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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Report

This month Access has set a number of new ridership records. A few months ago we were approaching 10,000 performed trips per day and recently Access performed over 10,400 trips in one day. These numbers got me thinking, how many people are associated with Access on a day to day basis to keep eligibility going, to book trips, maintain vehicles, create routes nightly, dispatch trips, operate vehicles, get invoices paid, apply/comply with grants, and ensure quality service is provided to our customers. The answer is 2,255 individuals. The largest employer is Global Paratransit in the Southern Region with 660 employees. With 654 employees San Gabriel Transit follows with a close second. I want to thank each and every one of these 2,255 individuals who work so hard at recreating Access day after day. Excellent job!

*Shelly Verrinder*  
Executive Director

## The Abilities Expo 2014



'Abilities Expo 2014' continues to be the go-to source for the latest in technologies and possibilities. In their annual return to the spacious Downtown Los Angeles Convention Center, the Southern Californian Community of people living with disabilities, family members and local healthcare professionals arrived in inclement weather for three days by the thousands. This year's attendees experienced kiosks from around the world including cutting-edge products, exciting designs in technology, elevating wheelchairs and service vehicles. It was a three day adventure with discoveries of new ability-enhancements and possibilities.

In the daily workshops 'Creativity' and 'Limitless Possibilities' appeared to be the main themes expressed by instructors and those in attendance.

The art classes' attracted children ranging from pre-school to pre-teens with canvasses in vivid watercolors and acrylics. For sheer-fun the most popular of all social interactions was the latest moves and grooves from the cool of 'Hip-Hop', 'Zumba', 'Latin' and the romance of 'Ballroom' movements and music.

Access Services and C.A.R.E. partnered with Metro's ADA Compliance Administrator Yvonne Price to meet and greet our mutual clients. Appreciation for the service and an opportunity to live an independent life was expressed by many family members and clients. For the Access consumers and their families, going to this yearly event was only possible because of Access!

*Erik Washington*  
Mobility Management Counselor

## Wheelchair Securement Training



On Saturday, February 22, 2014 Access Services hosted its 3rd Annual Wheelchair Securement Training. The purpose of the training is to review current wheelchair securement procedures and identify current trends. Improving current practices can help minimize and reduce potential liabilities.

Topics included - Review Of New Mobility Devices and Securing Them, Ergonomics and Wellness For Paratransit Drivers, Hands On Practice, and the Use of A Cutaway Lift.

Different mobility devices were viewed and discussions followed as to how difficult some of them are to secure properly. The mobility devices currently being used by customers present many challenges.

One of the issues that drivers could potentially be faced with is how to tie down out of the ordinary mobility devices.

Ergonomics awareness is critical in order to prevent injuries and work related claims. Ramp deployment practices were discussed.

Hands on techniques were conducted and discussions followed with proper securement practices.

MV provided a cutaway that assisted with proper use of the lift and proper loading and unloading techniques.



*Luis Pacheco  
Safety Analyst*

## Access, Emergencies, and the Media

In its ongoing efforts to prepare for emergencies and disasters, Access and provider staff recently participated in a tabletop exercise that focused on the duties of the Public Information Officer (PIO). Facilitated by consultants from Business Contingency Group (BCG), a total of 14 attendees were present for the exercise on March 5th. Access' three designated PIO's, other key emergency staff, and at least one manager from each of Access' service providers partook in the half-day session.

For those not familiar with the PIO position, the person occupying this role is an important member of an

organization's Incident Command System (ICS) structure. Reporting to the Incident Commander, the PIO is responsible for creation and dissemination of information during, and after, an event. Target audiences can be both external (the media, community, or other PIO's) and internal (both leadership and employees). Access' designated PIO's are Andre Colaiace, Faye Moseley, and Jack Garate.

After reviewing the technical details of the position, participants broke into two groups to brainstorm and plan responses to a simulated event - a lost passenger. Both

groups were able to strategize how to establish PIO operations, communicate through traditional and social media.

