

# Accelerate

Spring 2012

The quarterly newsletter for the Conference Of Minority Transportation Officials

## COMTO National Hits the Road

### COMTO CEO and Board Members Visit Chapters Across the Country

COMTO President and CEO **Julie Cunningham** started this year embarking on a cross-country tour, visiting COMTO chapters to stress the importance of consistency and alignment between the chapters and the national strategic plan. The tour, which started Jan. 19, will go through April 13, allowing Cunningham to make visits to 28 chapters around the country. COMTO National Board members will also participate in many of the meetings.

"It's all about our chapters. We want to work with them to strengthen them on the local level," says **Roosevelt Bradley**, COMTO National Chair.

Cunningham added, "It's a great opportunity to be able to visit such a large number of chapters in this



Julie Cunningham Stops at COMTO St. Louis on her Nationwide Chapter Tour

targeted time period. I look forward to hearing from the chapters—as well as working with our chapter leaders to ensure we are all in sync."

Discussion topics will include an update on national activities, organizational goals, upcoming elections for the

national board and chapter presidents, and the COMTO National Meeting and Training Conference being hosted by COMTO Colorado State.

COMTO National's visits to the Chapters prompted discussion about using local resources to address the

challenges that the local leadership faces in order to successfully execute their goals in alignment with the national organization's goals.

**Maria-Teresa Roman**, COMTO Chicago President and Government and Community Relations Officer at Chicago



Members of the Oregon/Southwest Washington Chapter with President and CEO, Julie Cunningham

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## COMTO Rallies Industry Professionals for White House Policy Briefing

On March 14, COMTO along with other industry organizations, attended a White House transportation policy briefing. Individuals in attendance represented the following organizations: Airport Minority Advisory Council, National Association of Minority Contractors, Eno Foundation, National Transit Institute, Black Leadership Forum, Gamaliel Foundation and the Transportation Equity Network. Representatives from the White House Office of Public Engagement, Federal Highways, Federal Aviation and Federal Transit were on hand to provide a policy update. COMTO President and CEO **Julie Cunningham** said, "This was a great opportunity to get everyone in the room at the same time. We will continue working with our collaborative partners and the Administration to address transportation issues."



ABOVE: Attendees of the March 14 Briefing



LEFT: Members of Airport Minority Advisory Council at the March 14 Briefing

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# COMTO National

## Developing the Next Generation of Leaders

### COMTO's Scholars Program Focuses on Future Leaders

Last year, the COMTO Scholarship Committee and the COMTO Youth Symposium Committee joined forces to create the COMTO Scholars Program. This new program will allow COMTO to house all of their long-standing activities that range

from developing interest in the transportation field to providing scholarship and internship opportunities and eventual employment in the industry under one umbrella. The Scholars Program will provide comprehensive programming that supports young professionals throughout their journey, from information to employment.

**Tracey Bessellieu**, Vice President/Director of Engagement at Parsons Brinckerhoff, and **Raynard Hughes**, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, are co-chairs of the program. Bessellieu recently



Tracey Bessellieu



Raynard Hughes

spoke with Accelerate about the goals of the program and what COMTO members should be doing to support transportation's future leaders.

**Accelerate:** What are the goals of the committee this year?

**Bessellieu:** We have aligned our short and long-term plans to support COMTO's strategic plan. We recognize that 20 percent of the COMTO membership comes

from student members. The U.S. workforce will be experiencing a tremendous amount of baby boomers retiring in the near future, leaving opportunity to introduce young professionals early and groom them for succession.

From the 2015 plan, our long-term goals are strategically aligned to support:

- 1. Membership Growth and Retention**  
Providing targeted and sustained initiatives at the local and national levels to attract more youth members to chapters.
- 2. Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs)**  
Partnering with our member HUBs to provide intern opportunities for our students.
- 3. Chapter Growth and Development**  
Relationship building with all interested youth and scholarship applicants by pairing them with local chapters for mentoring and development over time.
- 4. Professional Development and Training**  
Extend opportunities for youth to continually learn through local chapters, members and private partnership. Additionally, we strive to create a learning environment in our local areas.

Our short-term plans are to strengthen relationships with academic partners; expand 2011 pilot program with ITS America; build the CITY Internship Program by identifying public and private support to host 10 student interns in the summer 2012; continue to link scholarship, workforce development and other efforts; develop a COMTO curriculum with a focus on leadership, workforce preparation and industry skills; and expand the youth symposium to include development tracks for young professionals.

**Accelerate:** What are some things that the committee has planned that you're excited about?

**Bessellieu:** We have an awesome group of industry professionals with a true passion for working with youth serving on both committees. I am excited about being able to leverage the joint energy and efforts of the groups to maximize what we can offer youth members. We will be looking to step outside the box this year and find opportunities that have not been available in the past.

**Accelerate:** What do you want to see more COMTO members doing in regard to supporting up-and-coming young people in the industry?

