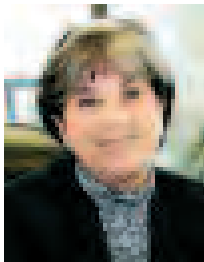# Alive!

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*SERVING OVER 17,000
CITY AND DWP EMPLOYEES*

ITA: There's Wireless in City's Future

■ **A recent *Alive!* interview with ITA GM Thera Bradshaw focused on cable TV and the City's wireless future.**

ITA — CEO John Hawkins and Alive! Editor John Burnes chatted with Thera Bradshaw, General Manager, Information Technology Agency (ITA), about the department and the future of wireless technology and cable TV in the City.

Alive!: Tell us about working with other City departments.

Thera Bradshaw: ITA exists to serve others. Everything that we do in ITA is in support of our partners within the City, all the City departments, or the public with programs like 311 and the

Thera Bradshaw,
GM, ITA

Pershing Sq. Wears Green For St. Pat's

■ **Pershing Square ups the fun with an afternoon party after the annual St. Pat's parade downtown.**
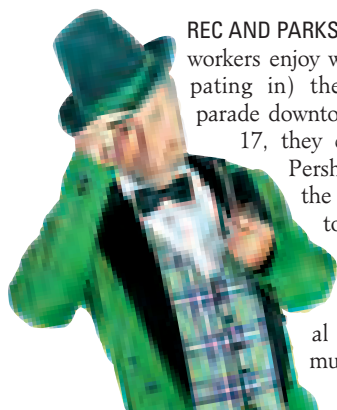
REC AND PARKS — After downtown workers enjoy watching (or participating in) the annual St. Pat's parade downtown at 11:30 March 17, they can mosey over to Pershing Square, where the parade is scheduled to end. That's where the fun will continue, with a party featuring traditional Irish food, drink, music and dancing.

Safe Harbor

■ **The Port Police works on ships, under water, in patrol cars, on bikes and in the air to safeguard one of the City's critical assets.**

HARBOR — The Port of LA is one of the most important features of the City. Whether it means managing millions of tons of cargo or welcoming tourists, the Port is a vital economic engine that drives the City.

Keeping it safe from crime and terrorism is of paramount importance. That job is proudly accepted by the Port Police, a strong and independent safety force that operates in many modes, as the situation calls for: on the water, below the water, in the air and on the ground.

Read all about the Port Police, and meet the people who keep our Port safe.

At bottom: Port Police (from left) Sgt. Alfred Guerrero, Officer Glenn Twardy, Officer II Maria Hernandez and Officer Masaki Imoto are four of the many who safeguard the Port of Los Angeles from a great many threats, including crime, pollution and terrorism.

City Looks Toward its Wireless Future

cable franchises; we have a consumer services division. Channel 35 is a combination of a partnership with the public as well as internal to the City.

Our department operates off of all of the City's network infrastructure, and anything that is telecommunications, ITA has the responsibility for it, City-wide. So, everything we do, for the most part, serves others.

Alive!: What's the most daunting technological challenge or challenges that ITA is facing right now?

Thera Bradshaw: That's actually a really good question. We're a mobile and global world and dependent on technology in the office, out of the office, on the go, in the car. Probably the largest challenge for us is being able to connect – any place, any time – with your business office. It's a challenge for us because we're working in an environment that is for the most part wired. It's an evolution that has been occurring over the past several years to really go to an unwired kind of world and a totally electronic world, as opposed to paper. We're not there yet. We're still operating in both of these platforms.

Alive!: Is the challenge greater in the general public or in the different departments within the City?

Thera Bradshaw: Technology is progressing so quickly, [but] our processes take a period of time. We go through the RFP processes and selection processes, and then present findings to the City Council, all of those things. It may take eight or nine months for an RFP. It's more challenging in the City environment to keep pace with technology that the rest of the world is easily able to go into their Radio Shack and buy. It is a difficult challenge for us, but getting to an all-electronic government, an E-government, is really important.

Alive!: For example?

Thera Bradshaw: Well, E-government means access to information, utilizing technology, utilizing the Internet, being able to be self-serving: If you want to have a building permit, you can do it yourself in your home. This really is an electronic world, and that's where the City's world needs to be for the best interests of the public. But we also have to be here for those who want interaction with a real person.

