

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner

This week's Commissioner's Corner was written by Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, **James Roberts**.

I am happy to report that one of the largest and most complex emergency construction projects the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO) has handled in recent memory has successfully concluded. Earlier this month, repair work wrapped up on the [Sunset Park sewer collapse](#) at the intersection of 64th Street and 5th Avenue in Brooklyn. All of DEP's subsurface infrastructure has been inspected, successfully stabilized and upgraded, the street has been resurfaced, new sidewalks and curbs have been built, and roadway markings have been painted.

The collapse was first reported in August of last year. Crews from our Water Distribution, Repair and Construction divisions were immediately dispatched to cordon off the area, shut down a 48" water main that ran through the collapse and backfill the hole to stabilize the area as

quickly as possible. During our assessment, it was identified that the manhole chimney had a defect which was allowing soil to enter the sewer tunnel that lay almost 70' below. Protecting the properties and infrastructure adjacent to the collapse was critical. Our emergency response and actions required close communication and coordination with our agency partners at FDNY, NYPD, OEM, and others, along with our private utility partners. The immediate challenge was to maintain a supply of drinking water to the areas in southwestern Brooklyn (Bay Ridge, Coney Island, etc.) which was at risk if the 48" water main failed. Additionally, pump equipment was deployed throughout the event to ensure both a continued flow in the sewers and that service was never impeded. Local utilities were then relocated, sheeting was put in place to allow for further excavation, and the older cast iron 48" water main was replaced with a new ductile iron main. In order to provide a reliable supply of water for south-



west Brooklyn, the new main was cleaned, pressurized and reactivated.

Throughout the initial phases of the repair, BWSO endeavored to minimize the impacts to the community to the greatest extent possible. However, when the damage was fully exposed it became apparent that the repair was going to require a sophisticated design and implementation to rebuild the manhole in its entirety to a depth of nearly 70'. Supports and braces were installed to buttress the water main and the area was fully excavated to allow for the inspection, cleaning, and reinforcement of a 15' diameter sewer line. Piles were then sunk to support the sewer and allow for the construction of a new manhole from the 15' sewer to street level. The area was then slowly backfilled and a new, local 15" sewer as well as 8" and 12" water mains were installed, connected, and activated.

Finally, new gas, electric, and communication lines were installed by the appropriate utility companies.

During the challenging repair process, BWSO worked with the Bureau of Public Affairs and Communications to keep residents informed about the progress. This outreach included weekly meetings with the merchants' association, as well as updating local elected officials, including Council Member **Carlos Menchaca** and Assembly Member **Felix W. Ortiz**, on de-



velopments. I thank them for their help in relaying communications to their constituents. Throughout the duration of the project, DEP made sure to have pathways available for pedestrians to patronize local businesses.

Although inclement weather was a factor at times during construction, the most difficult part of this large-scale fix was the complexity of the engineering required to work at a significant depth while maintaining the integrity of the existing infrastructure. I'm pleased to report that we accomplished this mission in a little more than a year. I want to thank our partners at the Department of Design and Construction for their assistance, as well as my colleagues in BWSO, particularly our field operations (District Supervisor **Marc Greenberg**, Supervisors **Gary Knight** and **Tom Cozza**, and Construction Laborer **Joe Bellafiore**), distribution (Engineers **Jim Hanratty**, P.E. and **Sham Hemraj**, P.E.) and emergency construction personnel (**Mike Sullivan**, P.E., **Alex Vega**, CPMII, and **Joo Seet**, CPMII), for ensuring these critical repairs were completed as expeditiously as possible while ensuring the safety of both workers and the public. I would also like to thank the residents and business owners for their patience. A job well done to the dedicated employees of DEP who worked diligently to make sure the water kept flowing!

Spotlight on Safety

Don't Bring Household Cleaning Products to Work

We all have favorite household cleaning products that we may want to bring to work in order to keep our workspaces clean. However, this is not recommended. By bringing chemicals contained in household cleaning products to work, you might introduce new hazards which are not accounted for in the office Safety Data Sheets (SDS), and which can have a negative effect on your coworkers, and even the environment, if not managed properly.

Federal and State rules require DEP, as an employer, to provide information to its employees concerning hazardous chemicals and toxic

substances, including infectious agents in the work place by means of a written program, training, SDS, labels or other forms of warning.

DEP implements a Hazardous Communication/RTK Program to ensure that information and training are provided to employees on chemical and toxic substance hazards to which DEP employees may be exposed in the workplace during handling or use. If you have questions on the agency's HazCom/RTK program, consult your bureau designated EHS representative. You can also review DEP's [HazCom/RTK Policy](#) and visit OSHA's website for more information.