**Bessellieu:** I want members to know that they can support the youth in their local chapters by reaching out to them and keeping in touch; making a special invitation to chapter meetings; adding an agenda item that focuses on the youth; allowing for shadow days with members; offering to be a mentor or coach; inviting them to business meetings; providing intern opportunities; and donating to the National Scholarship Fund!

**Accelerate:** What is the message about transportation that you want to spread to young people interested in the industry?

**Bessellieu:** The range of opportunities in the transportation industry is limitless. A young professional can utilize any of their passions or interests to support the industry, whether it is through a technical or leadership path. Be curious, ask questions, and find a mentor to talk to and learn more about the tremendous opportunities available to them. ■

## Update on the Surface Transportation Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — By a 293-127 vote on April 18, the Republican-controlled House extended transit and highway funding through September and passed a transportation bill that would advance the Keystone XL pipeline. The two-year \$109-billion transportation bill is less than the five-year \$260 billion package proposed by Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio). Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and others said the latest move by the House makes the hope of passing a transportation authorization bill highly unlikely before the November election, according to *The Hill* <<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/222349-house-gop-thwarting-obama-clears-highway-bill-with-oil-pipeline-mandate>>, a subsidiary of News Communications, Inc.



## INVESTING IN THE WORKFORCE REBUILDING THE NATION

### COMTO's 41st National Meeting and Training Conference | July 21–25

Join your COMTO friends and colleagues July 21–25 in Denver, Colo., at the Embassy Suites Denver-Downtown/Convention Center for the COMTO 41st National Meeting and Training Conference.

This event brings together the industry's top executives—including transit board members, chief executive officers, senior staff and management personnel—to collaborate with each other and share ideas, as well as to discuss the state of the industry and issues critical to the profession.

This year's conference will feature a comprehensive program offering a variety of educational and networking opportunities. **If you have any questions regarding the 2012 conference, please contact COMTO Administrative Office at 703.234.4072. ■**

**Register by June 21, 2012 and Save!**

#### Travel Information

##### Host Hotel

Embassy Suites Denver  
Downtown/Convention Center

1420 Stout Street  
Denver, Colorado 80202  
Telephone: 303.592.1000  
Fax: 303.592.1001

A contemporary hotel, LEED certified.

When making reservations, be sure to mention you are with the COMTO 2012 National Meeting and Training Conference. A discounted rate of \$179 has been secured for all registrants, excluding taxes. Visit [comto.org/meetings](http://comto.org/meetings) for detailed travel information.

First night stay will be charged to your credit card at time of reservation.

##### How to Make Reservations:

**Online:** <http://bit.ly/Hxn617>

**Phone:** 303.592.1000

Be sure to mention the COMTO meeting code: COM

**Check-In Time:** 3:00 pm

**Check-Out Time:** 12:00 pm (noon)

**Parking:** Valet Parking Only \$29.00 Daily

Travel Options and Directions from Denver Airports to Embassy Suites

##### Denver International Airport

**Distance from hotel:** 27 mi.

**Drive time:** 36 min.

**Directions:** Exiting airport take Pena Blvd ramp, then merge onto I-70 West. I-70 West to I-25 South, exit Colfax Ave, turn right onto Colfax Avenue. Turn left on Kalamath. Follow Kalamath underneath the convention center. Hotel will be on right.

##### Centennial Airport

**Drive time:** 26 min.

**Directions:** North on S. Peoria St to E Broncos Pkwy. Turn left at E Broncos Pkwy to S Peoria St. Turn left at E Arapahoe Rd to I-25 North. Take Colfax Ave exit and turn right towards downtown. Turn left on Kalamath to 14th. Hotel will be on right.

##### Colorado Springs Municipal Airport

**Distance from hotel:** 82 mi.

**Drive time:** 1.5 hr.

**Directions:** Head south on Langley St toward Old Drennan Rd. Turn right at Old Drennan Rd and take the 2nd left onto E Drennan Rd. Take the 1st right onto S Powers Blvd and turn left at E Fountain Blvd. Continue onto Martin Luther King Jr Bypass/US-24 W

**Bus Service** – Contact Hotel

**Super Shuttle** – \$34.00

[www.supershuttle.com/Locations/DENAirportShuttleDenver.aspx](http://www.supershuttle.com/Locations/DENAirportShuttleDenver.aspx)

**Taxi** – \$60.00

##### Air

United Airlines discounted flights are offered by calling reservations 800.426.1122 or online at [www.united.com](http://www.united.com). Be sure to mention meeting code: ZMS6585190

##### Train

Amtrak travel discounts are offered into Denver through reservations 1-800.872.7245 or online at [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) for travel to Denver, Colorado between July 18-July 28, 2012. Be sure to mention convention fare code X41J-943.

##### Car Rental

AVIS car rental reservations may be made at a discount by calling 1-800.331.1600 or online at [www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com) and mention code #D510811. These rates are available July 15–31, 2012.

Hertz car rental reservations may be made at a discount by calling 800.654.2240 or online [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com), mention code CV#022Q5528. These rates are available July 11–August 1, 2012.

