

A Letter from Commissioner Emily Lloyd

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some recent accomplishments of the Bureau of Customer Services in the collection of overdue revenue for water and sewer bills.

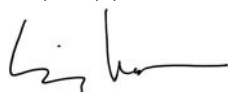
During FY 2005, the agency's accounts receivable balance dropped from \$710 million to \$625 million, due in large part to the enhanced efforts of BCS staff to get overdue account holders to pay their bills, including sending late notices and informing mortgage holding companies when unpaid water and sewer charges exist on properties for which they hold the mortgage. As a last resort, DEP has even shut off water service for commercial accounts.

Furthermore, DEP's participation in the City's annual tax lien sale was helpful in encouraging overdue account holders to pay their water and sewer bills. Administered by the Department of Finance and DEP, the lien sale allows the City to recover outstanding property-related taxes and outstanding water and sewer charges by selling the right to pursue foreclosure of the properties. This year, \$25 million in overdue water and sewer charges were collected through the lien sale, and the collection of another \$8.5 million in charges was committed to through 700 new installation payment agreements. Staff who worked to coordinate this effort with the Department of Finance and the public should be proud of this high return.

The funds collected from our customers are the basis for DEP's ability to continue maintaining and enhancing the critical infrastructure that supports the water supply, sewer, and wastewater treatment systems. Moreover, by improving collection of revenue owed to the Water Board, we have been able to minimize annual rate increases for the public. In July, the Water Board passed a rate increase of just 3% for FY 2006, an average of \$17 per single-family account.

Our ability to hold customers accountable for their water usage is critical to the mission of not only BCS, but the entire agency, and I congratulate the bureau on these achievements.

Very truly yours,



Emily Lloyd

DEP Responds to Flooding in the City's Upstate Watersheds



A BWT Skimmer Boat Assists in Capturing Debris in the Ashokan Reservoir

On April 2nd and 3rd, Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) staff responded quickly as near-record rains fell across the tri-state region. Areas of the City's watersheds averaged between two and four inches of rainfall over the two days, which created in some areas the highest runoff events in 100 years. As a result of the storms, almost all of the City's Catskill and Delaware watershed reservoirs reached record elevations.

In the days and weeks following the rains, DEP staff upstate worked long hours to safeguard water supply facilities, assist local residents affected by the rains, and ensure that high quality drinking water continued to be delivered to New York City residents.

The most immediate impacts of the storm were felt at five of the wastewater treatment plants (WTPs) operated by DEP in the Catskill/Delaware, Croton, and Port Jervis watersheds. Inflows at the plants rose drastically, some reaching ten times the plants' normal rates of inflow. Rapid staff response at all WTPs prevented the ultimate loss of significant plant processes and equipment.

Runoff from the storms scoured streams in the watershed creating very high turbidity, a measure of cloudiness in water. While turbidity by itself is not a health problem for water consumers, high turbidity levels can interfere with the effectiveness of the chlorine disinfection process.

To address the flow of highly turbid water leaving the Ashokan Reservoir, DEP request-

ed and received a permit from the NYS Departments of Environmental Conservation and Health to add alum to water entering Kensico Reservoir from the Catskill Aqueduct. Alum acts as a coagulant, causing suspended particles in the water to bind together; the heavier bound particles then fall through the water column and settle on the bottom of the reservoir, thereby reducing turbidity.

In the days and weeks following the storms, DEP acted on several fronts to address the after-effects of the storms and ensure that water quality remained high. In addition to adding alum, BWS increased substantially the frequency of sampling at key reservoirs and other locations to monitor water quality. (As water quality has improved since the storms, sampling frequency has returned to more normal levels.)

In addition, help with the storms' aftermath came from another bureau—the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) provided a skimmer vessel to prevent the spread of debris and floatables carried into the Ashokan Reservoir by the floods.

DEP's successful response to April's severe weather conditions in the watersheds has been remarkable—by remaining diligent and prepared, focusing the Agency's resources, and maintaining clear and constant communication with our state and federal regulators, we have ensured that New Yorkers continue to receive high-quality drinking water.

DEP Partners with Community in Southeast Queens on Station 6 Facility

An important part of the work that DEP performs is outreach to the communities that are affected by our projects, such as infrastructure rehabilitation and expansion or facilities construction. Recently, some of our most intensive public outreach efforts have concerned DEP's ongoing work to improve the groundwater system in southeastern Queens. Our work in this community has lately focused on the planned construction of Station 6, which will, once built, treat water from local groundwater wells in southeast Queens.

Originally, residents of southeastern Queens were opposed to a groundwater project in their community, citing a history of water qual-

ity issues while served by Jamaica Water Supply and a lack of confidence in the ability to produce potable drinking water from the area's wells.