Alive!: For the City employees themselves, what is the project that will have the greatest effect on the different departments City-wide?

Thera Bradshaw: I think there are probably two that are current right now. The

first one is videoconferencing, allowing citizens to testify before the City Council live from a remote location. We launched it Nov. 22. It's live testimony coming from Marvin Braude Center and Van Nuys City Hall into the Council Chambers downtown, and that in itself really changes administrative processes for the City. It allows the citizens to interact with their government at the highest level possible and with the legislative body, the City Council, live and not have to come downtown. It has positive impacts on transportation and on citizen involvement, but it will change our City process and how we manage that internally. That impacts all departments. It will impact the entire City overall as well as the public that we serve.

WIRELESS

Thera Bradshaw: (continued): The other project is wireless access in public facility locations. We have a pilot project, also at Marvin Braude: Wi-Fi access that's free for the public. What we found in that project is that there were a lot different uses that we had not really even thought about. That's why you do a pilot: You learn from those pilot projects and it helps you make better choices as it's deployed Citywide. Many communities are realizing the benefit of broadband connectivity in a wireless way, and that is at the top of the list for the City of Los Angeles to be a digital community. L.A.: the digital city, the digital community.

Alive!: Is there another pilot Wi-Fi project in the works—

Thera Bradshaw: We have a number of projects that are already out there. Pershing Square, Little Tokyo —

Alive!: And these are operating right now.

Thera Bradshaw: These are operating right now. We're looking at the Wi-Fi project linking to Van Nuys High School. I am working with the LAUSD, and so these partnerships are extending beyond the City family into other jurisdictions like the LAUSD. We're working very closely with the City, County and the LAUSD on procurement and leveraging our buying power within this whole area, because if you think about how many computers the City has and then you add how many computers the county has and then you add how many computers LAUSD has, that's a lot of buying power that we can leverage our buying power and reduce cost.

Alive!: And the wireless at the Braude Center, that's within the confines of the building, correct?

Thera Bradshaw: It actually is, within the Civic Center. Our staff led that. And we did a pilot in partnership with other departments in the City to make it happen, and with Internet providers and with an equipment provider. I have a whole team of staff that's really worked on that.

Alive!: We ran a news brief for a story or something on that.

Thera Bradshaw: We're also working with the MTA.

Alive!: Mobile-to-mobile wireless.

Thera Bradshaw: Exactly. Seriously.

Alive!: Now in five years, where do you see this whole wireless thing going? I have a T-Mobile hotspot account. But I don't want to have to go to a Starbucks or a location that has Wi-Fi.

Thera Bradshaw, General Manager, ITA, and John Hawkins, Club CEO, discussed the future of City technology.

Thera Bradshaw: Yes. Broadband in local communities is about economic development. It's about tourism, it's about having conventions in your city because people are mobile and global. And my vision is I think through the assets and the resources that we have in the City and partnering with Water and Power, partnering with various industry companies, that we'll have this City unwired in the next couple of years.

Alive!: Wow.

Thera Bradshaw: Yes.

Alive!: That's the timeframe, huh?

Thera Bradshaw: Yes.

Alive!: That's the vision. Would it start with government buildings, making them wireless and then spreading out to the City? Or is it a partnership?

Thera Bradshaw: No. I think it's a partnership. And it's a combination because, you know, we've done a study called Broadband and Beyond, to see what the connectivity was, where wireless had been deployed in various communities and what the model was, if it was a government model or if it was a privately owned or if it was a partnership of some sort. But it involves business to come in, people to live there and tourism.

Alive!: It's a quality of life issue?

Thera Bradshaw: It's a quality of life issue, exactly. It's the means to be able to have communications capabilities. That's the easiest way to describe it.

We have areas that are underserved in the City. And the reason I have partnered with LAUSD and the County is to leverage county, City and school district assets collectively together in a very big way to connect the City. That's what we're doing. And that's my vision: that we have an unwired City where everyone has accessibility. And it's not just about having the access. It's about having the technology available to you as well as having the education available to you.