#### IMPORTANT DEADLINES

##### Early Conference Registration:

June 21, 2012

##### Cancellation Deadline:

June 21, 2012

##### Hotel Room Block Rate:

Discounted rates are \$179 (single/double, excluding taxes)

##### Industry Awards Deadline:

May 21, 2012

#### COMTO Announces CEO Roundtable Series

##### CEOs and Senior Administrators –

Make plans to join us onsite in Denver this July 21–25 for COMTO's 2012 National Meeting and Training Conference. This year's conference will feature a series of roundtable sessions focused on topics specifically geared towards transportation agency CEOs and senior administrators.

Please check the COMTO website at [www.comto.org](http://www.comto.org) for more information.

*We expect the hotel room block will fill up quickly, don't delay. Business attire is suggested.*



## Celebrating Women Who Move The Nation

COMTO recently hosted its first Women Who Move the Nation Breakfast Awards ceremony March 14 at the JW Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C. The event, held during Women's History Month, honors the women who have made grand strides in the transportation industry.



**Greer Gillis**, Parsons Brinckerhoff, chair of the event, said that the women were selected through various criteria. The awards committee

worked to select women from each mode of transportation (aviation, highways, transit, advocacy, government, legislator and ports) with more than 15 years of experience and who had made significant contributions to the transportation industry. The awardees also had to be well-known in the industry and considered experts in their field and who had made contributions to COMTO and our membership over the years.

"Women represent an important part of our transportation community," Gillis said. "Many of our nation's leaders at state highway administrations, transit agencies,

port authorities and airports are women. They have made great strides to be in the position they are today, and it's important to pay homage to these women and their accomplishments. Besides, that's what COMTO does—we honor those who have led the efforts in our industry as we pave the way for the future leaders behind us."

Gillis said that there are many aspects of the event that she is excited about, particularly the annual "COMTO Woman Who Moves the Nation" award which is in honor of **Shirley A. DeLibero**, long time COMTO Member and industry icon.

"The committee wanted to give a special honor to a woman who exemplified leadership in the industry that expands across all modes of transportation," she said. "This will be an award that will be given every year, and thus will have special meaning at all of our future events. I am excited to see this award given out on the 14th, but I am also excited about what the reward truly represents."

COMTO President and CEO **Julie Cunningham** added, "This event was a vision finally realized. Hosting the event in observance of Women's History Month was more than appropriate, given the significant accomplishments and contributions of each of our honorees. We are certain that this celebration will become an industry signature event." ■



## 2012 Is An Election Year

Elections for chapter officers and the National Board are being held this year, prior to the National Meeting & Training Conference. Please contact your local chapter president for information on elections for your chapter. Regarding the national elections, be on the look-out for information regarding the nominations and election process. Members of the National Nominating Committee are: Chair **Will Scott**, Co-Chair **Wanda Oliver**, **April Henderson**, **Raynard Hughes**, **Christian Kent**, **Brad Mims**, and **Ruben Landa**. COMTO Chair **Roosevelt Bradley** stated, "Our nominating committee is very selective of our membership in terms of multi-modalism, and the public and private sectors. Under Will's leadership, the membership can be confident that this great cadre of representatives will do a fine job in overseeing our elections process." ■

## Congratulations to This Year's Women Who Move The Nation Honorees

### **The Honorable Corrine Brown**

Award: Lifetime Achievement  
*U.S. House of Representatives*

### **Laura Barrett**

Award: Advocacy  
*Transportation Equity Network*

### **The Honorable Marion Blakey**

Award: Aviation  
*Aerospace Industries Association*

### **Jane Chmielinski**

Award: Private Sector  
*AECOM Technology Corporation*

### **The Honorable Rina Cutler**

Award: Highways  
*City of Philadelphia*

### **Shirley DeLibero**

Award: COMTO Annual  
*DeLibero Transportation Strategies, LLC*

### **The Honorable Nuria Fernandez**

Award: Transit  
*State of NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority*

### **Nene Foxhall**

Award: Aviation  
*United Airlines*

### **The Honorable Camille Hazeur**

Award: Government  
*U.S. Department of Transportation*

### **Paula Hochstetler**

Award: Aviation  
*Airport Consultants Council*

### **The Honorable Grace Napolitano**

Award: Legislator  
*U.S. House of Representatives*

### **Dr. Beverly Scott**

Award: Transit  
*Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority*

### **The Honorable Beverley K. Swaim-Staley**

Award: Multimodalism Honoree  
*Maryland Department of Transportation*

### **Victoria Wassmer**

Award: Aviation  
*Federal Aviation Administration*

# Diversity in Motion

## Burke Retires from DART



**Victor H. Burke, Sr.**, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Operations for the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) in Texas, recently

retired after having provided leadership within the organization since 1991. In his most recent role, he managed the day-to-day operation of the agency, including an operating budget of \$203 million and just fewer than 2,300 employees. Managing the largest unit within DART, Burke was responsible for the operation of 805 buses, 180 paratransit vehicles and 93 light rail vehicles. His areas of responsibility included bus and rail operations, maintenance, material management, paratransit and transit police services. During his 20-year tenure at DART, Burke oversaw the initial construction of the \$841 million DART Light Rail Project.

