



DEP Employees of the Month for November

The Employee of the Month program recognizes DEP staff members that have exhibited outstanding personal effort, and have gone above and beyond the call of duty to serve the people of New York City.

DEP is a great agency that delivers services that millions of New Yorkers depend on daily. Making good on that promise requires the dedication and hard work of the nearly 6,000 employees at DEP. To nominate someone who has demonstrated uncommon dedication and excellence, fill out the nomination form with some basic information, such as the nominee's responsibilities, examples of extraordinary performance, and ways candidates set an example for others. The form is available on The Source, and you'll need to submit it by the tenth day of each month. For more information, email Herb Roth at hroth@dep.nyc.gov.

The Employees of the Month for November, featured in this Weekly Pipeline Extra edition, were honored at a breakfast on December 17 with Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development and Human Resources Diana Jones Ritter, during which they received a certificate, and had their names added to the Employee of the Month Board on the 3rd and 19th floors at Lefrak and at the Kingston Office. These men and women set a standard for all of us to emulate and appreciate.

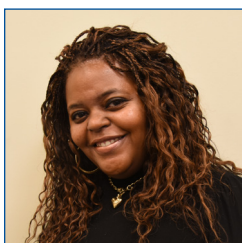


Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations - **Geeta Persaud**

Geeta began her DEP career in July 2014 and she currently serves as a Construction Project Manager Intern with the bureau's Division of Drainage Review. To aid in the effort to reduce the number of resubmissions in the site connection application process, Geeta has often volunteered to work extra hours to handle the increased workload. She has been a conscientious worker and has given up some of her Saturdays to work with the team in completing the necessary reviews.

In addition, the bureau's Project Management Group and the Office of Information Technology recently developed a new tracking system. The system was implemented with input from users and an in-depth training was provided. However, as is often the case with a new system, staff required additional assistance and Geeta was able to quickly master the system and now teaches staff to troubleshoot any issues they may encounter. She is a quick learner and great at communicating complex technical details with other staff when reviewing applications and checking for compliance with internal rules and regulations.

Geeta is detail oriented, professional and has an excellent work ethic. She is also willing to teach and share her knowledge and skills with her colleagues. Today, we formally thank Geeta for her dedication and exceptional service to the department.



Environmental Compliance - **Melanie Williams**

Melanie began her DEP career in September 1995 and she currently serves as a Public Records Aide for the bureau. Melanie is tasked with serving the administrative needs of the enforcement staff including ensuring that they are fully prepared to conduct field activities at the highest level of efficiency and compiling monthly statistics of staff activities.

In addition, Melanie answers calls from the public relating to asbestos abatement. Many of these requests are technical in nature and, by her own initiative, she has learned the terms and processes to properly advise the callers. Her eagerness to learn has saved the technical staff valuable time. Melanie regularly receives accolades from callers who have complimented her detailed and patient approach in responding to their concerns.

Recently, an incident occurred while Melanie was proctoring an asbestos handler exam. As she was reviewing the identification of an individual who came to sit for the exam, she noticed that the photo on the identification and the individual in front of her did not match. She questioned the individual who insisted that it was his identification. Melanie remained calm and followed protocol—reviewing the individual's specific identification details. When the individual was unable to provide Melanie with the proper date of birth on the identification, he confessed that the identification was fraudulent.

We thank Melanie for preventing this act of fraud and for her hard work every day.



Executive Travel Review Team

Marie Schneider

Sandrine Moore-Straw

Madelene Ramos (not pictured)

Madelene Ramos, Sandrine Moore-Straw, and Marie Schneider administer DEP's operational and discretionary business travel as part of the Travel Review Unit, and each has mastered the quirks and daily challenges of one of the largest travel budgets in NYC government. In addition, the team is involved in numerous administrative assignments including micro-purchases, Freedom of Information Law record keeping and coordinating the training for Executive and Executive Support bureaus, Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities Management and Construction.

