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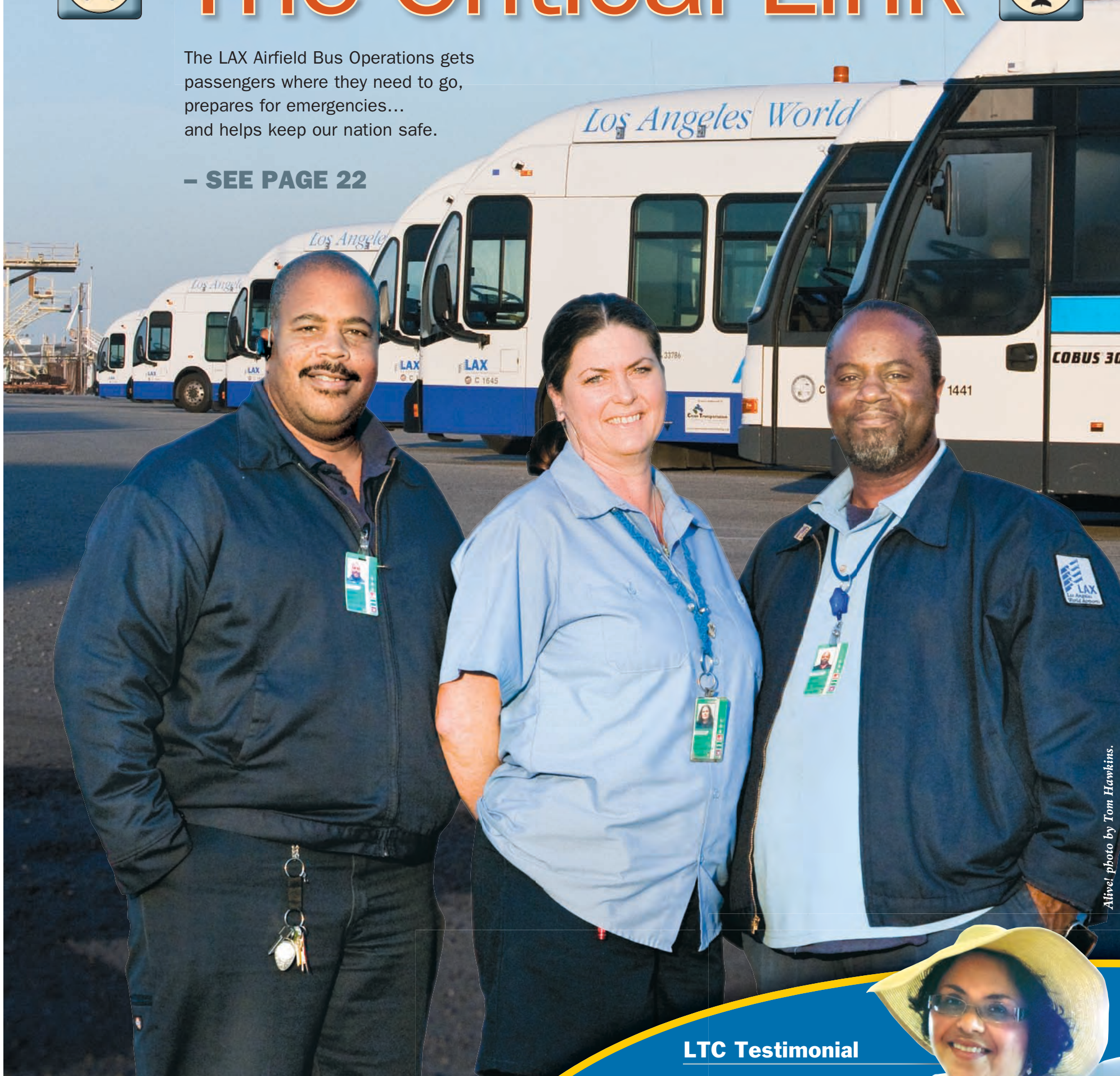


The Critical Link



The LAX Airfield Bus Operations gets passengers where they need to go, prepares for emergencies... and helps keep our nation safe.

- SEE PAGE 22



Alive! photo by Tom Hawkins.

LTC Testimonial

Read Barbara Arenaza's Story

Barbara Arenaza purchased the Club's Long-Term Care insurance, and it's a very good thing she did.