"My 20 years at DART were most rewarding, and I'm confident I did my best to help build one of the most successful transit organizations in the country," Burke said. "Credit for our success at DART definitely goes to the operating team members that I was fortunate to lead."

**Gary Thomas**, DART's President/Executive Director, said, "Victor joined DART after 28 years of service to his country as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces [Air Force and Marine Corps] and had an immediate positive impact on the performance of our agency."

Currently Burke is leveraging his extensive background and experience in military leadership, transit operations and security as an executive consultant with Fortress Mobile Services in Charlotte, N.C., which provides GPS and video surveillance products and services for fixed route transit, paratransit, student transportation and aviation clients, as well as law enforcement, ambulances and fire departments. ■

## O'Bannon Joins Perkins Coie LLP's Airport Concessions Group



**Don T. O'Bannon** joins the Perkins Coie's Airport Concessions Industry Group as Counsel. He joins the firm in Dallas where he previously served as vice president of

business diversity and development for Dallas Fort Worth International Airport.

"Don is well-respected throughout the industry for his experience with supplier diversity initiatives and his leadership in airport associations," said **Joseph McCoy**, Airport Concessions Group co-chair. "His addition to the group will assist us as we continue to expand our practice on a national basis."

O'Bannon will focus his practice on providing guidance and counsel to airport concessionaires operating in the

food and beverage, news and gifts, duty free, bookstores and specialty retail businesses. This includes counseling on Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (ACDBE) certification issues; preparing proposals for concession operators and ACDBE partners; negotiating concession license, lease and sublease agreements, in addition to other responsibilities.

O'Bannon earned his J.D. from University of Virginia School of Law and received his B.A. from Dartmouth College. Since 2008 he has served as chairman for the Airport Minority Advisory Council. He is also the former chairman of the board of directors for African Chamber of Commerce, Dallas Fort Worth and member of the advisory board for the Greater Dallas Asian Chamber of Commerce. ■

## Ewing Named General Counsel



Veteran public law attorney **Vincent C. Ewing** was named General Counsel for AC Transit by the agency's board of directors.

As a former deputy city attorney for Los Angeles, assistant city attorney for Santa Rosa, CA, city attorney for East Palo Alto, CA, and a prosecutor of violent crimes for the City of Los Angeles, Ewing brings vast experience in a variety of legal arenas, especially public law.

A graduate of Howard University School of Law, Ewing has advised city councils, city administrators, city managers and elected boards and commissions on issues ranging from government and fiduciary responsibilities to matters of general law concerning land use, due process, the Brown Act, labor, risk management, city charters and other public policies.

Ewing has 12 years of California municipal law experience. He has a highly successful litigation record and has provided impartial legal analysis and administrative guidance on a variety of ballot measures. Ewing holds a B.A. from UCLA and a J.D. from Howard University School of Law. ■

## Martin Spearheads Strategic Plan for the State University System of Florida



performance indicators that we will monitor closely," he said.

The Strategic Planning Committee worked on an aggressive

The Florida Board of Governors of the State University System recently voted to approve the "Board of Governors' Strategic Plan for the State University System of Florida: 2012-2025," featuring an array of new or updated components and performance metrics that will revolve around three key themes—Excellence, Productivity and Strategic Priorities for a Knowledge Economy—and reflect a major milestone and achievement by the Board of Governors, and its stakeholders and partners in the effort.

**Frank T. Martin** of Tallahassee was chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and is a global expert in transportation issues. He currently serves on several national transportation boards, including the American Public Transportation Association.

"The work product of this committee during the past 18 months — with all of the research, vetting and data review from across the nation — is nothing short of extraordinary, and it is also good public policy direction for the future of our public universities, providing us with new or amended

timetable to produce the document by year-end in 2011. It includes such ambitious targets as increased degree production at all levels, especially for minorities and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). The State University System of Florida is already in the top ten and top six nationally for overall graduations rates and minority graduation rates, respectively. The plan also recognizes and serves to increase the nationally competitive standing that the State University System has attained in several areas, particularly research and development (R&D) expenditures, and corresponding commercialization opportunities that produce dozens of new businesses and jobs in Florida each year. ■

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# COMTO USA

## Atlanta

### COMTO Atlanta Hosted Its First Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Seminar

Under the leadership of **Joseph Erves**, the Atlanta chapter of COMTO hosted its first Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Seminar and Networking Event. This is an exciting time in the transportation history of Atlanta. The city is buzzing with possibilities for HUBs amid a visit from the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Secretary **Ray LaHood**, for the Atlanta Streetcar Kick-Off and an upcoming vote regarding funding for regional lists of transportation improvement projects.

