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Department of Environmental Protection Graduates 72 New Sewage Treatment Workers

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today presided over a graduation ceremony for 72 new sewage treatment workers who will immediately be assigned to the City's collection facilities and 14 wastewater treatment plants. The 72 graduates represent the largest class to join DEP, which now employs over 650 sewage treatment workers. In order to ensure that the graduates are prepared to safely perform the myriad of highly specialized and complex tasks necessary to treat the 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater produced in New York City every day, they completed a mandatory six-week orientation program on a wide variety of topics including worker safety, wastewater treatment plant operations, and maintenance. Deputy Commissioner Vincent Sapienza and Assistant Commissioner John Petito joined Commissioner Strickland at the graduation ceremony that took place this morning at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant's Visitors Center, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

"Sewage Treatment Workers perform a critical function in protecting public health by ensuring that the 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater produced in New York City each day are treated to federal standards," said Commissioner Strickland. "During Hurricane Sandy and the record storm surge it brought to the region many of our employees selflessly worked to protect our critical equipment and ensure the treatment process continued even as flood water submerged the plants. I am happy to welcome these new graduates who now join this proud tradition of dedication to the environmental and public health of New York City."

The intense six-week orientation for the graduates included hands-on training at the Red Hook, 26th Ward, Newtown Creek, and Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plants. Topics covered included personal protection equipment, right to know, fall protection, algebra, work zone safety, oxy-acetylene cutting, pipe soldering and fitting, working in confined spaces, rigging and moving heavy equipment with chains, slings, hoists and cranes, and the proper use of an aerial lift and fork lift. The graduates also received the New York City Fire Department Certificate of Physical Fitness.

Since Mayor Bloomberg took office in 2002, DEP has invested more than \$10 billion in upgrades to its 14 wastewater treatment plants, the construction or rehabilitation of four Combined Sewer Overflow storage facilities, sewer main construction, Bluebelts, and other conveyance or treatment measures. In 2011, for the first time since the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, all 14 plants were individually certified as meeting federal treatment standards. The ecological health of New York City harbor water has improved substantially over the last few decades and DEP has also begun an historic nitrogen discharge reduction program at the plants to further improve water quality.

More Information

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The new graduates are:

- Anthony Aaron
- Hydar Ali
- Ravindra Bindesh
- James Blennau
- Michael Brennan
- Robert Brower
- Frank Caggiano, Jr.
- Joel Cepeda
- Peter Chin
- Reno Colalillo
- Christopher Cuzzo
- Cecil Daly
- Kevin Davies
- Michael DeVita
- George DeVito
- Yugul Dhanraj
- Vanessa Dipierro
- Paul Fiordimondo
- Sean Flaherty
- Sean Foley
- George Fouad
- John Franklin
- Robert Gaeta
- Robert Gavitt
- Erich Geiger
- Bruce Gilardi
- Luigi Granitto
- Brian Hanley
- Jamie Harkins
- Marcus Heesch
- Darrin Hrinya
- Raymundo Infante
- Eddie Irizarry
- Sasha Kachanovsky
- Dorothy Kovacs
- Michael Luke
- Richard Mazza
- James McCann
- Irving McDonald
- James Miglioizzi
- Danny Miraglia
- Ronald Mistretta
- Patrick Neal
- Joseph O'Brien
- Michael Oefelein
- Michael Panzarino
- Bindesh Patel
- Joe Pena
- Sean Phillips
- Albert Ramacca
- Stephen Reill
- Robert Ricchetti
- Louis Robles, Sr.
- Steven Ruff
- Jamie Schilling
- John Sears
- Emil Shalumov
- Venode Shiwlochan
- Leonid Sigal
- Chandrakhant Singh

Nyeem Sirmans
Kevin Smith
Ryan Smith
Bruno Speziale
Joseph Sue
Kevin Svoboda
Edward Terriberly
Nick Tramontano
Gregory Viske
Ellis Watson
Scott Wittson
Brian Wolf

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels, and aqueducts bring the water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take the wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 in the upstate watershed. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater

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