- READ HER STORY, PAGE 35



DWP Open Enrollment Starts May 1st !!



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LAX Airfield Bus Operations

The Critical Link

LAX Airfield Bus Operations plays a critical role in passenger transport, official welcomes, emergencies, training and Homeland Security.

Photos by Angel Gomez, Club Member Services Director, and Ken White, Bus Operator

When you've just landed on an international flight, but your gate doesn't have access to U.S. Customs... or you're taking off from one of LAX's remote terminals at the western edge of the airport... or there's an emergency: You're one of the nearly 10 million passengers at LAX over four years or so who can thank LAX Airfield Bus Operations for getting you to and from your flight.

LAX's Airfield Bus Operations Unit is a 24-hour operation, served by 33 Airfield Bus Operators, who are specially trained, licensed and certified to operate a variety of buses and specialized vehicles on airport service roads and taxiways in a customer service-oriented environment. Obtaining the position of Bus Operator is a highly competitive process, as this is no ordinary bus driver job. One past selection period included written testing of more than 2,500 applicants in which only 38 passed, with eight positions being filled.

On most occasions, the first people who travelers encounter when entering the United States after exiting a plane is an Airfield Bus Operator. Airfield Bus Operators transport international travelers to and from aircraft, in a "sterile" (secure) environment between remote terminals and U.S. Customs for first entry into or final departure inspections from the United States, driving in restricted airport driving areas, in and around taxiing and parked aircraft and emergency rescue vehicles, while monitoring separate radio frequencies for dispatchers and the FAA Control Towers.

From 2004 to 2008, Airfield Bus Operators transported more than nine million passengers between aircraft and terminals, using the various vehicles in its complete fleet, numbering around 40.

In addition to operating the Airfield Buses, Bus Operators operate a fleet of specialized vehicles, including tour buses used to carry City officials and dignitaries, both domestic and foreign, to various points of interest both inside and outside the airport, often explaining history or significance of sites viewed. Tour buses are also used by Airport Police and Fire personnel throughout the year in their training operations.

Another of the specialized vehicles used by Airfield Bus Operators is the ADA Truck. The ADA Trucks consist of a complex set of hydraulic lift systems used to raise the body of the truck up to the doors of planes to retrieve passengers needing assistance.

Airfield Bus Operators are LAWA's most qualified experts in the operation of the ADA trucks and help passengers, as well as first responders on numerous occasions throughout each year, including removing passengers from planes in wheelchairs, on stretchers and assisting in Medevacs, in which patients are transported to and by helicopter. Some of the more memorable occasions in which Airfield Bus Operators used their expertise in operating the ADA trucks were transporting actor Christopher Reeve from the aircraft in his custom motorized wheelchair; serving the Saudi royal families and the round-the-clock support they gave during and after the events surrounding 9/11 and the Northridge earthquake of 1994.

ADA trucks are also used during emergency situations, assisting police and fire departments during bomb threats, emergency aircraft landings and criminal transport to and from planes. Assistance is also given for criminal transport as well deportees. Operating the ADA trucks, Airfield Bus Operators are also instrumental in assisting the coroner with removal of deceased passengers.



LAX Airfield Bus Operations is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Having picked up their passengers, two LAX Airfield Bus Operations vehicles take their guests to the Tom Bradley International Terminal.



Airfield Bus Operations in Action

Approximately 90 percent of the actions by LAX Airfield Bus Operations is the basic, but demanding and constant, transportation of passengers from international flights to U.S. Customs facilities. Here, *Alive!* chronicles this function, plus other functions, too.