Our very own President and CEO, **Julie Cunningham** made a special trip to bring a legislative update to event attendees. HUBs were informed about the removal of restrictions on personal net worth in addition to the ability to transfer HUB certifications

received in one state nationwide. This news was greeted with a hearty round of applause.

The Director of Equal Opportunity for the Georgia Department of Transportation, **Michael Cooper**, was the keynote speaker. He provided HUBs with a significant amount of information on the trends in the HUB certification process along with details on how to approach the federal certifications. His presentation was both enjoyable and informative, reflecting his 30 years of experience in the field of equal opportunity and civil rights.

Attendees enjoyed networking at the conclusion of the event and provided several positive accolades about the value of the event.

## Ft. Lauderdale



Julie Cunningham visits COMTO Ft. Lauderdale

## Northern California

A recent membership survey by COMTO NorCal shows that members want greater interaction with industry leaders and increased opportunity for career and professional development.

More than 78 percent of respondents reported career advancement and development as their primary area of interest, followed by 64 percent who want greater networking opportunities with transportation leaders.

The survey, conducted for the second consecutive year, is a key component of NorCal's efforts to increase membership growth and participation and ensure that the chapter's long-term strategy is aligned with priorities of its members.

Engagement in transportation issues is a core charge of COMTO at the national and chapter level. "Ensuring our ongoing ability to influence trans-

portation policy depends on maintaining a strong membership base that is engaged in our programs and committed to ensuring transportation development meets the needs of our various communities," said **Debra Johnson**, President of COMTO NorCal.

The survey queried members on a range of topics including optimum time and locations of meetings, reasons for sponsoring events, participation on working committees and suggested ideas for chapter improvement.

When polled on key drivers for program or event participation, 69 percent of respondents said that subject matter was the most important.

"On behalf of the executive committee, I want to thank our chapter members for completing the survey and we look forward to their input throughout the year," said Johnson.

## Austin

This quarter COMTO Austin released our annual student scholarships during the month of March. First Transit and Veolia have both committed monies to fund two academic based and transportation focused scholarships for the chapter. The recipients will be announced in mid- April. Further, on March 28 COMTO Austin hosted the Expand Your Borders Tour Event with the COMTO National President. We had a total of 31 individuals attend the morning event. The audience was diverse as we had both public and private sector individuals attend.



COMTO President and CEO Julie Cunningham addressing the Austin Chapter



# COMTO USA

## Philadelphia

### Youth Explosion

On Saturday, March 17, the Philadelphia Chapter presented their 7th Annual Youth Explosion. This year's event was geared to promoting careers in the field of aviation. The students were given a plethora of information and insight to the various professions in the aviation arena. The panel presenters came from a variety of professional careers, from administrators to flight instructors.

The highlight of this event was the presentation given by a Tuskegee Airman in the person of **Dr. Eugene Richardson**. Dr. Richardson kept everyone's attention as he stressed the importance of staying focused and being committed. His message was essentially that education is vital for success. This event was very informative and educational for all.

### Breakfast Networking Seminar

On March 2, COMTO-Philadelphia hosted the first in a series of networking breakfasts intended to bring local Philadelphia businesses together to give MBE/WBE/DBE firms an opportunity to network with majority firms as well as other MBE/WBE/DBE firms. The keynote speaker, **Jeffrey Knuettel**, SEPTA's Chief Engineer and Assistant General Manager, spoke about contracting opportunities with SEPTA, explained the workings of SEPTA's DBE program and answered general questions from the attendees.



The event was a huge success and the response was overwhelming. The event was held in downtown Philadelphia at the Hilton Garden Inn. The general consensus among attendees was that the event was affordable, enlightening and they are looking forward to the next two events planned for the fall. Upcoming keynote speakers include representatives from Amtrak, the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, South Jersey Port Corporation and Delaware River Port Authority.

## San Antonio



COMTO San Antonio President James Coleman presents COMTO President and CEO Julie Cunningham with COMTO San Antonio's Contribution to the COMTO National Scholarship Fund.



### Dear Members:

If you have any changes to your contact information, please be sure to update your profile online.

[www.comto.org](http://www.comto.org)

— Thank you!

## TRB Volunteers Honored in New Class of National Associates of the National Academies



Robert Prince

The National Associates of the National Academies Program was started in 2001 to recognize extraordinary contributions made by individuals to the National Research Council (NRC) through their volunteer service on committees and panels of the NRC and the Institute of Medicine. The NRC chair periodically designates individuals for this honor under guidelines established by the NRC governing board.



Paul Larrousse

The 2011 class of National Associates includes 29 individuals who have served the Transportation Research Board (TRB) with distinction and who had not previously been honored with this recognition. Among them are **Robert Prince**, COMTO board member and AECOM Vice President, and **Paul Larrousse**, COMTO Partner and Director of the National Transit Institute. Membership in the National Associates recognizes past service and is active for life. ■

## Keith Britton, P.E., M.S., MBA Appointed to DFW International Airport Board of Appeals



Keith Britton

The COMTO Dallas 1st Vice President was tapped to serve on the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport Board of Appeals (BOA). The Airport Board of Directors formally installed the new members on April 11, 2012. Mr. Britton was also appointed to serve on the City of Frisco, Texas Convention and Visitors Bureau. He also serves as a mentor for the Young Entrepreneurs Academy where high school students progress through a 30-week course. The course teaches the students

about entrepreneurship including developing a business plan, selling their idea to an investor panel, and starting their own businesses.