To address community concerns, DEP constructed a pilot filtration plant for the system that operated for 13 months, testing state-of-the-art treatment options to determine the best methods of producing high-quality drinking water. The community was encouraged to participate in a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), to review the progress of the pilot plant and our plans for reactivating some of the wells. Additionally, the CAC retained a Scientific Review Panel to provide input on the project

and regularly toured the pilot facility.

Over time and through coordinated public education and outreach efforts, the Jamaica community has rallied to support the construction of a permanent full-scale groundwater treatment plant at Station 6. The full-scale facility will treat water from five ground wells, with the option to treat a sixth, as well as providing educational resources and a community meeting space.

This year, DEP's work at Station 6 earned it the American Council of Engineering Companies' Diamond Award for Planning, as well as the American Academy of Environmental Engineers' Grand Prize for Planning.

DEP Employees Receive "Serious About Safety" Awards for their Contributions to Environmental Health & Safety

The individuals listed below have received *Serious About Safety Awards* from the Commissioner for their contributions to making DEP's work practices and facilities safer; their commitment to ensuring the health and safety of their co-workers and the general public, and their work toward the Agency's compliance with federal, state, and local environmental regulations.

- **Robert Bye, Senior Construction Manager, Bureau of Environmental Engineering.** When individuals from a contractor's staff refused to comply with safety gear regulations after warnings from Mr. Bye, the contractor was removed from the project. The contractor was later involved in a fatal accident at another non-DEP site. Mr. Bye's dedication to site safety prevented this tragedy from striking at DEP.

- **William Cadelina, Senior Stationary Engineer (Electric), Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.** Mr. Cadelina has developed a preventative maintenance program that identifies safety precautions and measures pertaining to specific equipment under maintenance, as well as allowing the addition of other relevant EH&S information.

- **Brett Elk & Peter Lenz, Reservoir Operations, Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.** Working together, Mr. Elk and Mr. Lenz have developed a "lockout-tagout" procedures manual for all equipment at the Hillview and Jerome Park Reservoirs, which includes diagrams and instructions for isolating power sources from equipment at both reservoirs. The manual has also been employed as a model of lockout-tagout procedure for use at BWSO facilities.

- **Cynthia Garcia, Engineering, Bureau of Water Supply.** In addition to her regular responsibilities as a Project Reviewer, Ms. Garcia has vol-

unteered as the Engineering Division's Safety Liaison, coordinating environmental health and safety efforts, training employees, and ensuring the division implements and follows health and safety protocols.

- **Kevin Heinle, West of Hudson Operations, Bureau of Water Supply.** Mr. Heinle has been instrumental in developing and implementing standard operating procedures for dealing with reservoir flow meters and the dewatering and containment of water in pipes that may contain low levels of mercury at the West Delaware Tunnel Outlet. He is also continuing to develop similar procedures at other West-of-Hudson facilities.

- **Frank Ivone, Senior Stationary Engineer (Electric), Bureau of Wastewater Treatment.** When working with mercury remediation at Douglaston Pumping Station, Mr. Ivone developed a capture device that absorbs mercury to prevent it from venting into the atmosphere.

- **Orisha Jennings, Business Liaison Group, Office of Information Technology.** Ms. Jennings has been instrumental in managing the timely completion of the Commissioner's Monthly Progress Report on Environmental Health and Safety activities, and transitioning management of the report from a consultant to DEP.

- **Timothy Kelly, Watershed Maintainer, Bureau of Water Supply.** Mr. Kelly witnessed a member of a Contractor's staff pour concrete slurry and water down a manhole at a DEP facility; he immediately notified his supervisor. His quick actions prevented potentially hazardous materials from entering the Cross River Reservoir.

- **Maxim Klavansky, Heavy Construction, Bureau of Environmental Engineering.** In addition to providing electrical systems expertise on the

upgrades of DEP's wastewater treatment plants, Mr. Klavansky has provided operational safety training classes to plant superintendents and deputy superintendents to increase awareness of potential dangers and identified the need for special protective clothing for staff working on energized equipment.

- **Robert Miller, Machinist, Bureau of Water Supply.** Mr. Miller has had a long track record of using his skills to design and create equipment that enhance the Bureau's environmental health and safety capabilities. This equipment has included a hoist and crane for washing disinfection equipment and numerous custom-made guards for facility machinery.

- **Michael Mitts, Supervisor of Watershed Maintenance, Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.** Mr. Mitts has developed an integrated tracking database to track, monitor, and research hazardous and non-hazardous waste removal. The database provides information in "real time" and stores a specific site's waste removal history.

- **John Zollo, Field Operations, Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.** Mr. Zollo exhibited ingenuity and excellence in working to resolve long-standing DOB and FDNY violations at BWSO Field Operations facilities in order to ensure the safety of these facilities and his fellow employees.

For nomination forms and information about the *Serious About Safety Awards*, or about DEP's Environmental Health and Safety Compliance program in general, please visit the Office of Environmental Health and Safety Compliance or the Commissioner's Office pages on the DEP intranet, **Pipeline**.