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

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## Executive Report

It was Access Services' pleasure to attend the Disabled Resource Center's annual volunteer appreciation dinner this past week. Congratulations are certainly in order for Access Services

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) member Ms. Tina Foa Foa, who was honored as Volunteer of the Year at the Hawaiian-themed event in Long Beach. As he presented her with the award, CAC Chairperson Michael Williams made a wonderful speech, outlining Ms. Foa Foa's many accomplishments in the volunteer arena. Access Services and Global Paratransit staff members were joined by fellow CAC member Mr. Gary Jansen to celebrate Ms. Foa Foa and to support the efforts of the Disabled Resource

Shelly Verrinder  
Executive Director



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## Community Meetings

On June 16th Access conducted a regional community meeting for the southern region. Over one hundred and fifty Access customers and friends attended the event. In addition to briefing the attendees on the latest Access news, Access and provider staff (Global Paratransit Inc. or GPI) answered as many questions from the audience as possible. The goal of the community meeting is to keep it informative, conversational and lastly a pleasant experience for the meeting attendees. During the past year, southern region service provider GPI has conducted their own community outreach efforts in an attempt to stay connected with their customers throughout the year. GPI is always looking for ways to improve Access customers' experience and one way to accomplish this is by listening to the customers first hand! Thanks to all the Access customers for



coming out and meeting with staff at the Southern region community meeting.

Geoffrey Okamoto  
Project Administrator

## OIG Follow-up Meeting & Tours

On June 7th, Ms. Yvonne Zheng and Mr. John Metcalf, from Metro's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), visited Access and conducted a follow-up meeting with Access staff. They also took a tour of both the new administrative office in El Monte and the Access Eligibility Center in Downtown. Access COO Mark Maloney and I met with Ms. Zheng and Mr. Metcalf to provide additional information for their follow-up investigation of the OIG Audit from 2008. After the meeting we took them on a tour of the Access office in El Monte. They really appreciated the Access Customer Perception Posters that are mounted on the walls along with the Metro Photographs, which offer a glimpse of the old San Gabriel Valley. Afterwards, Access Director of Contract Administration Steve Chang and Project Administrator Evie Palicz took Ms. Zheng and Mr. Metcalf on a tour of the Eligibility Center. Ms. Zheng and Mr. Metcalf had visited the former eligibility center and were impressed by



everything they found in the newest facility. They took pictures of the decorated walls, the transit walk, and the numerous buses and Access minivans found inside the center, all of which make the Eligibility Center a one of a kind in the transit world. Access has completed all of the OIG recommendations except one, the reservations software change which is an ongoing project. Overall, it was a very successful visit and we invited them to come back soon.

Alfredo Torales  
Operations Analyst

## Community Meeting—Valley

If you host it they will come. And they did come to the Community Meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup> at The Encino Community Center.

With lackluster turn outs last year to the community meetings Access Services did a spectacular job of spreading the word about the upcoming meetings. Seat drops and recorded messages on the reservation lines gave customers the much needed information to attend a meeting in their region.

The room held approximately 100 customers and their PCA's and/or family members. The meeting was facilitated by Hamilton Franco, the Dispatch Coordinator for the San Fernando Valley Region. The rest of the "Dream Team" consisted of Project Administrator Evie Palicz, Customer Care Specialist Torrance Johnson, Customer Service Rep. Christina Blanco and

Admin Assistant Galen Hale.

We signed customers in at the door and assisted

by answering questions one-on-one with various customers prior to the meeting. This allowed for positive dialogue and for the customers to get a chance to meet Access personnel and get their questions and/or issues resolved quickly. The room quickly filled up with energetic customers that were eager to learn what was on the agenda.