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.

DETA Helps Keep 'U.S. Open' Safe



DEP Acting Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza** and Deputy Commissioner of Police & Security **Kevin McBride** visited with members of the DETA Hazmat unit who were on site at the U.S. Open tournament as part of the multi-agency CBRNE (Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives) team. The event was held August 29 through September 11 at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center stadium complex in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, Queens. In addition to Sapienza and McBride, pictured in the photograph are **Vassilios Zoumboulis**, DETA Director; **Dr. Harry Mayer**, DETA Deputy Director; **Victor Lee**, HAZMAT Respondent; **Dr. Peter Chen**, HAZMAT Respondent, and **Afrosa Amin**, HAZMAT Supervisor.

Cast Your Fishing Line at Ashokan

DEP will host **Family Fishing Day** on Sunday, September 18, from 9am to 2pm at the Woodstock Dike on Ashokan Reservoir. The event is being co-sponsored by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), which will supply fishing poles and bait to those who do not have their own. The New York State fishing license requirement is waived for adults who want to fish during this event and those who do not have a free DEP Access Permit can get one and print it from home by visiting nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit. A parking lot at the dike is located on a gravel driveway off Route 28, just east of the West Hurley Post Office. More information can also be obtained by emailing watershedevents@dep.nyc.gov, or by calling DEP at (800) 575-LAND.

Sewage Treatment Workers Join DEP



Last week, 27 new Sewage Treatment Workers attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Acting Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza**, Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Deputy Director for Human Resources Management **Herb Roth**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Chris Balem, Mathew Boban, Desean Carroll, Hector Castillo, Kevin Collins, Christopher Creed, Gregory Desiano, Kevin Doran, Zoltan Dudas, John Durante, Erik Viliusis, Angelo Evangelista, Robert Hayes, Mohamed Khan, Sergey Komarov, Carl LaPiedra, Delvon Mack, Aleksandr Makuyev, Joseph McSorley, Paul McElroy, Moises Padilla, James Pepe, Marcos Perez, Edgard Polycarpe, Stephen Schuck, Orrin Simon, and Angelo Soto with BWT.

Ashokan Reservoir Gates Replaced



DEP has restored full function to the Dividing Weir at Ashokan Reservoir by replacing the four massive cast iron gates that control the flow of water between the reservoir's two basins. The [\\$14.1 million project](#) allows DEP to move water from the reservoir's west basin to the east basin in a controlled manner. By drawing the west basin down, the new gates will also maximize retention time for water in that portion of the reservoir, which acts as a settling basin for sediment that is washed into the reservoir during heavy runoff events. Replacement of the four gates began in 2012 and was completed in 2016. The cast iron sluice gates are each 5' wide and 15' tall, and each weighs approximately 18,500 pounds. Before they were replaced, three of the four original gates were stuck in a closed position, hampering the ability of water supply operators to move water from one basin to the other. The four new gates are operated by individual motors, along with hand-crank backups, to prevent a single point of failure. In addition to the gates, bar racks were installed on the western side of the Dividing Weir to prevent large debris from coming through the weir or slamming into the gates when they are closed.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 41 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Acting Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza**, Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Donna Harris and Kiandra Venson with ACCO; **Christopher C. Battaglia, Michael Bellucci, Bassem Charaoui, Antigone Hawkins, Debbie McCray, Adam McLoughlin, Deborah Parson, Shou Hang Shi, Michael Prentice, Eucil Stanley and Julia White** with BCS; **Alejandra Carter and Sharam Urena** with BEDC; **Paul Mastroianni** with BWS; **Benjamin Basalla-Taxis, Sammy Caban, Erik Del Re, Jason Douglas-Bowers, Jeremy Fitzgerald, William Harrison, Brielle Hiar, Angelo Perrucci, Louise Pettiford, Necolious Shaw, Julia Standley Pradhan and Andy Zhang** with BWSO; **Donald McCabe and Christopher Russo** with BWT; **Elizabeth Greenstein** with CDBG; **Michael D. Lateef** with Env. Compliance; **Ebony Epps** with Exec. & Support; **Lester Blackshear III** with FDC/FMC; **Yong Gao and Gregory Wilson** with PS; **Brian Lamberta** with Public Affairs; **Sara Margolis, Stephanie Vorwerk, Zachary Wyche and Zachary Youngerman** with Sustainability.

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