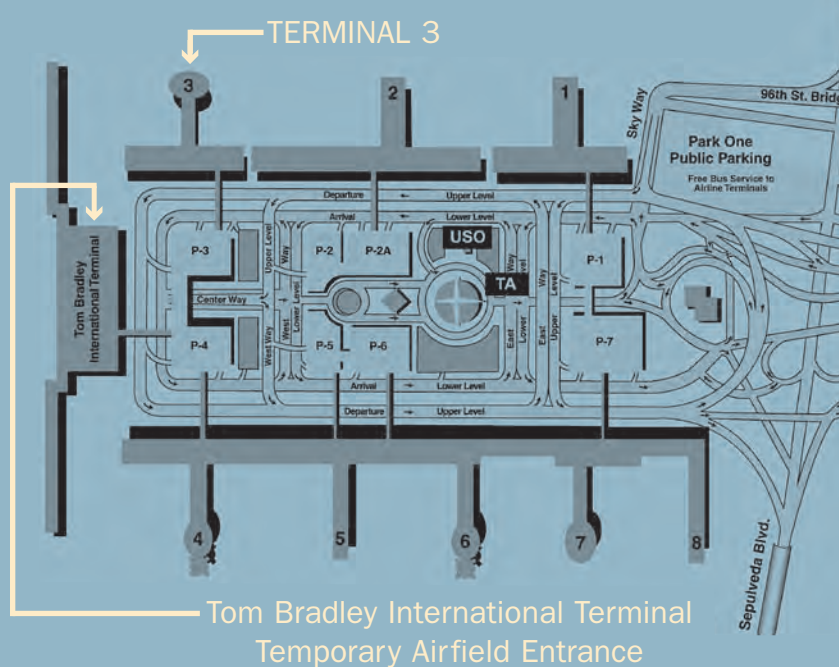
➔ International Passengers to U.S. Customs

Airfield Bus Operators monitor two different radios both in their office waiting area, and in their buses. Also, they know most of the international flight schedules.



An international flight arrives and parks at the gate. This terminal – Terminal 3 – does not have U.S. Customs facilities to process the passengers, so they must be taken in a “sterile” (secure) environment to the Tom Bradley International Terminal.

Los Angeles International Airport



Bus Operator Luis Manrique waits for international passengers to deplane.



The passengers deplane via stairs and do not enter the terminal. They board the Airfield Bus.



The bus delivers its international passengers to the Tom Bradley International Terminal, and they depart to be processed through U.S. Customs. (This facility is a temporary one, built to accommodate passengers while the Bradley West project is under construction.) **And the job is done!**



The Airfield Bus closes its doors and departs for the Tom Bradley International Terminal.



His job done, Bus Operator Norland Caampued gets a call for his next run.



ALIVE! FEATURE

LAX AIRFIELD BUS OPERATIONS



The Airfield Bus Operations Crew

Here are some of the Bus Operators who do a great job of taking passengers where they need to go.



Bus Operator Luis Manrique.



Bus Operator Jim Grimes.



Bus Operator Sharon Pitts



Bus Operator Ken White.



From left: Bus Operators Marcus Williams and Mercio Williams.



Bus Operators Phil Harrell and Julie Rose.



Bus Operator Fred Gilmore.



Bus Operator Brian Gulseth.



Bus Operator Norland Caampued.

From left: Marie O'Kelly-Green, Manager of LAX Airfield Bus Operations, and Al Torres, Bus Operator.



Bus Operator Michael Boucher.



From left: Bus Operators Robert Winston and Brian Gulseth.



Airfield Bus Operations in Action

— continued



ALIVE! FEATURE



Remote Gates

At the western edge of LAX are remote gates for many international flights. Since these gates are not connected to any terminal, all passengers both embarking and disembarking must use an LAX Airfield Bus to get to and from the Tom Bradley International Terminal. A fully loaded Boeing 747 can fill five LAX Airfield Buses.

The LAX Airfield Bus Operations Unit was created to serve these terminals.



An LAX Airfield Bus awaits its passengers at a remote gate.



Private Terminals

Sometimes, international passengers arrive on private jets and deplane at one of LAX's private terminals, such as the Atlantic Terminal. LAX Airfield Bus Operations picks them up and takes them to the Tom Bradley International Terminal for processing.



An LAX Airfield Bus waits outside LAX's Atlantic Terminal.



Disabled Passengers

LAX Airfield Bus Operations must be equipped to transport disabled passengers. Since international passengers in wheelchairs must also go through U.S. Customs, Bus Operations is equipped with special buses to move these passengers efficiently and in comfort.



Disabled passengers arrive at the Tom Bradley International Terminal to be processed through U.S. Customs.



Special Tours

LAX Airfield Bus Operations provides airport tours for a wide variety of groups and needs. Also, the unit assists Public and Community Relations Division at Van Nuys Airport by driving groups at that location, too.



LAX Airfield Bus Operations gives an airport tour.



Natural Gas Vehicles

The entire fleet of LAX Airfield Buses uses natural gas.



