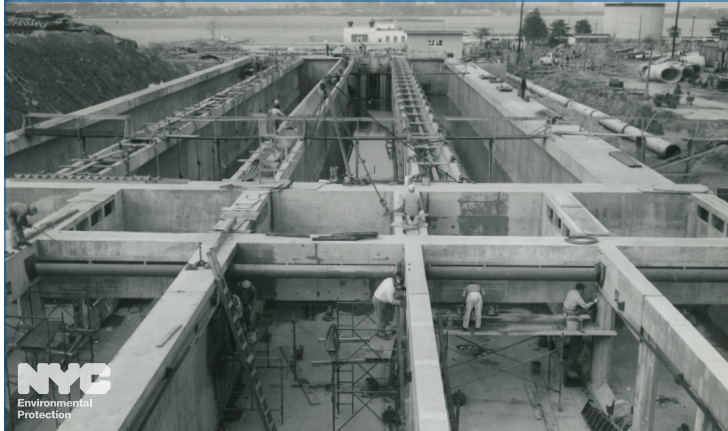


Protecting the Harbor for 75 Years



DEP's 14 wastewater treatment plants play an essential role in maintaining a healthy city, and last week marked the 75th anniversary of the day that the Tallman Island Wastewater Treatment Plant—located in College Point—began operations. The plant was the third to go into operation, following Coney Island in 1935 and Wards Island in 1937. The plant was dedicated

by **Mayor Fiorello La Guardia** just in time for the 1939 World's Fair, which also opened on April 30. In fact, improving the cleanliness of the city's harbor for the World's Fair was an impetus for the construction of the wastewater treatment plants.

Originally Tallman Island was indeed an island. However, in order to support the plant

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

Leading Indicators Can Improve Safety

Leading indicators are predictive measurements that can evaluate the effectiveness of many management systems, including Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) programs. Designed to uncover possible issues before they cause harm, leading indicators allow DEP to better understand its EHS culture and identify areas for improvement.

Using leading indicators, DEP has implemented steps to reduce or eliminate risk such as: using Prevention Through Design models to reduce risks prior to construction, sourcing employee

suggestions to encourage a culture of safety, and open communication to identify and set specific EHS performance improvement goals.

Leading indicators can be used to:

- Anticipate, prevent, or eliminate risks and losses
- Monitor and evaluate performance
- Motivate safe behavior, personal commitment and continuous improvement

For more information go to [DEP's Strategic Plan](#).

Commissioner's Corner



Last Thursday, I joined Deputy Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza** to cheer on more than 20 of our wastewater treatment workers as they competed in the 27th annual Operations Challenge—a contest that showcases the expertise and skills required to operate and maintain New York City's 14 wastewater treatment plants. Six DEP teams, from our North River, Coney Island, Hunts Point, 26th Ward, and Jamaica

from Jamaica will compete in a Jeopardy style contest that will test their knowledge of the wastewater treatment system. The two highest scoring teams will advance to the statewide competition in June in Hauppauge, NY. From there, winners of the statewide contest will participate in the national competition in New Orleans in September.

The Operations Challenge was developed by the Water Environment Federation, the largest professional organization representing the wastewater treatment industry. This year's competition was held at the Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant and was sponsored by a local chapter of the organization in conjunction with DEP. A team from DEP has made it to the national competition for 17 straight years.

DEP's sewage treatment workers protect the health of our waterways and the environment, and the Operations Challenge provides a unique opportunity to showcase what it takes to treat more than a billion gallons of wastewater each day. Thanks to the talent and dedication of the nearly 1,900 men and women who work in our wastewater treatment plants, New York Harbor is cleaner than it has been in a century.

The competition consisted of four timed and judged events, including: collections, where teams responded to a leaking pipe and repaired it while it remained in service; maintenance, which challenged contestants to remove damaged submersible pumps, make the necessary repairs and return them to service; worker safety, where teams competed in a timed, confined space rescue of a fellow employee and performed CPR while checking air quality; and a new pump maintenance event during which crews responded to a simulated severe weather condition that resulted in a pumping outage. In addition, this year's competition included a water quality event where teams perform tests on water samples to determine if they meet discharge standards and a written exam that tests contestants on their knowledge of the wastewater treatment process.

I would like to thank our four BWT judges: **Juju Xia, Kevin McCormick, Joseph Atkins, and Marty Bunce**, and Deputy Superintendent **Howard Robinson** who took over as event coordinator after **Bill Grandner's** retirement. If you would like to see photos from this year's Operations Challenge [click here](#).

