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access ...**BEHIND** **THE SCENES**

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Executive Report

I have great news. At the upcoming Metro Planning and Programming Committee on June 16th, item number 5 will be recommending funding for 3 of the 4 grant applications we submitted for New Freedom (NF) and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funds. The projects are as follows:

1. Access to Work with a recommendation of \$2.9 million funded out of JARC
2. Transportation Service for Adults with Children with a

recommendation of \$600K funded out of NF

3. Tether Strap Program with a recommendation also of \$600K funded out of NF

Congratulations are in order to Matthew Avancena and his staff, especially Giovanna Gogreve and Geetu Banerjee. The group did an excellent job in not only preparing the applications but lining up letters of support and aligning the application with the regional coordination plan. Excellent effort all the way around!

Shelly Verrinder
Executive Director

Inside this Issue:

Mobility Resource Center	2
Rancho Shuttle	2
Helping Hand	2
Temporary Employees	3
Customer Perception	3
Mobility Management	3
Rider Comments	4

Community Meetings

On May 19th Access Services conducted the first in a series of upcoming community meetings. This community meeting was for customers in the West Central Region where service is provided by California Transit, Inc. (CTI). The meeting was well attended with more than 40 customers in attendance.

Representing CTI were General Manager, Michael Fricke, Operations Manager, Margie Morales, and Community Relations Manager, Anne Perkins-Yen. In attendance from Access Services were Administrative Assistant, Galen Hale, Dispatch Coordinator, Faustino Salvador, Road Supervisor, Connie Jimenez, Customer Care Specialist, Erik Washington, and Call Center Analyst, Marcia Velis.

The topics for this round of community meetings are Access Services' Safety and Customer Perception campaigns.

After a brief presentation of both items the floor was open for a spirited Q & A session with many positive comments about the service! Customers applauded the efforts being made to

both fine tune our safety programs and to enhance the customer service experience.

Customer concerns, no longer centered around late trips due to the outstanding on time service performed by CTI, are more focused on ride times, trip planning and no shows. In addition to explaining the ride time standards that Access Services must comply with on the federal level, we presented an explanation of the daily operational challenges that can sometimes cause a trip to be excessive in

Continued on Pg. 4



...Behind the Scenes

Mobility Resource Center Kick-off Meeting

Staff recently held a kick-off meeting with Judith Norman Transportation Consulting (JNTC) to begin the planning and outreach process for the Mobility Resource Center Feasibility Study.

The purpose of the study is to determine whether Access can serve as the mobility resource center for the region and serve as a centralized facility for a number of transit services including mobility management, travel training and eligibility evaluations.

Beginning in June, the consulting team will be conducting a series of focus groups and regional roundtable discussions throughout the County to gauge the level of community

support and get ideas on the kind of services the proposed center can provide.

In addition to focus groups and individual meetings, the consulting team will also conduct a countywide survey of seniors, persons with disabilities and low income individuals. Once the focus groups and countywide surveys are completed, the consulting team will use the data collected to draft the final report which will contain a number of recommendations on how to move forward. The study is expected to last approximately 12 months. If you are interested in participating in any of the focus groups or meetings, please contact Geetu Banerjee at Banerjee@asila.org.

Matthew Avancena
Mgr. of Planning & Coordination

Re-launch of Rancho Los Amigos Shuttle Service

Access Services launched the Rancho Access Shuttle service back in November of 2007. This is a free shuttle service that transports Access customers and their Personal Care Attendants as well as guests between Metro Blue/Green light rail Imperial/Wilmington station or any where in the City of Downey to and from the Rancho Los Amigos Facility. The intent of this demonstration project is to provide flexible scheduling for Access customers after their

treatment at Rancho Los Amigos facility and encourages our customers to utilize fixed route services to connect to their final destinations. Since 2007, the shuttle service transported over 7000 customers, however, it has not been cost effective. The Access and Rancho Los Amigos teams would like to re-launch and actively market the shuttle service for the next six months before we make a final decision on the longevity of this demonstration project.

Steve Chang
Dir. of Contract Administration

Helping Hand

And the Handy goes to.... **Robert Unzueta** of Los Angeles. Mr. Unzueta has been riding Access for 5 years. He has a total of 229 trips in the last 6 months with no late cancellations or No Shows. He currently works for Kaiser Permanente. He's been employed with Kaiser for over 31 years. He will retire in 5 more years. His mom Margaret is a young 92 year old great woman. The Dispatch Coordinators were honored to meet these wonderful people.

Stay tuned and hope you have a Happy week!

Cynthia, Gina, Hamilton & Faustino
Dispatch Coordinators



Access Services hired five temporary employees for the Safety First Orientation and Wheelchair Marking/Tether Strap Installation Pilot Program. These temporary employees started at the end of April and will be working until the end of June 2010 at the Eligibility Center to give the Safety First Orientation Briefing to all applicants and to mark or install tether straps on all wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility devices.

