

Kudos Corner



Since 2013, DEP has been a part of the Demand Response Program (DRP), an initiative which aims to improve the reliability of the city's electric grid by offering financial incentives. Water supply and wastewater treatment plants consume a tremendous amount of electricity, and DEP helps to prevent brownouts and blackouts by strategically reducing its energy usage during peak hours. DEP reinvests the funds earned for its role in DRP into energy projects and other improvements at its facilities, which helps to save rate-payer funded costs for the agency. In addition, by avoiding the use of additional power plant resources, which typically burn dirtier fuel, DRP helps to improve air quality. To date, it is estimated that DEP's efforts have avoided approximately 200 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Pictured are **Gary Banks** (BWS), **Pamela Elardo** (Deputy Commissioner of BWT), **Richard Ventura** (BWS), and **Mikael Amar** (Energy Office).

Spotlight on Safety

Distracted Driving Awareness Month

The National Safety Council (NSC) observes the month of April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, 3,477 people died from distracted driving alone in 2015. NSC also estimates that 2016 may be the deadliest year for overall deaths in motor vehicle crashes since 2007, with as many as 40,000 deaths.

In this day-and-age, technology allows us to make phone calls, write texts or emails, update social media, and use dashboard "infotainment" in vehicles while driving. These technologies are

merely distractions to drivers and increase the risk of vehicle collisions. Even hands-free devices available in vehicles are not risk-free, and using these technologies distract our brains even after we finish using them. Next time you are behind the wheel, put safety first and Just Drive—this is the 2017 theme for Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

Cell phone use, including hands free, is not allowed while operating any City Fleet vehicle. To learn more about the fight against distracted driving, visit OSHA's [Distracted Driving Page](#) and [NSC's website](#).

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.

Commissioner's Corner



Now that the warmer weather has arrived, the Bureau of Public Affairs & Communications has been busy partnering with elected officials in communities throughout the city to provide free rain barrels to homeowners. Thus far this month, we have held two events and delivered 280 rain barrels. And, there are several more events planned for the upcoming weekends in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop.

The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner's water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of New York Harbor and local waterways. Last year, DEP distributed a [record-setting](#)

[11,111 rain barrels](#) to New York City homeowners. Photos of the giveaways can be viewed [here](#).

Each homeowner who received a rain barrel was provided with an installation kit and instructions. It's important to note that rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City's Green Infrastructure Plan that aims to capture stormwater before it can ever enter the sewer system and thereby reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. DEP has committed to invest \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls, such as rain barrels, to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows by 2030.

I'd like to thank the Community Affairs staff, who have already worked numerous weekends on this important initiative, as well as the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment, which helps warehouse the rain barrels.



Focus on the Field



New York City has 14 wastewater treatment plants that together treat 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater daily—but only one plant, Wards Island, uses a steam system to provide heat to the sludge tanks. This is a complex component of every wastewater treatment plant, which is not only critical to solids processing for digestion and the creation of a useable biosolids product, but also heats human-occupied spaces. That's why DEP's only Steam Stationary Engineer, **Robert Mastrolembro**, is assigned there.

"My first priority is making sure the boilers are working properly to heat the sludge. I have to keep the temperature just right," he said during a recent tour of the facility. "However, I also have to balance the system to supply steam for the hot water tanks, radiators and the chiller," a unit which supplies air conditioning in the warmer months.

Since joining DEP two years ago, Robert has shown his ability to be innovative by improving the maintenance and operation of the boilers at Wards Island. He maintains the complex system which sends steam to the sludge tanks, land-marked buildings, and laboratories.

"Robert exemplifies the level of dedication and ingenuity throughout our operations teams in the field,"

said **Pam Elardo**, Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment. "I appreciate his skill and commitment to quality work for those working at the plant, and for all residents and visitors who experience the benefit of a healthy and clean environment."

Robert also took the initiative to make much-needed upgrades to the Compliance Monitoring Section of the plant located in the Old Administration Building. With assistance from some of the plant's many skilled sewage treatment workers, he is constantly monitoring the boilers' gauges and making necessary adjustments to balance the use of steam with digester gas.

Robert began his City career with the NYPD, followed by a brief stint at the Department of Correction, before joining DEP in 2014. He had previously worked as a stationary engineer for New York-Presbyterian Hospital for 23 years. Robert, a Navy veteran, lives in Queens with his wife of 25 years and their three children.

"When I worked for the hospital they really taught me the value of respect and customer service and I really try to apply those principles here," he said. "I think of the staff as my customers and I make myself available to the people here. DEP is a good fit."

DEP to Host 'Take Your Child to Work'

DEP will partake in the City's "Take Our Children to Work Day" on Thursday, April 27, 2017. The theme is "Count on Me!" and planned activities will center on teamwork, collaboration, problem solving and logistics. Activities will also incorporate DEP's mission as it relates to each bureau. The program supports career development by helping students connect school, the world of work, and their own futures. There will be "The Escape Room Challenge" theme activities with a focus on DEP. Students will be placed in a room and have to seek out hidden compartments and clues in order to escape. If you are interested in participating in the program, you must register your child by Friday, April 21, with your bureau's Event Coordinator(s).

Engineering Expo a Hit with Students



Nat Federici of BEDC and Kent Chin of BWSO discussed DEP career opportunities with attendees Tim Malone, Tim Malone, Jr., and Sabastian Fitzgerald.

DEP staff proudly participated in the Lower Hudson Valley Professional Engineering Society's *Engineering Expo 2017*, held April 2 at White Plains High School in Westchester County. More than 4,000 people attended and agency employees discussed various career opportunities with interested students and their parents. Additionally, representatives from over 40 of the region's leading learning institutions including Rutgers, Cornell, Columbia, Penn State, Villanova, RPI and SUNY were on hand to discuss course offerings and curriculum.

Beautiful Waterfall Supplies Neversink



The water cascading over this beautiful waterfall along upstate Route 47 will eventually wind its way to Neversink Reservoir in Sullivan County. Neversink, one of four reservoirs in the Delaware Water Supply System, was formed by the damming of the Neversink River and holds 34.9 billion gallons at full capacity. The reservoir is located more than 75 miles from New York City and was placed into service in 1954.

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