Madelene, Sandrine, and Marie regularly navigate the complex, assorted processes for travel related to specialized training, professional conferences, and intergovernmental meetings with state and federal agencies, Shop-Witness Tests, Quality Assurance inspections, and much more. DEP's normal operations take employees across the United States, as well as to Canada, Europe, Asia and South America. Also, because DEP worksites are spread across such a vast area, much of our inter-office travel upstate is considered out-of City Travel by the oversight agencies. Over the course of a year, the team oversees nearly one thousand trips and wears many hats to provide exemplary advice on audits, payments, and customer service to employees across our client bureaus.

Handling agency travel is an enormous undertaking. The logistics can be staggering in their complexity, the rules are intricate, and the timeframes inevitably short. These three professionals go out of their way to support employees in clarifying the labyrinth process while keeping costs low and adhering to all relevant directives. They have managed travel for multinational conferences, such as the recent water and climate change conference that took place in Paris, and coordinated housing for critical teams during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Not only they do they handle each time sensitive emergency with grace, they have managed to maintain their good humor throughout the years!

The unit regularly works with City Hall analysts and Comptroller Auditors and in a testament to their longstanding expertise, these other agencies often call DEP for advice and guidance when dealing with unusual travel situations. This award is a well-deserved recognition of the hard work Madeline, Sandrine, and Marie have put in to making DEP the gold standard in handling out-of-city travel. Thank you for your incredible commitment and service to this agency, and your fellow employees.



Bureau of Wastewater Treatment - James Aird and Michael Wagner

James has been working for DEP for over 24 years and currently serves in the capacity of Senior Port Engineer for the bureau's Marine Section. His responsibilities include overseeing marine engineers, vessel maintenance and repair contracts, and the largest DEP marine fuel transfer facility. In addition, James was the lead bureau representative in the design, construction and commissioning of the new class of sludge vessels, and is still engaged with warranty work and technical issues.

Michael began his DEP career in October 2001 and he currently serves as a Procurement Officer for the Marine Section. He is instrumental in procuring, operating, maintaining and training staff to operate the fleet of vessels used for harbor water monitoring and sampling. Michael is very resourceful in managing the budget and inventory for 50 diesel engines, of which there are 12 different manufacturers, 250 motors and controllers, as well as firefighting and survival systems.

The new fleet of sludge vessels that was delivered and put into operation at the end of 2014 bolstered an aging fleet and provided additional resources and challenges. Although the new technology provides the operators with cutting edge tools for navigation and watch-standing, there have also been some technical issues. The new vessels were found to be very sensitive to power loss, especially during off-work hours. A loss of power for four hours was found to cause the on-board computers to crash, and during cold weather, water systems freeze with no heat.

To rectify this power sensitivity issue, James researched and Michael procured an inexpensive system that senses power loss on a vessel and sends an electronic alert. In one month, they were alerted twice for different vessels that lost power while docked overnight. These alerts allowed personnel to respond promptly and prevent the computer from crashing. This, in turn, helped to ensure that the vessels stick to their schedules – maintaining the Marine Section's nearly 100 percent operational efficiency.

We thank James and Michael for their team work and exceptional service in preventing expensive repairs to equipment and hours of downtime.



Bureau of Water Supply - Michael DeLucia

Michael has been with DEP for almost 34 years! He serves as the Deputy Chief for the Bureau of Water Supply's Shaft Maintenance Section in the Eastern Operations Division, which operates out of the Hudson River Pumping Station in Dutchess County, NY. Michael is tasked with the maintenance and repair of 15 riser valves located within nine shafts along the Delaware Aqueduct. Specifically, he oversees the annual exercising of riser and gate valves, the maintenance of riser caps and other appurtenances, and the performance of other non-routine valve operations, including aqueduct and siphon blow-off valves.

On October 1, a significant flooding incident occurred at Shaft 4 in Gardiner, NY in Ulster County. The event took place while a contractor was testing a pump for the new Interconnection Project, which will connect the Catskill and Delaware Aqueduct systems. The contractor mistakenly opened a pressurized valve, causing the chambers to rapidly flood. Michael, who is trained on the Shaft 4 operating system, sprung into action. He safely tripped the riser mechanism to stop the flow of water into the chamber. He then assisted in the evacuation of the facility, ensuring everyone's safety.

