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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

One of the key components of Access Services' Mission Statement is to take a leadership role in the "national dialogue as an advocate for universal access to transportation." To that end, Access staff has recently become involved with the Transportation Research Board and its many activities.

TRB is sponsoring the International Conference on Demand Responsive Transportation on September 26-28, 2016 in Breckenridge, Colorado and Chief Operating Officer Sarah Boden is on the conference steering committee. The conference will provide an opportunity for paratransit professionals from around world to discuss ideas and trends in the areas of technology and communication, industry partnerships, service concepts, innovation, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, health and wellness issues, and performance measurement.

Andre Colaiace is part of a group overseeing a TRB research study on dialysis and transportation, which is an important issue given that most ADA paratransit agencies provide a significant number of daily trips to dialysis centers. It will be interesting to see what findings come out of this study, particularly as it relates to the coordination of transportation and health policy in the United States.

**Shelly Verrinder,**  
*Executive Director*

**access**

## AVA Digital Awards

AVA Digital Awards is an international competition that recognizes excellence by creative professionals responsible for the planning concept, direction, design and production of digital communication. Work ranges from digital engagement campaigns to audio and video production to website development to social media interaction to mobile marketing.

The AVA Digital Awards honors work that transcends innovation and craft work that made a lasting impact, providing an equal chance of winning to all entrants regardless of company or agency size and project budget.

I am please to announce that the Access Services mobile site was awarded the 2016 Gold award in the mobile website category!

**F Scott Jewell, Director of Administration**



## APTA TransITech San Diego Conference

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the APTA TransITech conference in San Diego. The event was hosted by Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) which is one of the oldest transit systems in Southern California, dating back as early as the 1880s.

The conference featured a broad range of topics such as fare systems implementation, mobile apps, disruptive technology, and cyber security. All the sessions were informative, but two subjects that I was particularly interested in were mobile apps and cyber security. For the mobile apps session, APTA did an excellent job in gathering a panel of industry experts to share their lessons learned with implementing vehicle-based, real-time solutions. This topic couldn't be more relevant to Access right now as we are currently working to implement the mobile web based "Where's My Ride" project.

For the cybersecurity roundtable discussion, the panel talked about the ever growing network security issues such as malware and ransomware and how simple best practice reminders to staff about not opening attachments from unknown senders could be so effective in preventing malicious outbreaks.

**Ruben Prieto, Systems Analyst**

## NLACRC Life After High School Fair



On March 31st, Access mobility and operation Project Administrator Fayma Ishaq had an enjoyable evening speaking with parents and teachers at the 20th Annual Life After High School Fair.

Located at the Miller Career and Transition Center (MCTC) in Reseda, the event targeted students with developmental disabilities and their families. The fair was sponsored by the North Los Angeles County Regional Center and was coordinated by Transition Unit Supervisor Engrid Smith. Engrid's goal is to introduce the wide variety of programs, services, and support that are available to students after they graduate.

Exhibitors from the San Fernando Valley shared information concerning educational and employment opportunities, vocational choices, Adult day care, living options, and community college programs. Spanish translations, given by Jose Rodriguez, NLACRC Consumer Advocate, for Spanish-speaking parents who had questions regarding, eligibility, service area, standing orders and BTC.

Ms. Smith wanted to thank everyone for all of their hard work and support with those whom we serve. She also shared a note from the Vendor, Work Creation Programs, "It was great to see all the familiar faces yesterday at Transition night. It was one of the best-organized events our company has attended. I am looking forward to working with you and your great team to serve our consumers. Thank you for your support of our program last night."

Vendor feedback was positive, and every family in attendance came away with helpful information. Access looks forward to participating next year at the LAHS Fair.

***Stephen Wrenn, Senior Mobility Management Counselor***

## The Fifth Annual Emergency Preparedness Expo



On April 20th, Stephen Wrenn and I staffed a table at the Fifth Annual Emergency Preparedness Expo at the San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center. We had a great time! There were agencies from all over the country including the American Red Cross, Kaiser Permanente, Southern California Edison, The Gas Company, and Salvation Army. My favorite was the Fire Department Yogi Bear's Shakey Quakey trailer. This highly-specialized earthquake simulator was designed to educate children and families about how to prepare for, and stay safe, during an earthquake in a way they can understand. It simulated a 3.5 earthquake!

There were a variety of presentations scheduled throughout the day. Stephen and I could not attend many of them because the attendees

never stopped coming to our table. The attendees at the Expo had tons of questions about Access Services. We saw many Access customers, and some were non-customers interested in the service.

Stephen and I got a chance to visit some vendors before the Expo started. One vendor who caught my eye was the Blue Can Company. I was surprised to see there is emergency water with a 50-year shelf life! The Expo was very informative and showcased all the great things California is doing to educate and protect the lives of its people. I was so impressed that I've decided to volunteer with American Red Cross or Salvation Army!