I learn a lot from my grandchildren. And, I mean, Casey was on the computer at two years old and making cards and very competent. I don't know that I even thought about a computer when I was two years old. It just wasn't there. But today's world has really changed.

> "I love what information and technology can do to not only make government more efficient and more accessible, but what it can do in the public's homes to connect them more to participate with their government."

The *Alive!* Interview

Thera Bradshaw, General Manager, ITA, talks to John Hawkins, Club CEO, about technology initiatives in the City.

Thera Bradshaw, General Manager, ITA, in her downtown office.

In the future, wireless Internet communications could be available in downtown's open spaces.

Technology has done that. Technology has been the catalyst to really connect and change the world. And I always tell everybody that we're mobile and we're global. We really are global. We can be speaking on the Internet with someone from China in a second. We can be ordering products that we want off of the Internet without ever having to go to the store. We don't have to go through a travel agent to book travel. We can go right to Jet Blue and book a flight. That's how people are: Fax machines are old technology now. How often do you get a fax? The only time I get a fax is when it's from a lawyer.

Alive!: Printing your boarding pass to me is the greatest thing.

Thera Bradshaw: You don't have to check in. Just print your boarding pass, you just walk in. That's the power of technology and information that's really connecting the world and changing the world. And that's why this is such an exciting time. I love LA, but I love what information and technology can do to not only make government more efficient and more accessible, but what it can do in the public's homes to connect them more to participate with their government.

Alive!: Talk about handling wireless. Is it going to happen as a public utility, almost like power or a phone company would be?

Thera Bradshaw: Los Angeles is unique because we're 450 square miles or something of that nature. And it is a corridor going down to San Pedro, to the beach, to the mountains. We have different infrastructures in place within all of those 450 square miles. Policy decisions have not been made for the City of Los Angeles in terms of what the model ought to be. But in the interaction that I had with my colleagues around the country, every jurisdiction, every local community has to assess what the right plan is, the right model is, for their area. Different governments will do it differently. Smaller cities, it's easy. It's easy to unwire. They're a smaller geographic area. You do main corridors of a business, shopping downtown. There are easy things to do. There is also new technology, broadband over power lines, that is changing connectivity of the homes, actually using the infrastructure of the power and bringing broadband into homes. Every home generally has electricity. All of that is very possible in LA. And [the DWP] is the largest municipally owned water and power organization and; it has tremendous assets and lots of fiber. I think that in Los Angeles it will be a combination of different ways serving different communities. The districts the council members serve are 250,000 people [each], basically. Each one of those is larger than a lot of cities in America. My hometown, Eugene, Oregon, I think is 150,000 people. These council members' districts are bigger than my hometown, and certainly bigger than Bend, Oregon, where I have another home.

Alive!: And that affects traffic mitigation.

Thera Bradshaw: It gets really to the heart of being wireless and mobile and global, because if you can do something at home through the Internet and have that capability, have the technology, have the capability, have the connection, then you don't have to get in your car and come downtown to get a building permit, for instance. Technology has such an impact.

> "The reason I have partnered with the LAUSD and the County is to leverage county, City and school district assets collectively together in a very big way to connect the City. That's what we're doing. And that's my vision: that we have an unwired City where everyone has accessibility."

The mayor has some real top priorities: education, transportation, public safety. And technology is all a piece of making those things more effective. The video conferencing, just that project alone is mitigating traffic. People would have to get into their cars, come downtown to spend ten minutes to testify, and they would have been in their car an hour maybe to get here, depending on what time of day it is, ten minutes to testify, probably 30 minutes to find parking, and another hour to go back home. So you spend a half a day to come to share your views, valuable views, that I know the mayor and council want to hear. And now you can do that remotely by going to your neighborhood City hall and testifying direct live. That's the power of technology, in my opinion, and why this is an exciting place to be. I love LA, but I love my job. I really do. It probably shows.

Alive!: It does.