Mr. Britton is a progressive young professional under 40 who has a serious entrepreneurial spirit and is an active member of COMTO Dallas and the National Society of Black Engineers. He is the Principal of Iconic Consulting Group, a civil engineering consulting firm with headquarters in Dallas, Texas with offices in Houston, Texas and Denver, Colorado. ■

## COMTO Scholarship Recipient Joins Reminger Law Firm



Julian Emerson

**Julian Emerson**, a former COMTO scholarship recipient, recently passed the Ohio bar exam and now practices as an attorney in Reminger's Cleveland office. He joined the firm as a law clerk in 2010. He focuses his practice in the areas of professional liability, general liability, trucking and commercial transportation. As a recent graduate of Temple University Beasley School of Law, Emerson served as justice of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity

International and served on the executive board of the Black Law Students Association.

In 2004, Emerson received COMTO Philadelphia's General College Scholarship; in 2005, he received the COMTO National Rosa Parks Scholarship; in 2006, he was the recipient of COMTO National's Thomas G. Newsom Scholarship; and in 2007, he was honored with the COMTO Philadelphia General College Scholarship. ■

## Bradlink, LLC. E-10 Award



Helen Callier

The Houston Minority Supplier Diversity Council (HMSDC) Emerging (E-10) Awards Luncheon awarded **Helen Callier**, President of Bradlink, LLC, with the E-10 Top Minority Business Award in honor of Bradlink's business success and small, minority, and women owned business advocacy in the Greater Houston Area. Ms. Callier said, "I am grateful and inspired for HMSDC, one of the most recognized business diversity councils located in the fourth largest city in the U.S., to recognize Bradlink for

doing an outstanding job. On behalf of the Bradlink team, I am honored to receive this prestigious award and it is our desire to continue to deliver and "get it done" for the Houston region plus make a larger impact in our great country," said Callier.

Callier also serves as the Chair of the 2012 Houston Greater Procurement Conference Advisory and Planning Committee. While working previously in the capacity as co-chair, she was able to provide hundreds of small and minority owned businesses an opportunity to meet key local, state and federal agency and prime decision makers. This experience also served as an occasion for Bradlink to better serve their existing clientele, and a way to connect with future, prospective clients. Bradlink's client **Frank Wengler**, Vice President of AECOM, states, "I have had the privilege to watch Bradlink grow under Helen's leadership, and I don't know anyone who is more deserving of this distinguished award. I am a testimonial of her 'living and breathing' her clients and I look forward to a continued working relationship with Bradlink in the days ahead."

Callier was also instrumental in helping to revamp the City of Houston's SMDBE Mentor Protégé Program. This blossomed to a larger program "Guiding Protégés to Success" that involves HISD, Port of Houston and METRO Transit and provides small businesses an opportunity to grow and develop their business through mentorship from large primes and agency involvement. ■



# COMTO CHICAGO Celebrates the Promotions of Members...



**India Birdsong**

Chicago Transit Authority

India Birdsong, was recently promoted at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to a Transportation

Manager in Bus Operations. Ms. Birdsong is a former TCRP Ambassador and the current Treasurer of the COMTO Chicago Chapter.



**Eunice Mina Escobar**

Regional Transportation Authority

Successful, experienced public financial professional

with more than 20 years of increasing responsibilities primarily in the fields of public transportation and capital program management who has successfully assisted in managing multi-million dollar capital programs, Eunice Escobar currently works for the Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority, where she has been promoted to Program Manager of Asset Management Oversight. Prior to working at the RTA, Eunice worked for more than 15 years at the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation as the program manager for the Northeastern

Illinois Capital Program. Eunice has been a member of WTS for more than five years and a COMTO supporter for the same time becoming more involved with COMTO Chicago Chapter Board since 2009.



**Brianna Hickman**

**Brianna Hickman**

Chicago State University

COMTO Chicago Intern Brianna Hickman left the Arizona sunny weather for the

Windy City to join the Chicago State University (CSU), where she is a Business Marketing Major and a member of the CSU Women's Golf Team.



**Rovaughn Graham**

**Rovaughn Graham**

Chicago Transit Authority

Mr. Graham was recently promoted to General Manager of the 77th Street Garage in the CTA's

Bus Operations Department.



