

Former DEP Commissioner Honored



A pedestrian bridge connecting Old Howard Beach and Hamilton Beach was [renamed last Friday](#) in honor of former DEP Commissioner **Joel Miele**. “As DEP Commissioner, Joel’s leadership following the 9/11 attacks was instrumental in helping to quickly restore water and sewer service in Lower Manhattan, and he left an indelible mark on the design of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant with its digester eggs, iconic symbols of his dedication to public service,” said DEP Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza**, who attended the ceremony along with Council Member **Eric Ulrich** and other city officials. Miele, a Navy veteran who also served as commissioner of the Buildings Department, died in 2013.

Spotlight on Safety

Safety First in Disaster Recovery

After devastating storms in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, as well as the earthquake in Mexico City, it is important to think about how to evaluate a work site during disaster recovery and cleanup. High winds, floods, rain and earthquakes can compromise structures. All building elements, equipment, and utilities should be carefully inspected for damage, cracks, loose or missing parts and leaks.

You should only walk and work in areas where there is standing water after you have received a safety briefing and proper PPE must be used. Standing water may be contaminated and can

present hazards including submerged holes, equipment or sharp objects.

Other hazards can include:

- hazardous substances or infectious materials in debris
- downed electrical wires
- carbon monoxide build up from portable generators
- presence of mold in water damaged areas

For additional information, visit the [Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) and the [Safety and Health Checklist for Volunteering in Disaster Recovery](#) pages on OSHA’s website.

Commissioner’s Corner



In the days since Hurricane Maria caused historic damage to both Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, I, like many of you, have been deeply affected by the sad news and images of devastation coming from the hard hit islands. I have also heard from several employees who have family and friends living there, and are very concerned as the disruption to communications continues on and desperate situations may become more dire. I want you all to know that our DEP family is mounting a relief effort to collect critically-needed supplies to send to the struggling residents of Puerto Rico and the US Virgin

Islands. Collected donations of diapers, baby food, batteries, first aid supplies and feminine hygiene products will go directly to families in need. Please note that those are the only items that we are collecting. Together, we can make a difference and lend a hand to those seeking assistance. Please see [this flyer](#) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to **Sara Pecker** at ext. 5487.

Mayor de Blasio has also created [18 local drop-off sites in firehouses and EMS stations](#) in every borough for residents to help.



At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it’s okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau’s EHS liaison how they can help. If you’ve still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It’s DEP’s responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we’ll not only get the job done, we’ll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.

New Playground Opens in Flushing



A new, [state-of-the-art playground](#) that features green infrastructure elements recently opened at P.S. 120Q in Flushing. The innovative playground uses 3,500 crushed toilets from DEP's Municipal Water Efficiency Program to serve as a sturdy, porous sponge under the synthetic turf field. Now, instead of wasting clean water, those toilets help one inch of rain soak into the soil beneath, reducing the burden on the city's sewer system. This, as well as other green infrastructure elements, will capture up to an inch of rainwater in storm events, amounting to about 500,000 gallons per year. DEP funds green infrastructure on publicly owned property to reduce combined sewer overflows into New York's waterways, including Flushing Creek and Flushing Bay.

Sub-Aqueous Water Main Underway



A [\\$19 million project](#) is under way to upgrade the drinking water supply connection to Randall's Island and Wards Island. Constructing a new sub-aqueous main will help to ensure a reliable supply of water for the multiple public buildings located on the islands. Work includes the use of a micro-tunnel boring machine that will excavate a passage for the new pipeline beneath the Bronx Kill waterway. DEP is funding the project and DDC is managing the construction, which is anticipated to be completed in 2018.

Tour of Ongoing Projects at Wards Island



Commissioner Sapienza recently visited the Wards Island WWTP to see firsthand some of the capital improvement and state of good repair projects ongoing at the 80 year old facility. Staff from the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment—including Deputy Commissioner **Pam Elardo, Art Spangel, Bob LaGrotta, Anthony Maracic, Jerry Fragias, Chris Martell, and Sam Young**—provided a tour of the plant with a focus on the new high efficiency centrifuges that have cut energy consumption in half; new marine vessels that transport biosolids citywide, including the *Hunts Point*, which was just repainted and updated at a dry dock in Staten Island, and a new glycerol system that has enhanced the biological nitrogen removal process to significantly reduce nitrogen discharges to the East River. The group also reviewed anticipatory work to be done to refurbish the final settling tanks—a \$116 million project being managed by BEDC that will bring the tanks back to peak performance.

Educators Visit the Watershed



More than 50 educators from various organizations recently participated in a full-day bus tour to explore, and learn about, the New York City water supply system. The tour brought educators to sites within the East of Hudson River Watershed, including the Cross River Reservoir, the Watershed Agricultural Council's Green Chimneys-Clearpool Model Forest, Hilltop Hannover Farm and Education Center, Croton Dam at Croton Gorge Park, Old Croton Aqueduct and weir chamber, and the Kensico Reservoir. Presentations were given by DEP engineers and scientists, the Watershed Agricultural Council, and the Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, while DEP educators shared education resources and modeled lessons and activities designed to enrich their education programs.

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.