

# Behind the Scenes



## Executive Director's Report

On Monday, November 1, 2023, Access held its Annual Meeting virtually.

Thirty-one of the ninety-one attendees represented the Board of Directors and local and municipal members agencies. Those in attendance heard financial and operational reports on Fiscal Year 2023 presented by Deputy Executive Director Hector Rodriguez and Chief Operations Officer Mike Greenwood, respectively.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of two special awards. Ms. Sonya Hackett, Call Center Supervisor for Global Paratransit, Inc. in Access' Southern Region, was the recipient of the Spotlight Award. Her commitment to process improvement and dedication to superior customer service make her a deserving recipient. The Spirit of Accessibility Award Recipient, Metro's on the Move Riders Program, is an inspiring initiative designed to improve senior mobility for the older adults of L.A. County. The program stands as an example for other transit agencies, showcasing how public transportation can be a transformative force in enhancing the lives of older adults and ensuring they remain active, engaged, and connected to their communities.

I would like to congratulate our award winners and look forward to the next Annual Meeting in November 2024!

**Andre Colaiace**  
Executive Director

**access**

## Access staff attends APTA TRANSform Conference and Expo



The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) held its annual TRANSform Conference and EXPO Oct. 8 to 11 in Orlando, FL. Approximately 12,000 attendees from 88 countries assembled at the conference to collaborate and network, share best practices and lessons learned, and build the best transit system in their communities. Conference attendance and participation far surpassed previous attendance records.

Access is a proud member of APTA. Representing Access at this year's event were Access Board members Doran Barnes, Foothill Transit Executive Director; Valerie Gibson, City of Pasadena Transit Manager, and Martin Gombert, Administrator Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority. From Access' leadership, Bill Tsuei, Access Director of Information Technology; F. Scott Jewell, Access Director of Administration, and Randy Johnson, Access Director of Governmental Affairs participated in the conference.

APTA is the leading national body advancing public transportation. This year's conference focused on some of the primary concerns of APTA and the transit industry:

- > **Bus Procurement:** APTA members created a Task Force on Bus Procurement to identify short and long-term financial issues and consider alternative procurement approaches.
- > **Workforce Issues:** Ninety percent of all transit agencies are experiencing a shortage of workers. APTA created six mini guides to help agencies address this issue.

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- > **Ridership:** Although transit ridership was impacted by the pandemic, nationwide, ridership levels have reached 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels due to a creative mix of recruiting programs, enhanced customer service and flexible routing and scheduling.
- > **Federal Funding:** APTA successfully convinced Congress to fully fund public transit programs for 2022 and 2023. APTA leadership, however, warned that as much as \$2 billion in proposed funding cuts may impact transit in Fiscal Year 2024.

There were also in-depth discussions about safety, cyber-security, and the first-ever public transit equity summit. The conference provided an opportunity to discuss these issues and potential solutions with FTA Administrators, DOT Officials, public transit executives, and industry experts from across the country.

In addition, there were more than 670 exhibitors in the Products and Services Showcase, where attendees could see and learn about what's new and innovative in bus and paratransit products and tools.

**Randy Johnson**  
*Director of Government Affairs & Outreach*

## **An Ounce of Preparation: Staff provides emergency preparedness presentation to CALIF**



Emergencies can happen any time. When it does, seconds can count. To this end, one can never be too prepared. Access staff recently provided an emergency preparedness presentation to just under 100 people via Zoom at an event hosted by Communities Actively Living Independent and Free (CALIF), an independent living center based in Downtown Los Angeles. Participants were very engaged and had the opportunity to ask questions.

During the presentation, staff provided information specific to the disability community. The biggest takeaway was the importance of advance planning and not counting on emergency authorities to address all needs. Staff provided information regarding Access's role during these critical situations. For example, Access does not provide emergency medical transportation. However, during an emergency, authorities may request the assistance of Access to help evacuate communities. Access does not self-deploy, and impacted persons should call 911 for assistance.

Access has provided evacuation assistance during wildfires and other emergencies. It does so at the request of emergency management agencies such as the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management and the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department. Those agencies provide guidelines for how the evacuation is carried out, including what can be accommodated at shelter facilities. Access is proud to assist the community during emergencies and is a close partner with our local emergency management community.

**Alex Chrisman**  
*Emergency Management Coordinator*

## CTSA Extension hosts Wheelchair Securement Training

Access Services and Q'Straint/Sure-Lok Wheelchair Securement Manufacturer recently collaborated to present over 25 Safety and Training personnel with a complete wheelchair and occupant securement training on a variety of four-point securement systems.

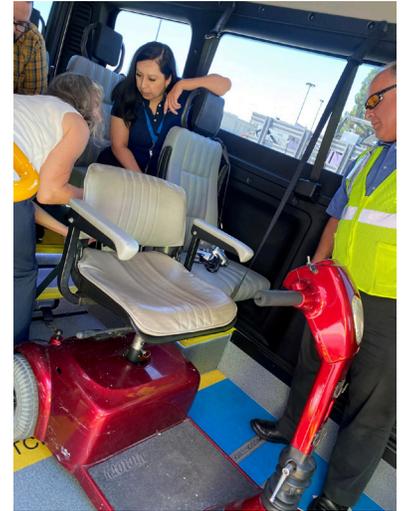
The training covered essential principles for properly securing a wheelchair and its occupant, as well as "how-to" problem-solving strategies for securing difficult mobility devices like power/electric devices, 3–4-wheel scooters, and how to secure occupants more effectively in situations where the passenger's disability or the design of the device prevents proper use of a lap/shoulder belt system.

The goal of the training was to increase operator comprehension, confidence, and avoid the main securement mistakes that lead to the majority of wheelchair occurrences, hence reducing risk and liability and enhancing overall safety when transporting and securing passengers.

CTSA Extension's Learning & Development program is available to transportation professionals and health and human services representatives in L.A. County at no cost. To register for the upcoming training, click on the link below.

[2023 Learning & Development Program](#)

**Mayra Noriega**  
**CTSA Analyst**




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## Commendations

"I would like to file a Smile for the reservationists at GPI. Each time I call they are professional, welcoming, and perform better than expected."

**Frank Damiani**  
**Rider since Nov 2009**

My driver Jose was kind, helpful, and kept his vehicle very clean. Please send him a Smile on my behalf."

**Myrna Maneclang**  
**Rider since June 2005**