**Ronald Ester**

**Ronald Ester**

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)

Mr. Ester has been appointed Vice-President of Rail Operations. ■

## Eno/Robert H. Prince, Jr. Scholarship Awarded



**Barney McCoy**

Congratulations to **Barney McCoy** the recipient of the Eno/Robert H. Prince Scholarship. McCoy's career in transportation includes marketing and customer service within both the airline and public transit industries. McCoy is fluent in French and holds a Masters of Science degree in Transportation Planning and Management. ■

## COMTO National *(continued from page 1)*

### COMTO CEO and Board Members Visit Chapters Across the Country

Transit Authority, said that chapters' focus on the national strategy will benefit members by giving them a stake in one of the only organizations that caters to their needs.

"It will give COMTO members an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the only national organization that is invested in the community of color within the transportation industry," she said.

Roman notes that she is hoping the dialogue between COMTO National and its local chapters continues throughout the year and that she is anticipating some of the new opportunities presented to engage the two segments and solidify the relationship.

"I am looking forward to the implementation of a COMTO retreat or leadership development day or weekend hosted by National for the new chapter officers, who will be voted in this spring," she said. "The retreat should model a grassroots leadership training with an executive transportation theme. Its agenda should include, but not be limited to, the role of COMTO's leaders within the industry and a plethora of 'how-to's.'"

"This should be a holistic leadership development program that would aid local chapter members, particularly those in non-senior staff positions, to continue to want to invest in COMTO because COMTO is making an investment in them, as opposed to looking to other professional organizations for development opportunities. An interactive program such as this could help National enhance its relationship with local chapter presidents and simultaneously strengthen the chapter's succession plan, under National's directive. Providing this type of guidance may assist local chapters with identifying successful candidates for COMTO sponsored programs and assist in the development of future leaders of transit agencies and members of service transportation boards."

**Shirlyn A. Myles**, COMTO St. Louis President and community liaison for Missouri Department of Transportation, said that Cunningham's visit allowed her chapter to identify and strategically target specific organizations for membership using her visit as a chance to set up meetings with key leaders. The chapter has also already developed its goals for the remainder of the year as a result of the meeting, including regularly scheduled general membership meetings, fundraisers and networking events, scholarships for the HBCU in the region and more.

"After this visit, we are specifically looking forward to acquiring new members, increasing participation and more members attending conferences," Myles said.

With the chapters focusing on COMTO National's strategy, Myles believes that members will benefit through more organizational structure and clarification, increased training and professional development, access to networking opportunities and scholarships, and more officer and chair roles. ■

## CEO Corner: Carolyn Flowers | Charlotte Area Transit System



**Company Name:** Charlotte Area Transit System

**Number of Constituents Served:**  
FY2011 | 24.3 million rides

**Number of vehicles:** 322

**Years in the industry:** 20

### What would you say is your biggest accomplishment as CEO of Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)?

I would say my biggest accomplishment is advancing the long-range transit plan under the current economic climate. The Blue Line Extension (BLE) is moving forward into final design. We are also looking at innovative financing options for the proposed Red Line in the northern part of the county. CATS has implemented many financial decisions to maintain a high quality of service and current service levels in this economy.

### What goals are you looking to accomplish this year regarding CATS?

My main goal is to secure a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the Blue Line Extension. This is a commitment from the federal government to pay half the cost of construction of the light rail line. We are also anticipating the State of North Carolina to sign a State Full Funding Grant Agreement (SFFGA) for 25 percent of the cost of building the line. This will keep us on schedule to start construction in 2013. We will also continue evaluating options to advance our 2030 Transit System Plan and focus on delivering quality service during the DNC.

### How is the Charlotte Area Transit System planning to accommodate the traffic/travelers that this year's Democratic Convention will bring? What do you think will be some of the challenges that may arise with this event? How do you think the convention will affect the City of Charlotte?

CATS has not been informed of any decisions that would impact the transit system during the Democratic National Convention. We are confident that CATS services will be operational during the convention. ■

## Winter Park Jazz Festival

Saturday, July 21, 2012

11:00 am – 6:00 pm

COMTO Colorado Chapter invites you to join them inside their tent for the Winter Park Jazz Festival on Saturday, July 21, 2012.

Please see the COMTO Colorado Chapter website for details: <http://www.coloradocomto.org> for more information.

Register with COMTO Colorado prior to purchasing your tickets unless you have your own transportation.

To purchase tickets go to:  
<http://bit.ly/JpjqTR>

## Farewell to a Friend



The COMTO community mourns the death of founding member and staunch public transportation advocate **Daniel C. Lawson**.

Mr. Lawson began his transit career in 1975 when Houston Mayor **Fred Hofheinz** requested his services to help initiate the development of the city's transit program. This led to the creation of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Houston.

In 1979, Mr. Lawson started his own company, Lawson National Distributing, which was involved in the marketing and sales of public transit vehicles. In 1986, *Black Enterprises* magazine recognized Lawson National Distributing as the ninth largest African American company.

In 1995, he created an innovative marketing process bundling financing, leasing, maintenance, vehicle procurement and facility development in long-term 12 to 15-year contracts. This led to the first nationwide Federal Transit Administration approved "turnkey" lease maintenance program for transportation systems through a joint venture with the Roger Penske Corporation and GE Capital.