Since many of the attendees have firsthand experience with lost passengers, the exercise generated a lot of discussion, and even some debate. Overall, it was a great activity that continues to raise awareness and prepare Access to handle emergencies.

*Mike Greenwood  
Director of Safety and Emergency  
Preparedness*

## West Central Community Meeting



The West Central Region hosted Access' final community meeting of Spring 2014. Access customers from all over Los Angeles County came to the Westchester Senior Citizen's Center on Saturday March 9, 2014. This was the first time a meeting was held at this facility. The first session was the English language portion from 11am - 1pm, which had over 100 attendees. Before the meeting began savory hot dogs, chips and beverage of the customer's choice, as well as a light

dessert were served and provided by California Transit, Inc.

The meeting started off with applause from the audience who expressed their appreciation for Access and for the great service the West Central Region provides. Many topics were presented by Access, such as, the July 1st fare change, how the Access system works, dispatch functions, how customers can help Access, mobility management, emergency preparedness and a host of other topics that customers brought front and center. Many hands were raised as the microphone briskly went around for individuals to voice their concerns. There were topics that provided great discussions and clarification to help deliver the message of what Access provides, so customers had a better

understanding and expectation of the service. Similar information and discussions were presented during the Spanish meeting which had over 30 attendees and was from 3pm-5pm. Overall the responses for both meetings were positive and customers expressed their gratitude.



*Geoffrey Okamoto  
Project Administrator*

## Eastern Region Community Meeting



On Saturday, February 22, 2014, Access held its fifth community meeting of the year in the Eastern Region. The meeting was held at the South Coast Air Quality Management District in the City of Diamond Bar. Operations staff Hamilton Franco (Spanish) and Jack Garate (English) led the meeting with an informative presentation about "How Access Works".

The presentation included the upcoming fare increase reminder, items related to trip booking, service delivery methods, and the different ways a customer can contact Access. The presentation also touched on personal emergency preparedness i.e. how a customer can be prepared in the event of an emergency.



After the presentation, questions and comments were taken from the audience. Enefino Mendoza, a 95 year old Access customer expressed how pleased he was with the meeting venue and information given to Access customers. Mr. Mendoza also shared his appreciation for the separate meeting held in Spanish to accommodate the Spanish speaking customers.

*Jack Garate  
Operations Administrator*

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## Rider Comments

On February 23, 2014, the driver arrived 10 minutes early. I was using a mechanical wheelchair and had my prosthetics on both legs. There were some difficulties maneuvering my chair into the van, but the driver assisted me to walk up the ramp and get seated in the back seat. He was extremely helpful, and patient, as I was slow and unsteady using the walker and new prosthetics.

There was a charity 8K run going on at the Brea Mall, so the driver was not able to drop me at the food court but he was very cooperative in getting me to my destination and assisting me out of the vehicle. When I arrived to the pickup area for my return the area was still blocked off by barricades. My driver Mr. Dang was able to pick me up and get me home safely. He was patient and helpful in assisting me to walk down the ramp, and situated me into wheelchair. He was exemplary in demonstrating the type of caring professionalism for PWDs and it is obvious Access trains all their drivers.

Sometimes as disabled riders, we tend to forget the fact that Access is such an indispensable transportation service provided at such a reasonable cost (I paid a total of \$6.50 for my 70 mile round-trip, including my PCA). We are not rock stars, and Access is not a private limousine service, but a valuable shared ride program that allows thousands of PWDs to travel to appointments and social outlets. Access remains the most cost-efficient, well-trained, reliable transport service for PWDs that I have ever experienced. I thought it very important to share and give kudos to those caring, professional drivers. Thank you for being there, Access!

*Michael L*  
*Access Rider since 2013*

## An Access Fun Fact!

*Over the past month Access Services has broken a new record of daily trips... twice! On February 5, 2014, 10,657 trips were performed. This record was quickly broken exactly one month later, on March 5th, when over 10,700 trips were completed. This growth in demand is particularly*

*noteworthy, considering that before October 2013 Access had not yet performed 10,000 trips in a day.*

*To the right - a map of all trips on March 5, 2014.*