Hamilton's laid back approach allowed the customer's to feel comfortable in this large group environment. He started off the meeting by advising the attentive audience about upcoming changes to



# Customer Perception Program

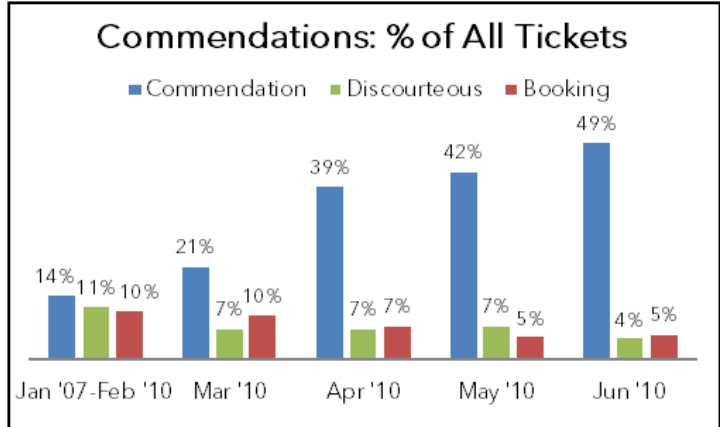


As project manager of the Customer Perception Project, I wanted to provide another Miles of Smiles progress update. Recently, Sean Frye, Director of Customer Support Services provided me with some interesting information

that in April, Commendations took over the #1 spot as the most commonly filed ticket. So, I decided to look into this further because to my recollection Commendations have never outnumbered all other categories.

So, after crunching the numbers (see charts below) and reviewing the period of January 1, 2007 - February 28, 2010, Commendations represented only 14% of all the tickets. Beginning in March 2010, Commendations took over the number one position! Moreover, the percentage keeps rising! In March Commendations represented 20% of all tickets, In April, 38%, in May 42% and for the first half of June 48%!!!

Just as notable, since this campaign is intended to improve the perception of customer service delivered by Access Services, the percentage of Discourtesy complaints has trended downward since the inception of the campaign.



Additionally, Booking complaints has fallen out of the top five most common tickets filed! This is significant because one of the components of better customer service is getting the call center operators to understand that our hold times are well below the standard and they can take a bit more time on the phone, not only for better customer service, but to reduce Booking errors.

I am excited to report that this campaign appears to be having an impact and as the upcoming fiscal year moves along I'll share additional trending with everyone. Thank you to all of the contractors and Access staff for your participation and support and I hope to see continued improvement in these areas!

David Foster  
Project Administrator

# Trip to NYC Transit

In early June 2010 a team of Access and provider staff embarked on a trip to visit MTA New York City . The purpose of the trip was to get a better understanding of how the Strategen software is used in their Paratransit operation and how that may apply in the way Access uses the StrataGen software. MTA New York City staff welcomed the Los Angeles Access team and openly shared their StrataGen software experiences and knowledge with the team. The Access team visited MTA New York City's reservation center and one of their service providers to get a better and deeper understanding of how the StrataGen software works as well as the process involved in



the software parameter set-ups.

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Project Administrator

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Agency

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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.)

the Rider's Guide. He also spoke about the overwhelming success of the Miles of Smiles Program. This great program recognizes call takers and other staff for their hard work and

contributions assisting the customers. Since its inception The Miles of Smiles Program has filed over 590 commendations.

The customers were also informed of Access Services dedication to Safety. This includes driver training, reviewing and analyzing the existing training and safety cultures with our service providers.

The Q & A portion of the meeting was overwhelmingly positive. There were many commendations from customers stating how happy they were with our service. The room was filled with applause from many satisfied customers. There were very few complaints which were mostly policy issues. The customers were informed of policies and procedures and were also encouraged to read the Rider's Guide.

The most touching part of the meeting was at the end. A woman was smiling at me while she was leaving and she was speaking in Spanish. It was translated to me that she was saying "How great Access Services was and that we were a God send."

It warmed my heart because this is what the job is about. Making people happy.



## Rider comments

"I am an 87 yr-old cancer patient... I have used Access for the past 8 yrs only for hospital visits. I am solely dependent on Access for my transportation and have no other means. I keep a wide margin of time before appointments hence I have not missed any visits... I do not know whether I would have remained alive to date without Access. I always receive courteous & prompt service. May God bless the people who work for Access!"

– Waman, San Gabriel  
– Rider since 2000

Torrance Johnson  
Customer Care