Access attends 2016 WTS Annual Conference

The Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS) International organization hosted its 39th WTS Annual Conference in Austin, Texas, May 18-20. WTS is dedicated to fostering and building the future of transportation through the advancement of women. Shelly Verrinder, Executive Director, along with Sarah Boden, Chief Operating Officer; Faye Moseley, Deputy Executive Director of Human Resources; and I had the pleasure of attending the conference on behalf of Access Services. The conference brought women together from the public and private sectors to converse, share, and learn on a professional platform. The 2016 conference provided more networking opportunities, expanded professional development opportunities, and offered more technical tours than any other WTS conference to date.

This year’s conference theme, “Tune into the Future of Transportation,” highlighted the transportation challenges of the 21st Century. Some of the conference highlights included keynote speaker Lilly Ledbetter, whose story touched on how she fought for women’s equal pay at a Goodyear tire plant in Gadsden, Alabama. Ms. Ledbetter achieved victory in 2009 when the 111th United States Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Another memorable highlight was the Annual Awards Banquet, where Therese McMillan, Chief Planning Officer of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, received the WTS Women of the Year Award for being an exemplary role model for women in the industry. Also, seven scholarship winners were recognized for pursuing their academic studies in the field of transportation. The conference concluded with Jacy Good’s real life story of being involved in a car crash with her parents while returning home from her college graduation. She was the only survivor and now spreads the word to warn about the dangers of using a cellphone while driving.

Fayma Ishaq, Project Administrator
The 7th Annual Summit of the Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition

In the Ronald Tutor Campus Center Ballroom on the campus of the University of Southern California, the Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition (LAAAC) held its 7th annual Summit on Aging in Community. The Summit, held on Friday, May 20th, had over 350 advocates, health care providers and organizations along with individual senior citizens attend the event. Experts on gerontology and public health from UCLA and USC spoke along with government officials from the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles and California State Assembly and Senate.

The primary objective of LAAAC is to inform members of its coalition of current issues on aging and to work with its members “to preserve, protect and strengthen access to quality care for seniors, their families and caregivers in Los Angeles County” as described by LAAAC’s Chair Rigo Saborio.

Despite speakers from different backgrounds and careers, a theme throughout the summit was that as people age, it is critical for them to have access to the resources they need, be it affordable housing, health care, reliable transportation or social services. Another important issue illustrated very effectively by California State Senator Carol Liu was that there are dozens of departments at the state level that oversee some part of senior services, and this creates a complicated web of services that seniors and their caregivers must navigate to receive services.

A final message of LAAAC’s Summit was the importance of agencies from different backgrounds working together to coordinate resources and strengthen networks across many disciplines for the benefit of the seniors that the various programs serve.

**Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner**

Community Outreach - Los Angeles Unified School District

Access Services was recently invited by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to attend its First Annual Community Resource Fair at Monte Vista Early Education Center in Los Angeles. LAUSD’s Early Education Centers are high quality developmentally appropriate preschool programs that address the social-emotional, physical and cognitive needs of the population served.

LAUSD’s First Annual Community Resource Fair at Monte Vista Early Education Center was a big success. The event had good attendance by parents, students, and LAUSD officials. Many of the event attendees are familiar with Access Services and feel that Access is a valuable resource in the community. Mr. Jay Rallion, Principal of the Monte Vista Early Education Center, thanked Access Services for being part of this LAUSD community event.

**Steve Chang, Deputy Executive Director Client Relations**
I recently attended the 2016 California Transit Association (CTA) Spring Legislative Conference in Sacramento, CA. The one-day program featured a number of great sessions about the future of transit and paratransit in California.

The sessions included:

- **Addressing the State’s Transit Funding Drought:** This panel of State Senators and Assembly members discussed how best to address a decline in transit and transportation revenues and provided insight into whether any action would happen in this legislative session.