From 1997 to 2003, Mr. Lawson served as a key strategist and fundraiser in the successful elections of **Dr. Lee P. Brown**, Houston's first African American Mayor. He was also a key adviser to Mayor Brown in the strategy, development and funding of the city's light rail system built by Siemens.

Mr. Lawson was a graduate of Oklahoma State University, where he played football. He played professionally with the Washington Redskins after his graduation. OSU later inducted him into its Leadership Legacy Program and in 2005 named him the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award.

He is survived by his wife Johnnye, his son Daniel R. Lawson and a host of loving relatives and friends. ■

# Welcome New Members

COMTO welcomes members who joined the association between Nov. 8, 2011 and Feb. 15, 2012

## Business Members

**Desbuild Incorporated**  
Hyattsville, Md.

## Academic Institutions

**University of Pennsylvania**  
Philadelphia, Pa.

## Individuals

Listed by Chapter

## At Large

Ferdinand Risco

## Atlanta

James Wong

## Birmingham

Wytangy Peak  
Adrian Solomon

## Boston

Adler Eliacin

## Central Florida

Sabina Mohammadi

## Chicago

Homa Ashouri  
Michael Bastanipour  
Phillip Beckham  
Countess Cary  
Jack Chalabian  
Ronald Ester  
Daniel Hall  
TaNesheha Harris  
Peter Ousley  
Ronald Singleton  
Paris Tyler

## Cincinnati

Bernard Smith  
James Washington  
Colorado State  
J. Chad Gilbert  
Freddie Hanns  
Lloyd Herrera  
Gregory Murphy  
Benjamin Murray

## Dallas

Isolina Byrd  
Braden Carlton  
Enrique Garcia  
Gerry Gilliam  
Joy Morrison  
Micheal Williams

## Delaware

Tavon Cherry  
Natasha Griffith  
Devon Hackett

## Maryland

Felicia Alexander  
Iain Banks  
Dennis Dorsey  
Jerrod Huggins  
Tershia Moulden

## Michigan

Oladayo Akinyemi  
Darryl Daniels  
Harold Gardner  
Vanessa Hansle  
Timothy Miles  
Chelsea Shelling

## New Jersey

Portia Henry  
Elis Sosa  
Naja Taylor

## New York

Marva Brown  
Alfreda Parker  
Esteban Varas  
North Carolina  
Reginald Arrington  
Jeannene Lynch

## Northern California

Shirley Douglas  
Juana Borrego  
Michele Johnson  
Joe Wallace

## Philadelphia

Karen Alexander  
Taylor Bailey  
Rosetta Bussie  
Deborah Carpenter  
Gene Council  
David Didier  
Michelle Ehriodo  
Nathalia Galarza

Khadijah Hall  
Clinton James  
Garrett Marsh  
John Milius  
Dima Mircheva  
Myneca Ojo  
Bijan Pashanamaei  
Kimberly Reed  
Clarena Tolson  
Thoa Vu  
Carlton Williams  
Moises Young

## San Antonio

Veronica Araiza  
Juana Borrego  
Elizabeth Campbell  
Kenneth Davison  
Shirley De Leon  
Carl Dreighton  
Stephanie Flint  
Michael Hightower  
Craig LaFond  
Veronica Lopez  
Dianne Mendoza  
Devoria Moore  
Hubert Nelson

Catondra Noye  
Lydina Nunn  
Anna Padilla  
Felix Perez  
Sally Ann Rigdon  
Shannon Roberts  
Laura Rubio  
Pauline Vasquez  
Kevin Wilson

## Southern California

Randy Johnson  
Darryl King

## Washington, D.C.

Sandra Candelaria  
Darnell Grisby  
Natalie Wilkins

## COMTO Council of Presidents: Your COMTO Chapter Contacts

The following individuals represent active COMTO chapters on the prestigious COMTO Council of Presidents and are the principal contacts for the chapters. Each individual's name, company, and email address are provided below. For expanded contact information, visit the "Chapters" link on the COMTO website, [www.comto.org](http://www.comto.org).

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### Editor's Note:

This list does not include COMTO chapters that have pending officer elections (Columbus, Hampton Roads, New Jersey, South Carolina) or are inactive as of this writing (Dayton, Gary, Northern Virginia, Pittsburgh).





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**Accelerate** is a quarterly newsletter published by the  
 Conference Of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO)  
 12100 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 130, Reston, VA 20190  
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*Publisher:* Julie A. Cunningham  
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**COMTO Vision Statement**

To see the diverse faces of America equally reflected in all levels of the transportation industry.

**COMTO Mission Statement**

To ensure a level playing field and maximum participation in the transportation industry for minority individuals, businesses, and communities of color through advocacy, information sharing, training, educational, and professional development.

**COMTO Core Values**

COMTO's core values are embodied in how we conduct business and how we interact with our stakeholders, including our members, customers, partners, and supporters. We affirm and are committed to the following core values: Advocacy, Diversity, Excellence, Inclusion, Innovation, Integrity, and Service.

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