An articulated LAX Airfield Bus refuels at an off-airport facility.



This ADA-compliant bus reaches high to sit parallel with a plane's exit doors, helping disabled passengers deplane safely and efficiently.

The *Alive!* Interview

World Ambassadors

Among their many other functions, Airfield Bus Operators are sometimes the first Americans their passengers ever meet. That's among their major responsibilities.

On March 10, Club CEO John Hawkins and *Alive!* editor John Burnes talked to Marie O'Kelly-Green, Manager of the LAX Airfield Bus Operations. The interview took place in the Bus Operations Facility on the north side of Los Angeles International Airport. —Ed.

ALIVE!: Thanks for sitting down with us today, Marie. How many years have you worked for the City?

MARIE O'KELLY-GREEN: 21.

Where did you start?

MARIE: I started in Public Works, the Board Office, in a Graffiti Abatement Program.

And how long have you been in your current position, then?

MARIE: A little over a year.

And you came from?

MARIE: I came from another section here at the airport. I was in human resources here at LAWA [Los Angeles World Airports] for about five years.

What do you like about supervising the Airfield Bus Operations?

MARIE: I like it because you have more direct contact with the constituency. When you're in the HR personnel area, your customers are the employees. But now I get to meet the customer, the people, the citizens. That's very good.

Marie O'Kelly-Green, Manager of LAX Airfield Bus Operations.



So this is a 24/7 operation. We've been here for a few hours now, and it's a busy place.

MARIE: Very busy.

Is there a typical day?

MARIE: There isn't a typical day. We have expected flights, but there is nothing that is absolutely normal about what these folks do. They pick up passengers, generally for international flights. But they can respond to emergencies, they can provide airfield tours, they can provide tours off of the airfield for community groups.

Right.

MARIE: So there is no 9 to 5 about this. Which is very exciting.

And you're staffed 24/7 here?

MARIE: Yes, we are. We have a staff member that is always here that can drive, that can move an airfield bus... plus one supervisor at all times.

A Coveted Job

It sounds like this job is coveted. What makes it popular?

MARIE: I think a number of things make it popular. You have access to both the tenants – the airlines, and the passengers, as well as community groups.

I think it's popular because it is a 24/7 operation, so it allows folks to do things during traditional hours that they wouldn't be able to do in a 9 to 5 job. So we have employees that have gone to school, earning their degrees. We have employees that consider this a second job. So they're able to hold two jobs because it is a 24/7 operation.

You have access to so many unique and fun things, especially if you like aviation.

You meet people from all over the world. Whenever there is a big event in Los Angeles, the airport gets the residual. So if the Lakers are having a good year, [more vacationers] are going to come through here. For the Academy Awards, you'll see an uptick of the celebrities. They all have to come through here. And many times they're international arrivals, and they have to hop onboard one of our buses just like anybody else. So it's great. It's fun.

It's coveted because, for a driver, you have a very specific area in which you have to operate. You have a very finite group of passengers. So you're not a metro bus operator that may be picking up any number of folks on any city street. You're not working with children as a school bus operator, which has its own set of difficulties.

So it is a highly coveted position, which is good because it gives us great candidates to choose from when we fill a position. When folks get here, they don't leave.

Challenges

What are the unique challenges to doing what you do?

MARIE: My most difficult task right now in this economy is, how do you continue to support the infrastructure? This is an infrastructure piece of the airport. How do you support that when your revenues are down, when we are trying to build the new Tom Bradley International Terminal, which is a huge capital outlay for this department? How do you balance fewer staff members because of the [early retirement program]? All of the bus operator positions weren't filled, but the work still needs to be done, so our drivers are working harder. From a management stand-

Marie O'Kelly-Green, Manager of LAX Airfield Bus Operations, talks to Club CEO John Hawkins (left) and *Alive!* editor John Burnes.





point, it's kind of managing the financial with the personality and personnel issues, and still getting the job done effectively and efficiently. So that's my charge, that's my task.

Ambassadors

When people are flying to America, and this is their first visit here, that bus driver could very well be the first American they ever see.

MARIE: That's correct.

That's pretty powerful stuff. Do you think about that?

MARIE: Absolutely.

And do you train people to think about that as well?

MARIE: Absolutely. We remind our managers constantly that bus operators are oftentimes the first face or the last face that travelers will see. The first impression and the last impression can make or break an experience here at the airport.