- **Assisting the State Transit Assistance Program:** New calculation and allocation methodologies recently went into effect for the State Transit Assistance program. This session talked about these changes and the CTA’s strategy for trying to amend them. Some of these changes came about because of efforts by Los Angeles County to ensure that Access Services’ data is included in statewide STA calculations.

- **Public Transit and California’s Road User Charge:** This panel provided attendees with an overview of the development of California’s road user charge pilot program and how the new program would affect transit funds, some of which are derived from fuel taxes. The proposed program would charge drivers for the miles they travel rather than levying a tax at the gas pump.

In addition to the Conference, I also attended a meeting of the CTA’s Legislative Committee as well as a Legislative Reception. The following day, I met up with Access Services’ Sacramento advocates from the firm of Joe A. Gonsalves and Sons and we met with a number of legislative staffers to discuss Access Services and statewide paratransit issues.

**Andre Colaiace, Deputy Executive Director, Planning and Governmental Affairs**

**MOVE L.A. Meeting**

On Monday May 23rd I attended MoveLA’s 8th Annual Transportation Conversation at the Cathedral Plaza. This year’s event featured a number of prominent guest speakers which included Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and L.A. County Supervisor and Chair of the L.A. Metro Board Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Access was invited to speak on a panel to discuss the proposed ballot measure (Measure R2) to dedicate a percentage of the sales tax funding for paratransit services and free student bus passes. There was unanimous support from all the speakers on the need to fund paratransit services; however, some attendees went further by advocating that funding for senior and student transportation should receive a higher allocation than the currently proposed two percent. The event was heavily attended with over 200 participants representing various agencies throughout the County.

Move L.A. is a community based non-profit organization whose mission is to improve public transportation in Los Angeles. A project of Community Partners, Move LA was started by Denny Zane, a former mayor of Santa Monica, with the mission of developing broad support and new funding for a more robust, financially sound, and more equitable public transportation system.

The group’s major contribution has been in pulling together a coalition of labor, business, and environmental groups to work with Metro and the mayor of Los Angeles in support of transit related projects.

**Matthew Avancena, Manager, Planning and Coordination**
Rider Comments

"Mr. Mejia would like to file a smile for Eastern Region driver Clande. Driver was not his driver but Mr. Mejia felt he needed to be acknowledged for his exceptional attitude and willingness to help."

David Mejia
(customer since September 2007)

"Miss Holmes is filing a smile for reservationist Linda from the Eastern Region. Miss Holmes stated that she was very frustrated and Linda's patience while helping Miss Holmes was much appreciated. Linda has great customer service."

Antonia Holmes
(customer since September 2010)

Access Board of Directors Meeting

The Access Board of Directors recently met on May 23 and June 1 and took a number of actions.

May 23, 2016

• The Board passed the Consent Calendar which included items on a Website contract extension, update to the Employee Handbook, and a technology procurement award.

• The Board authorized scope of work changes to all of service provider contracts. This was related to the staffing and training sections of the scope of work.

• The Board authorized rate changes to the service provider contracts based on Affordable Care Act law as well as minimum wage law changes on July 1, 2016 and July 1, 2017.

• The Board authorized contract extensions for the service providers in the West/ Central, Southern, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valley service regions.

• The Board authorized a contract extension for the Parents With Disabilities service in the San Fernando Valley service region.

• The Board authorized a contract extension for the eligibility determination contract and awarded the mobility marking service contract to C.A.R.E Evaluators.

• The Board authorized the voluntary collection of Access riders’ Medi-Cal numbers.

• The Board authorized the renewal of commercial package insurance policies and the Self-Insured Retention Automobile Liability Program.

June 1, 2016

• The Board authorized the renewal of Access employees’ Health and Benefit Insurance Plans

• The Board authorized a one-year extension of primary automobile insurance policy

For further information on each of these items, please contact Access staff or see the Access website at http://accessla.org/news_and_events/agendas.html.

Andre Colaiace,
Deputy Executive Director, Planning and Governmental Affairs