Evie Palicz
Project Administrator



From left to right: Willie Boyd, Edward Quintana, Justine Warren, Alex Serrano. Not pictured: Ramon Marquez

Customer Perception Program

One of the components of the Miles of Smiles program is that each month one lucky customer receives a free book of Access coupons for taking the time File a Smile. **The March 2010 winner is Ms. Shirley Fifer!**



A customer now for almost 10 years, Shirley says, "I love Access, I really do, it's the truth!" Born in Brooklyn, Shirley was 13 when she moved to California with her family. Shirley married very young and had two children. She was

married for 24 years. A huge sports fan, Shirley loves baseball, basketball and football, and her favorite team is the Angels...sorry Dodger fans!

While still married, and without a college degree, she was able to learn accounting and was an accountant for many years until Macular Degeneration sidelined her bookkeeping career. In addition to her two children, Shirley has 5

grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren! Her daughters live nearby in Pasadena so it's good to know she has family nearby; although she confessed that her daughters want her to move into an assisted living facility and she'll have none of that!

Shirley applied for Access Services due to Macular Degeneration and these days she mostly goes to appointments and her favorite, Ralphs supermarket. When asked what she likes about the service she said, "Everybody is perfect, the drivers and the operators, everyone!", and "they're sweet, each and every one of them!" Shirley says the two trips that stand out in her memory involve a trip to visit family in Seattle using Access Services to and from LAX, and to San Pedro to take a cruise, exclaiming, "Access took me there!"

When I asked her what in particular she expects in terms of customer service or what this particular driver did that inspired her to file a Smile she simply stated, "When I'm around the drivers and operators I feel like a million bucks!"

David Foster
Project Administrator

Mobility Management in the Community

On May 26th Mobility Management staff participated in two outreach events in Alhambra and Burbank. In the afternoon both Stephen Wrenn and I participated in the East Los Angeles Regional Center Professional Development Series on "Accessing Community Resources and Changes to Public Benefits." This session was attended by a variety of social workers, Access riders, ELARC clients and staff, including TPAC Chair Jesse Valdez. The audience had many questions about Access eligibility, Free Fare, service area, and hours of operation.

In the evening I participated in the City of Burbank

Joselyn Adult Center informational session, "When to Take the Keys Away, Should Mom and Dad be Driving?" I was invited to participate by Ms. Renee Crawford, the Social Services Supervisor for the City of Burbank. I had a table with other non-profit and government agencies displaying information related to seniors, health and transportation. The main focus of the session was the panel discussion. They had representatives from the medical field, social services, and law enforcement who provided information on how physical and neurological issues affect the driving abilities of older adults.

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The Los Angeles County
Consolidated
Transportation Services
Agency

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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~ Mission Statement ~

Access Services promotes access to all modes of transportation and provides quality and safe ADA paratransit service on behalf of public transit agencies in Los Angeles County.

~ Vision Statement ~

Access Services serves the community as the leader in promoting accessible and innovative transportation solutions.

We accomplish this vision by:

- *Providing quality, efficient, safe and dependable ADA paratransit service.*
- *Leading the national dialogue as an advocate for universal access to transportation.*
- *Partnering with other entities to secure alternate funding sources and legislation that expands transportation options.*

Community Meetings (cont.)

length; for example, we explained how every day and in every region a certain percentage of routes are "de-combined" (trips peeled off and reassigned to other vehicles) due to any number of factors including, vehicle breakdowns, traffic congestion, freeway closures, etc. We explained that when this occurs, the routes that the trips are reassigned to can become longer and less linear since the first priority is to get each customer picked up within the 20 minute on time window.



We also discussed trip planning and strongly encouraged customers to contact our Customer Support Center for assistance if they have questions regarding how long a given trip may take. We explained that by booking ones trip further in advance of the time needed to arrive at the destination, the customer can have a more stress free

trip and get to where they need to go and arrive at the desired time.

As with most meetings, the topic of no shows and no show enforcement was discussed. Customers were reassured that Access Services No Show Policy is intended to address that very small percentage of customers who abuse the service and its policies at the expense of other customers, and also reassured them that the policy was designed to err on the side of the customer, and that all no shows can and should be appealed by the customer if they believe the no show was unwarranted.

As mentioned, the meeting on the whole was extremely positive and many customers had nothing but kudos for the service and the people that provide it!!

Rider comments

"My right side is paralyzed. Access gave a meaning to my life. Access is a bridge between me and the outside world. Access made it possible for me to feel better towards life. I can go outside, go shopping, see people. Access' people are always on time. They are cooperative, friendly and kind. Thank you all."

– Karbis, Reseda

– Rider since 2000

David Foster
Project Administrator