When we discuss training, we talk about – how do you manage 85 people that don't speak the language, and you need to give them an instruction? How do you manage security here at the airport? Because this is, for many travelers, a first time they're on American soil, and so they want to go and take pictures. So how do you maintain a secure, sterile environment on your bus? Our bus drivers have the responsibility of transporting international passengers that haven't cleared customs. So when they are on the bus, the driver and an agent are responsible to see that these folks do actually clear through customs. To do that, we want to make sure, since they're the first face or the last face, that our equipment is top-notch. Our buses run anywhere between \$600,000 and \$800,000 for each vehicle. It's a big capital outlay for the department, but they are high-end pieces of equipment. The equipment has to be right, the drivers are in uniform to present an image to the passenger that they are in good hands, and that this is a well-oiled machine. Last year we transported 1.6 million passengers in this operation. The airport handles 57 to 59 million folks each year. So no less than three percent came in contact with one of our airfield bus operators.

That's a lot.

MARIE: So yes, we have a huge impact on the face of the department. And I think the department recognizes that. They're very appreciative of that.

Emergencies and Other Challenges

So, taking those international passengers from terminals that don't have customs, to a customs facility, is about 90 percent of what you do?

MARIE: I would say 90 percent is a good number.

But then you have the other things that you train for and hope never happen, in supporting the first responders in a crisis.

MARIE: Yes.

What kind of a challenge is that to kind of stay on your toes for something that you hope might not happen?

MARIE: Well, even though our offices are here on the north side of the airport, this operation is actually controlled through the Airport Response Coordination Center.

The new one that just opened?

MARIE: Correct. So they're the eyes. Bus operations has supervisors there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So in the



Club CEO John Hawkins talks to Marie O'Kelly-Green, Manager of LAX Airfield Bus Operations, next to a massive, efficient articulated bus.



event of an emergency, or an abnormal event – meaning that there's a line at TSA, there's a plane that's disabled – any number of things that they may be called out on, we have standard operating procedures. When an aircraft has mechanical difficulty, our drivers know exactly where they need to go to await that plane. And if the passengers have to disembark, then they know exactly what to do. Because our drivers aren't new, they know this airport probably better than I do.

Right.

MARIE: So they are well prepared. They think on their feet all the time. If you review the emergencies that we've had at the airport, two years ago there was a flight out of Hawaii that became disabled, and the buses were there and waiting to scoop up the passengers.

Generally, our challenge is staffing, because there are so many demands on us. There are so many flights that are coming in that need our services, especially during construction. They are building this huge terminal without closing the airport. This is the largest capital project ever in the City of Los Angeles. The service road, which is what they drive on, may be open today, and then construction closes it tomorrow.

There are a lot of construction vehicles that [are driven onto] the airport. And many times their drivers are not familiar with an airport. That is one of our bigger challenges right now. Even though it's not an emergency, that's a big challenge for us. And then anytime we have a media event [is also a challenge].

Skills on Display

MARIE: One other thing I wanted to mention is that it's the department's goal to have a bus rodeo sometime in September. We'll invite you out.

Oh, absolutely! We know the concept, but maybe not the specifics. Tell us about that. It's all about skills, and then... stop!

MARIE: Which would probably be easier than parallel parking a 60-foot articulated bus.

Well, sure. Where will it be?

MARIE: Ours will be in the parking lot that is immediately southwest of here.

Will they compete amongst each other, or with other agencies?

MARIE: They'll be competing amongst each other here, and then if we are so approved, then we will be able to send our winner, because they do these nationally and internationally.

For us, this'll be a first. Because generally, the municipal bus, the MTAs, those are the folks that are competing.

Will it be open to the public?

MARIE: It should be open to the public. We'll hold it in an area that's not sterile, so that folks can come.

Well, this was great. Thank you!

MARIE: I'm glad that you came out today!



Special Thanks

Alive! wants to give its sincere thanks to Harold Johnson, Airports Public Relations and Club Member, and Ken White, Bus Operator and Club Member, for helping us get the shots we needed while maintaining strict security control within the highly sensitive LAX airfield environment. Well done, gentlemen!



Ken White, Bus Operator, Club Member.

Harold Johnson, Airports Public Relations, Club Member.