***Cynthia Stevenson, Safety Analyst***

## Long Beach Disability and Senior Collaborative



On April 13th, Access staff members Steve Chang and Zachary Strom of Client Relations attended the Long Beach Disability and Senior Collaborative. The collaborative, hosted by Board Member Dolores Nason, was held at the Disability Resource Center in Long Beach and featured Molina Healthcare as one of its primary sponsors.

The collaborative has set both short and long-term goals in unifying organizations that provide assistance to seniors and people with disabilities. A presentation was given on the Coordinated Care Initiative, a program designed to unify the existing benefits of both Medicare and

MediCal recipients while also providing assistance to those who would have difficulty navigating through the programs independently.

Access is eager to contribute by promoting coordination and educating existing social and healthcare services about what type of services it provides to people with disabilities. Access is tentatively scheduled to give a presentation about its service goals and achievements to the group in June.

*Zachary Strom, Client Relations Coordinator*

## Grant Writing Course for Public Agencies and Non-Profits at Access Services

I attended a two-day Grant Writing course held on Thursday, April 7th, and Friday, April 8th that gave a comprehensive overview of how public agencies and non-profit organizations can find grant funding and then successfully compete for such funds through timely and well-written grant applications.

Annually, over \$650 billion is made available in grants from Federal, state and local governments as well as Foundations and private corporations. In many cases, the grant funds are released to promote a particular initiative, for instance, funding new body cameras or bullet-proof vests for local police agencies or medical research on how to combat viruses like HIV or Zika.

John Cannan of Grant Writing USA led the class and gave a very educational and interactive presentation in which he tackled the two most challenging parts of securing grant funding:

- (1) first, how to locate what grants are available from the government, foundations, or corporations and
- (2) second, how to write grant applications and develop programs that meet the objectives of the funding organization.

There were nearly 20 representatives from Southern California transit agencies, including Torrance Transit and Foothill Transit; city organizations like El Monte and Culver City as well as independent non-profit organizations and social service agencies. Alvina Narayan, Grants Analyst and Jack Garate, Operations Administrator and I attended the class on behalf of Access Services.

In the past, Access Services has successfully secured grant funding for programs such as Access to Work and Parents with Disabilities as well as grants to fund new and replacement Access minivans. Access anticipates that as demand for its paratransit transportation increases in the years ahead, staff will need to continue to work actively to secure additional grant funding for new and existing programs. Each of the Access staff who attended walked away from the course feeling they had learned valuable lessons from the course and were eager to seek out what grant funding was available that could help Access in its important work.

For questions or comments about the recent Grant Writing course, please feel free to contact me.

*Eric J. Haack, Strategic Planner*

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## Rider Comments

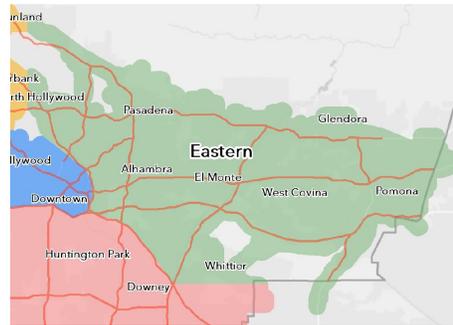
"I appreciated the service I received from my driver Anita. She was very helpful. I had a very pleasant trip."

**Deborah Goss**  
(customer since July 1998)

"I appreciated how polite, courteous, and helpful Shanetta from Customer Service was. She is very good dealing with customers."

**Julie Kitashima**  
(customer since July 2006)

## Access Services Eastern Region Spotlight



Service for the Eastern Region is provided by San Gabriel Transit (SGT). SGT was awarded the first contract from Access, back in 1995. Today SGT provides service to riders with a roster of 510 drivers, a fleet of 214 vehicles, and a support team of about 100 employees.

The Access service area encompasses 1,900 square miles in Los Angeles County and is split up into six regions. The Eastern region

is the largest geographically in our system. With boundaries stretching from Sunland to Whittier, and from Downtown Los Angeles to Pomona. Here is what an average month looks like for service in the Eastern Region:

More than 80,000 trips scheduled

About 107,000 riders transported

Answered more than 117,600 calls

Over the past 21 years, service for the Eastern Region continues to increase.

In partnership with Access, SGT continues to grow, innovate, and expand to accommodate the growth. They have also pioneered several innovations, which have helped improve productivity and service quality. Here are several enhancements that SGT has initiated over the years:

Integrated the use of taxis to help with ridership growth and increase system capacity

Started using taxi dispatching software, to create a shared ride dispatching system

Developed ATBOS software that produced paperless trip sheets, and performance reporting

Introduced 5M software and the first automated booking and routing software

Access anticipates continued growth in ridership in the Eastern Region and believes that SGT will continue making improvements in service and maximizing productivity to provide the most reliable, and safest service for Access riders.

**Randy Johnson, Project Administrator**