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Behind the Scenes

Executive Report

On Friday the 13th of March the US Department of Transportation finally (after almost 9 years) issued its final rule on reasonable modification - "transportation entities are required to make reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure that their programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities." (the full text is available here - <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-13/pdf/2015-05646.pdf>).

This is applicable to policies of both fixed-route and ADA paratransit operators. The rule takes effect on July 13, 2015 and requires a designated employee and complaint process to resolve compliance issues. If you have questions regarding this please contact Andre Colaiace (colaiace@accessla.org).

Shelly Verrinder
Executive Director

Access Attends Board of Supervisors Women of the Year Awards



The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor's Los Angeles County Commission for Women held its' 30th Annual Women of the Year Awards and Scholarship Luncheon on Monday, March 10. The theme for the event was "Educating, Motivating and Inspiring Women." Access Services' Deputy Executive Director of Administration, Faye Moseley, was invited and proud to attend the event on behalf of Access Services.

L.A. County Board of Supervisors Michael Antonovich; Hilda Solis; Mark Ridley-Thomas; Sheila Kuehl; and Don Knabe were all in attendance to present their recipients for Women of the Year.

The L.A. County Board of Supervisors has had a continued vision, engagement and recognition of the unique and deserving needs of all women in Los Angeles County. The L.A. County Commission for Women seeks to expand their work on specific women's issues relating

to equality, health and violence. The Commission also raises scholarship funds for their "Girls At Risk Scholarship Program" that provides education and training opportunities for young women who would not otherwise be able to afford college and vocational programs.

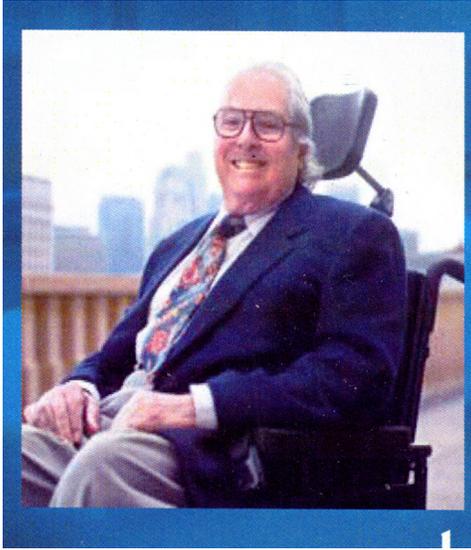
Honorees who serve on a daily basis as outstanding role models, while also making extraordinary contributions to enhance the social and economic status of women



within L.A. County were honored. Among them included Gina Prince-Bythewood (Director/Screenwriter), Jessica Midkiff (Commercially Sexually Exploited Children) and Gail Farber, P.E. (L.A. County Department of Public Works).

*By Faye Moseley,
Deputy Executive Director of
Administration*

Hugh Hallenberg Remembered



I am very sorry to inform you that Hugh Hallenberg passed away on Friday, March 6th. Many of you know Hugh from his many hours devoted to all things Access Services. He was an active member of the Access Community Advisory Committee, the Access Board of Directors, and a tireless advocate for the individuals we serve. Over the years Hugh and I developed a friendship that included visits outside of work and great conversations about life. Hugh was a tireless advocate and believed deeply in the rights of individuals to live independently.

Hugh had a wonderful sense of humor and enjoyed flirting with all the ladies (which he was very good at). We have lost a great human being who contributed so much to making the world a better place for all of us.

By Shelly Verrinder, Executive Director



Access Participates in Town Hall Meeting

What is the future of transportation in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys? That was the question on everyone's minds and the topic of a recent Town Hall Meeting organized by the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments and Move LA. The town hall meeting, entitled, *Imagining Our Transportation Future in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys*, was held in Van Nuys on February 26, 2015.

Joining featured speakers Paul Krekorian, Michael Antonovich, and Ara Najarian from the Metro Board of Directors was Andre Colaiace, Access Deputy Executive Director of Planning and Government Affairs. Mr. Colaiace represented Access on

one of the panel discussions focused on community level infrastructure. Mr. Colaiace pointed to the critical role of ADA paratransit services for people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans in San Fernando Valley and throughout Los Angeles County. Mr. Colaiace also encouraged everyone to be mindful that any future ballot initiatives seeking to raise funds for public transportation in Los Angeles County should also include paratransit services.

The other panel of the night included Martha Welborne, Metro's Chief Planning Officer, and Bart Reed, Executive Director of the Transit Coalition, among others, discussing infrastructure transit

opportunities. Move LA is a coalition of business, community, and government leaders with a mission to build a broad constituency that will advocate for the development of a comprehensive, diverse, robust, clean, and financially sound public transportation system for Los Angeles County and champion strategies to accelerate its implementation.

By Alfredo Torales, Special Projects Administrator

Abilities Expo 2015



Access Services participated in the annual Abilities Expo which was held at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The three day event, which ran from March 6th through the 8th, showcased the latest technologies and resources for all disabilities, offered informative workshops on issues that most resonate with the community and had fun activities like adaptive sports, dance, assistive animal demonstrations and much more.

Cara Eichorn, Customer Service Supervisor for Access Services, thought it was a treat and a privilege to be able to staff the Access booth at the Expo. From a newcomer's perspective, working the Abilities Expo gave her the opportunity to mingle with and learn from some of the

pros from Metro, C.A.R.E., Mobility Management Partners and from the tenured Access staff.

Cara also had the opportunity to walk the exhibit floor to check out some of the exhibitors. "The array of products and services for people with disabilities was overwhelming," stated Cara.

Also attending was Miss Wheelchair USA 2014, Theresa



DeVera, along with Operations Service Monitor Gina Breceda and Global Paratransit Trainer Nancy Loaiza.

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Women In Transportation Keynote Speaker Supervisor



On Friday, March 6th Access staff attended the Women in Transportation luncheon, featuring Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Member, Hilda Solis as the keynote speaker. Supervisor Solis is the newest member

of the Metro Board of Directors, taking the seat after having been sworn in as Supervisor for the First District of Los Angeles County on December 1, 2014.

Supervisor Solis described how her previous experience as United States Secretary of Labor has shaped her vision for transportation in Los Angeles County, calling out the need to make public transit more accessible, connected, and marketable to the average working family.

Access staff had the opportunity to meet Supervisor Solis and her

staff, Senior Field Deputy Danielle Valentino and Transportation Deputy KeAndra Dodds. Deputy Valentino is familiar with Access. She reported that Access did a great job conducting the last round of community meetings, which she attended.

The well-attended luncheon provided a great opportunity to network and discuss the positive impact that Access has on the community.

*By Melissa Thompson,
Operations Analyst*

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Rider Comments

"I just moved to Nevada, and I want to say I was so thankful and grateful to have Access for the last three years." Access is a lifesaver, and all the drivers and people on the phones are great."

*Madelen,
 Rider since September 2011*

Veterans Village in El Monte Celebrates One Year



Just down the road from Access Headquarters at the El Monte Bus Station is the Veterans Village, the San Gabriel Valley's first affordable-housing community specifically for homeless veterans.

This state-of-the-art veterans housing community, which includes 40 furnished studio apartments, opened one year ago

on March 12, 2014. This complex is designed to provide veterans with easy access to services and public transportation. With many residents being disabled veterans, having Access Services at their doorstep is another great service needed for getting around the community.

*By Louis Burns,
 Customer Service Administrator*

Continued - Abilities Expo



The Walk and Roll Dance Team performed at the Abilities Expo.

By Steve Wrenn, Senior Mobility Management Counselor, and Cara Eichorn, Customer Service Supervisor