Michael's quick actions prevented the water level from reaching the electrical and control rooms, thwarting a very dangerous situation that would have created an electric charge. Michael's actions avoided damage to electrical equipment, construction delays, and—most importantly—injury or loss of life to those inside the chamber.

After this event, Michael joined the recovery team and helped to determine the extent of the damage and how to resume operations. Michael's knowledge and experience were instrumental in returning the systems to working order, allowing the project to proceed. The qualities that Michael possesses truly exemplify the spirit of the Employee of the Month Program.

Commissioner's Special Award for November:



Nomination for Naming our New Employee Appreciation Program

Christopher Smith

Michael Bartlett

Jeffrey Hurley

Cindy Szlaien (not pictured)

In October, Organizational Development and Human Resources hosted a contest to name the new 2016 Employee Appreciation Program. They sought a name that would “raise the bar” in how DEP celebrates exceptional employee contributions to the agency's mission, environment, and employee relations!

The new type of award ceremony will give DEP employees a more streamlined opportunity to nominate colleagues for awards, helping them to better express their appreciation for the exceptional work that they observe on a daily basis.

The contest received over 330 suggestions, making the final selection a very tough choice. Some of the top submissions came from:

- Michael Bartlett of Training and Development
- Jeffrey Hurley of the Bureau of Water Supply
- Christopher Smith of the Office of Information Technology
- Cindy Szlaien of the Bureau of Engineering Design & Construction

After careful consideration, Jeffrey Hurley's submission was selected. Congratulations to Jeffrey! His chosen name is “Always Creating Excellence.”

Jeffrey came up with the idea after brainstorming about what DEP employees do to deserve recognition in general. He determined that nominees would need to exhibit some sort of display of excellence, which caused him to think about WWII flying aces and having an “ace in the hole.” Jeffrey liked the fact that someone who does well or is considered an achiever is thought of as an “Ace,” allowing him to arrive at his final suggestion—Always Creating Excellence (ACE)!

Commissioner's Award for November:



Breathe Easy Leadership Team

Alyssa Preston

Gerry Kelpin

Sonny Koya

Gerry, Sonny, and Alyssa from the Bureau of Environmental Compliance have been tasked with implementing Local Law 77, which empowers DEP to reduce air pollution at city construction sites.

The Law is designed to reduce particulate emissions, such as nitrous oxide, from diesel exhaust. Long-term exposure to diesel particulates is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, respiratory illnesses, and cancer, making it a public health matter.

Successful implementation of the law required innovative methods, creative rulemaking, and proactive enforcement. Gerry, Sonny, and Alyssa worked together to establish rules, revise Standard Operating Procedures, develop a record keeping system, and educate site operators about the importance of the regulations. They oversaw the retrofitting of over 150 pieces of construction equipment to reduce particulate emissions. They also conducted site visits to evaluate compliance and imposed fines when necessary. Their careful work has reduced emissions at these work sites by 56 percent on average since 2013.

Earlier this year, the Northeast Diesel Collaborative—a joint effort by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, state agencies, private actors, and nonprofit actors seeking to reduce diesel emissions in the Northeast—honored Gerry, Sonny, and Alyssa with a 2015 Breathe Easy Award.

This recognition was unquestionably well deserved. Other cities and states are now citing Local Law 77 as a successful model to reduce emissions. Congratulations to Gerry, Sonny, and Alyssa for truly embodying DEP's mission and the spirit of the Commissioner's Award.



Employee Experience Site Tour Drawing

At today's ceremony, the following awardees and their nominators won passes to participate in one of the upcoming [DEP Employee Experience Site Tours](#).

EOM Awardees: **Melanie Williams / Carlstein Lutchmedial** – Nominator, **Sandrine Moore-Straw / Frank Camardella** – Nominator, and **Marie Schneider / Frank Camardella** – Nominator

Commissioner Awardee: **Sonny Koya**