Thera Bradshaw: I love the people whom I'm privileged to work with. I believe you get things done with relationships and the power of those relationships. No one person does anything, but as a team we effectively all do it together. And that's why I think in the deployment of broadband and unwiring the City, it's going to be different partnerships in different areas because in underserved areas, we may have to go in as a government and do it because they don't have the technology in the home, they don't have the knowledge base. In some cases, my granddaughter has a better knowledge base of how to make things work quicker than I do. So, partnering with education, using children to teach their parents, because they do, is what I've been talking about with the LAUSD is how do we leverage the power of these children to teach their par-

ents and to carry on to be future leaders of the City. We do it by partnering and we do it through technology and providing the resources.

CABLE TV FRANCHISES

Alive!: Tell us about cable television and how it connects with ITA.

Thera Bradshaw: Technology is changing so much. A cable company isn't just a cable company today. Cable companies are offering video-on-demand, cable television service, telephony, all sorts of different kinds of services. And the Internet.

Alive!: Phones.

Thera Bradshaw: Telephones, right. They're offering video streaming, Internet, telephone services, wire lines and wireless. So the whole world has really changed. The cable franchises in the City were negotiated in 1987. So franchises have a lot of different parts to it. We're in negotiations now. The effort is being led by the CLA office. ITA's job is to administer and regulate what the policy leaders negotiate and put in place in agreements. And, so, we are supporting that effort. ITA did a very large community outreach effort that is called the Needs Assessment. We went out into the very diverse parts of the community, different stakeholders and interest groups. We even went to Hollywood. We went to the neighborhood councils. The reason was to determine what the community wanted and felt they needed out of cable television. And what came out of that was published before the Council. Because we're in negotiations, I can't get into all of the [specifics].

But we are the public advocate. They want reasonable rates and quality service. And they want more and better facilities for public education and government access. The other thing that the Needs Assessment showed is that we need to use the infrastructure that's in place because there's no sense in digging up the road 15 times. Use the infrastructure in place to connect all of our various cities' facilities in a way that will strengthen the communication capabilities for the City to operate and to get more efficient.

The City has through the Federal Communications Commission the ability to collect revenue for the use of a public right-of-way. And the cable industry supports the City at about $23 million a year. I have $23 million coming in from these cable franchises. And so if you think about a cable franchise that is bringing in $23 million in annual revenue to the City and it's over a ten-year period of time, that's a lot of money.

There is competition between the cable industry and satellite carriers. If you have satellite, you can't watch your government at work

[Channel 35]. So that's one advantage of having cable television service as opposed to satellite.

Alive!: I never thought about that.

Thera Bradshaw: Yeah. The program lineups are totally different and you don't have the public education and government access.

different film shoots here is actually a tourist draw. People come here from the tour buses and they hear about Hollywood and Los Angeles and they'll say, boy look, they're shooting something, let's go. And they sit there and they'll take photographs and it's really kind of intriguing.different things and it's a real positive for the City.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Thera Bradshaw: One exciting thing that I want to tell you about, and this is something I'm really proud of. A few years ago, we've had interns who have worked in ITA. And through their last couple years of college, they come in and work for the City. When we had some tremendous fiscal challenges we lost that internship program. It just couldn't be funded. And, so, we have recently partnered with the Hispanic Engineering Association to bring back the internship program. They are fully funding it at $1 million a year for five years and they will administer it. And they are recruiting for us from over 200 colleges and universities across the United States, and will be bringing interns in about five at a time.

What it does for us, we're getting interns that are in their junior, senior or graduate programs, and it's a good recruiting round for the City. And it's giving these students valuable real-life work experience in government. Sometimes a lot of engineering students will think of going to work for, like, Ford or Chrysler or IBM and they don't think about opportunities in government. And I really see that that internship program is sort of thinking out of the box in a different way. I was telling a couple of gentlemen that I felt bad about losing the internship program. And so literally, as a result of that conversation, we met a couple weeks later and they said, "You know, I think we can help you. I think we've got some industry partners that will help fund this."

Three major partners came forward to help fund the first year: IBM, Lockheed and Hewlett-Packard. They are paying the students fair wage through the Hispanic Engineering Association, recruiting in the colleges, and we get the benefit of picking the students that come to work for us. How good is that?

Alive!: That's great.

Thera Bradshaw: It's complementing our workforce, mentoring students, and hopefully recruiting to come to work in public administration. ▪