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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Report

Recently I came across in a local newspaper a comment that was made in response to an advice column. "Been There in California" stated -

*"Dear Annie: I read the complaint from "Frustrated," the woman whose friend does not drive. In our area, transportation services are offered at low cost. The services in the Los Angeles area are Dial a Ride and Access. Both are great. "Frustrated" can then offer her driving services on her terms. It also will give her friend the feeling of independence."*

It is always satisfying to receive a compliment on the job you do, especially when it is from an unexpected place. Such recognition is a welcome commentary on the hard work that Access staff and its contractors do on a daily basis.

Shelly Verrinder  
Executive Director

## Access Partners with Metro to Help Veterans



In mid-2012 Metro and Access Services worked together to apply for a Federal grant designed to improve services for veterans and members of the active military.

The FTA liked Metro and Access' proposal and awarded the grant for them to improve their transportation services and make them easier for veterans to utilize.

On Tuesday, August 13th, Metro, Access staff and experts from the consulting firms of Cambria Solutions and Frank Wilson & Associates, Inc. held a kick-off meeting at the El Monte offices of Access Services to discuss possible future projects that ultimately could serve to help veterans throughout Los Angeles County.

A large component of this program will be to develop a way to change the current Access application process. Using guidance from the grant, Access, Metro and industry experts will work to develop a method where staff at Veteran's Administration offices may request applications

for veterans wishing to apply for Access on-line. Currently, persons wishing an Access Services application must request an application via telephone with Access' Customer Service Division.

As the meeting proceeded, the discussion considered a future expansion of the on-line application process that this grant program will create, so that any applicant (not just those using the services of the Veterans Administration) may request an Access application through Access' website. This improvement in the application process would serve to provide a more user-friendly experience and also would provide time savings for call-taker staff in Access' Customer Service Division.

Metro and Access staff will meet again with the consulting team later in the month of August to explore the next steps needed to launch this on-line application service. There is real excitement as to the benefits that could come from this new program that could improve Access' communication with its customers and applicants. For further information on Access' Veterans Grant Program, please feel free to ask me or Matthew Avancena.

Eric J. Haack  
Strategic Planner

## In-N-Out Truck visits the Southern Region

My first day on the job was met with great joy and excitement, but more importantly, I was able to experience firsthand how Access rewards hard work, selfless service, and dedication. For the month of March 2013, one of the busier months at Access, Steve Chang, Deputy Executive Director, Operations, challenged the regional service providers with on-time performance goals. Global Paratransit, Inc., the service provider for the Southern Region, was one out of only two providers to meet the challenge. For the month of March, the Southern Region provided over 76,000 trips, completing 91.2 percent of those trips on time. Such an accomplishment could have only been attained through the hard work and dedication of the dispatchers and drivers who are employed at Global Paratransit. In response to meeting the challenge, Access provided lunch for the employees at Global Paratransit on July 8, 2013. In just minutes of the In-N-Out truck arriving there was a certain excitement in the air. As the employees lined up to receive their free meal I had a chance to speak to a few of them. Within minutes, many had begun to explain some of their most challenging encounters with some of our customers. What I learned from these conversations is that these employees work extremely hard. It takes a great deal of dedication to deal with the operational

challenges they encounter while performing their job duties and maintaining excellent customer service. If I learned anything from my first day on the job it is that these challenges are not solely used to meet operational standards, they are also used to increase employee morale and to say thanks to our frontline staff.

*Ramon Garcia  
Intern*



## Santa Clarita Met Performance Goals



For meeting performance goals for the month of March 2013 and the rest of the year, staff at the City of Santa Clarita Transit Maintenance Facility received In-N-Out Gift Cards. On Monday, July 16, 2013, I visited the Facility and personally thanked and greeted reservationists at the call center with In-N-Out Gift Cards. Reservationists, dispatchers, and drivers in Santa Clarita are known for their excellent customer service. Because of the small region, City of Santa Clarita and MV Transportation employees get to know customers very well. The Gift Cards are a way for Access to say thanks for all the hard work in

meeting performance goals and maintaining great customer service.

