transit Administration New Freedom grant covered half of the operating costs.



**Eric Haack with Parents with Disabilities customers**

In June 2018, Access' Board of Directors voted to extend the Parents with Disabilities program for an additional year so that Access staff and program customers could work together to find alternatives and possible partners. These meetings would be intended to find ways to allow the program to continue beyond the current one-year extension.

On Thursday, July 12th (less than two weeks after the start of the one year extension), the first meeting of customers and staff took place. At the main meeting room at the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce, eight active users and I met and discussed future steps for the program.

Access and many of the parents had already attempted to reach out to local political officials and at this meeting the attendees discussed offices that had already been contacted and offices that could be contacted in the future to find potential partners.

Between the program participants and Access, over 20 different political offices and organizations had already been contacted prior to the meeting. Ideas for other agencies and organizations to contact were also discussed throughout the lively meeting.

A future meeting was scheduled for two weeks later in which the group would discuss how best to share the benefits of the program with potential partners.

**Eric J. Haack**  
**Strategic Planner**