This evening, the 1st place Harlem Pump Trotters from North River, the 2nd place Warriors from 26th Ward, and the 3rd place Sludge Hustlers

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. 🙋

Focus on the Field



Almost everyone at DEP should recognize Processing Specialist **Laleta Conyers** because, for the last 29 years, she has met all new hires on their first day with the department. And we should all hope we see her again—she also processes all title changes and promotions.

Conyers was born in Guyana and came to the United States with her family when she was 12 years old. They settled in Brooklyn and she attended Bushwick High School. During her junior year she joined the Co-op Program and began working at DEP in the Human Resources division. This is where she first met Deputy Director of Human Resources **Herb Roth** and Supervisor of Operations **Donna Ascione**, and assisted them with everything from filing to copying. After graduation, Conyers joined DEP full time and she relocated to Queens. She began as secretary to the then deputy director of Human Resources, but shortly thereafter took over the role of processing specialist.

Anytime DEP looks to hire a new employee, the Human Resources division gets all the necessary documentation together, including the resume, as well as salary and all relevant background information. This packet goes to the commissioner's office for approval and then to the City's Office of Management

and Budget. Once all the necessary approvals have been made, Conyers steps in. She contacts the prospective employee and has them come to Lefrak headquarters for processing. This includes finger printing and the production of a background profile, which is sent to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for their investigation, as well as ensuring the new employee has the proper civil service title and all the information they need concerning health and retirement plans. In addition, for approximately 15 years, Conyers ran the Co-op program for DEP.

"I really grew up at DEP and love working with Herb and Donna and the whole human resources team," said Conyers. "The part of my job that I enjoy the most is meeting people on their first day and then seeing them grow and take on new responsibilities through the years."

"Whether you are being processed as a new employee or are a current employee receiving a promotion, you have worked hard to get to this point, and for many years Laleta has ensured that the required paperwork is handled as quickly and effectively as possible," said Ascione. "She is a valued member of our team as well as a good friend."

Conyers still lives in Queens, now in the Hollis Hills neighborhood. Her husband, **Loncey Sr.**, works in DEP's budget office and they have two children. **Lauren** is seventeen years old, attends Saint Francis Prep High School and is busy studying for the SAT's. **Loncey Jr.** is 13 years old and he will attend Saint Francis Prep this fall. Loncey Jr. is a member of a travelling baseball team and the family spends much of their free time travelling around the city, and the region, to watch his games.

Did You Know...

DEP is coordinating a new program for bi-weekly delivery of fresh vegetables and fruits from the Greenane Farms in Delhi, NY to employees at our Lefrak and Wards Island facilities? To find out more about the program visit the [Source](#).

Extra, Extra!



gallons of wastewater produced in New York City each day and protect public health and the environment.

For those wishing to view the video outside of the office, you can watch it on our [YouTube channel](#).

(Protecting the Harbor for 75 Years... continued)

facilities, the island was filled on the north and east sides during the original construction, forming a cove. Later, the creek that ran along the west side of the island was filled in to create Powell's Cove Boulevard, joining Tallman Island to the rest of Queens. In addition to the original 1937–1939 construction, major rehabilitation and upgrade projects were completed in the early 1960s, the mid-1970s, and the 1990s. It was the first New York City wastewater treatment plant to implement the step aeration process, which was an improvement over the existing activated sludge process. It will also soon feature nitrogen reduction technology to help improve the health of Flushing Bay and the upper East River.

Tallman Island represents an important part of NYC history and luckily there was a treasure trove of historical records at the

Thanks to the dedication of the nearly 1,300 men and women who work in DEP's wastewater treatment plants, New York Harbor is cleaner today than it has been in more than a century. Click the photo to see a video about the Operations Challenge, which provides a unique opportunity to showcase the skills necessary to treat the more than one billion

plant offices. Among the records, which were recently transferred to the DEP Archive, are contractor progress photos and aerial photography of NYC wastewater treatment plants from more than 60 years ago. In addition, there is a specification book from the original 1937 construction contract and four Daily Log Books that detail the day-to-day running of the plant from decades ago. Notable events in the plant's history include a visit from a Chinese delegation in 1946.

It is possible that these records would have stayed in a file drawer at Tallman Island for many more years if it wasn't for the dedicated plant personnel. With these records we are able to recognize the work of our predecessors, assist current department operations, and preserve our history for future generations. To see more photos go [here](#).

New Watershed Residents



A bald eagle nest alongside the Gilboa Dam construction site has yielded eaglets for the second consecutive year! Two eaglets hatched inside the nest, located only a few hundred feet from the dam's west support wall, in early April. Because bald eagles are a federally protected species, DEP is monitoring the nest to ensure that construction activity at the dam does not disturb the eaglets or the adult eagles. For more information go [here](#), and to see more photos visit [Pipeline](#), or [DEP's Flickr page](#).

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