*Alfredo Torales  
Project Administrator*

## Tenth Annual Familia Unida Celebration

In July 2013, Access' Mobility Management staff was invited to participate in the Tenth annual Familia Unida 'Living with MS' Wheelchair Wash. The celebration was a day of pampering for individuals living with MS and other disabilities at the East Los Angeles Civic Center. The eight hour event began with the serenading Mariah Morelias strolling down the 'Red Carpet', followed by a blessing of the wheelchairs.

The day was designed for friends and families to join together in fellowship and a shared knowledge. It was a chance to sing along and dance with the entertainment or become a part of the washing of wheelchairs. It was also an opportunity for education and learn about healthier lifestyles from healthcare professionals or share dialogues with local Pharmacists. For the culinary comdisulier, there were classes with Chef Parra.



For Access Services, staff was presented with the privilege of meeting with both familiar and new clients. It was an opportunity to explain how the service and staff can enhance lives and strengthen families and love ones. Today, while serving well over one hundred and thirty thousand customers and their families in the greater Los Angeles regional areas, Access Services continues to grow not only as a foundation for a more independent life but with its' customers as well.

*Erik Washington*  
 Mobility Management Counselor

## Scratch and Win Raffle

In recognition of all their hard work and dedication to providing a safe and positive transit experience, please join me in congratulating our Scratch and Win Raffle winners.

JULY'S WINNERS:

AURORA DELGADO, CTI

SUSAN SOWINSKI, SGT

AUGUST'S WINNERS:

CHARLES BERGER, MVT

DIEGO RANGEL, CTI

They will each receive a \$100 gift card as a token of

appreciation. The Scratch and Win Raffle is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, during the Operation Safety Steering Meeting.

*Galen Hale*  
 Operations Coordinator

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## 2013 ROSE HILLS CONFERENCE



The Hyatt Regency Long Beach was given the honor of being the host city for The Rose Hills Annual Conference. The free, one-day conference provided seniors, people living with disabilities, caregivers, health care professionals and advocates with valuable information about local and city-wide services and

resources that are supportive and available.

This year's conference was designed to enlighten seniors, families and Personal Care Attendants through a series of sixteen workshops led by experts in various fields on the topics ranging from "Personal Finances", "Your Body & Your Mind" to "Knowing your Insurance. Sessions and materials were provided in English, Spanish and Mandarin/Chinese. From Talk-Show pundits to the halls of Congress, the subject of "Healthcare" is debated daily on the evening news, newspapers and the Internet. It is the one subject that will affect all Americans. What does "Health Care Reform" really mean? Rose Hills' attendees were invited to participate and learn in seminars led by Healthcare professionals. Other conference topics focused on "Social Security and Benefits" and the challenges

confronting Baby Boomers, who are now facing the difficult responsibly of taking care of their aging parents.

Access Mobility Management Counselors Stephen Wrenn and Erik Washington were afforded the rare opportunity to meet with the Access Services' clients and share new information, i.e. go511.com. For the customer who was unaware of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or with Paratransit transportation, many saw Access Services as a route to a more independent life.

*Erik Washington*  
 Mobility Management Counselor

## Helping Hand Winner - July 2013

The Operations Team is proud to present the July recipient of the Helping Hand Award! Please join us in congratulating Ms. Lauri Dowling of Van Nuys, CA.

In the past months, Ms. Dowling has:

- Traveled 286 times since the beginning of the year
- Countless call taker and driver commendations
- She goes out of her way to call and inform us of changes in her area.

Ms. Dowling has expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the superb services and support she receives from Access Services and our Provider teams. For that, we have the honor of presenting this wonderful customer with the Helping Hand pin at the end of the month.

*Hamilton Franco*  
 Operations Supervisor

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