



**Environmental
Protection**

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Carter Strickland, Commissioner

WEEKLY

PIPELINE

March 12, 2013

Volume IV • Issue 166

Strategically Speaking



Two years ago, DEP developed *Strategy 2011-2014*, an ambitious blueprint for transforming the department into the safest, most transparent, efficient, and cost-effective water utility in the nation. Each of the 29 goals and 100 initiatives identified in the plan directly support DEP's mission to protect public health and the environment by supplying clean drinking water, collecting and treating wastewater, and reducing air, noise, and hazardous substances pollution.

Last week, DEP released the plan's 2012 Progress Report, which documented the achievements and progress made toward the initiatives. At the plan's halfway point, 57 initiatives have been fully achieved, 30 are on track to be completed on schedule, and the remaining 13 are in the planning and design phase.

"Despite being tested by Hurricane Sandy, the worst natural disaster in New York City's history, as well as Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm

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Spotlight on Safety

Laboratory Safety: Labeling of Chemicals

The presence of hazardous chemicals, and biological, physical, and radioactive materials in a laboratory make it a potentially dangerous place to work and proper labeling of the chemicals is one simple measure that can be taken to help protect against injury.

- Permanent container labels must include the identity of the chemical, the primary health or physical hazards, and the name and address of the manufacturer.
- Secondary containers are required when a chemical must be transferred from the original labeled container to another container. Secondary containers

must be large enough to catch spills that may occur during transfer and the same labeling requirements must be followed.

- When replacing a label, the original label must not be removed, altered or defaced and the new label must contain the same information as the original.
- In addition to annual training, laboratory workers should be familiar with the chemical hygiene plan that contains important laboratory specific safety information.

For additional information see: [OSHA - Laboratory Safety Resources](#)

Commissioner's Corner

Yesterday I was thrilled to announce that in June DEP will receive the 2013 "Exemplary Source Water Protection Award" from the American Water Works Association (AWWA) at their annual conference. This award underscores DEP's successful protection of water quality in our upstate watersheds by acquiring land around our reservoirs and their headwaters, helping neighboring communities improve their wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and working with farmers, local governments, and other watershed partners to create and strengthen programs that ensure clean, safe drinking water for nine million New Yorkers.

For more than 20 years, DEP has been leading the way in public health protection by designing and implementing a suite of initiatives to preserve and enhance the high quality of our water supply. In fact, the City has invested more than \$1.5 billion in watershed protection programs since 1993, when the EPA first issued the city a waiver from the federal requirement to filter tap water. Our programs have been recognized around the globe as a model for a cost-effective and sustainable approach to water quality protection. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of DEP staff, along with the vital cooperation of our partners across the watershed.

In addition to supplying the nation's largest metropolis with clean drinking water, DEP is charged with protecting our waterways to ensure New York continues to be a vibrant, thriving city. Last week we announced the completion of two projects that will help make our harbor cleaner and our shorelines more attractive. First, we released plans to convert a 1.2 acre parcel of DEP-owned land in the Hunts Point area of the Bronx into recreational space. The land was previously used as a staging area for construction equipment during the recently completed \$280 million upgrade of the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is situated adjacent to the 11-acre Barretto Point Park, land that was originally converted by DEP in 2001, and the



Upper East River. As we continue to look for opportunities to expand fishing, boating, and other recreational uses of our waterways, this newly converted land will provide residents with an important open space and an additional access point to the East River.

Last week we also announced the completion of a \$15.6 million project that extended the city's sewer system to 136 homes in the Annadale area of Staten Island, which were previously serviced by aging septic tanks that can leak and pollute our waterways. The work also included the installation of new water mains as well as the continued build-out of the award winning Bluebelt system that controls stormwater and reduces street flooding. Prior to this project, the Annadale section of Staten Island did not have a sewer system and street flooding was a common problem when it rained. The 4,600 feet of new storm sewers and 68 catch basins will help mitigate street flooding and the 1.2 miles of new water mains will improve the distribution of tap water and help minimize disruption to consumers during any future water main work and service shutdowns in the area.

The design, planning, and construction of these projects take years to complete and would not be possible without the contributions of our nearly 6,000 employees. DEP provides vital services and from AWWA to the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, our work is being recognized across the industry. Congratulations to all.

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



BWSO District Supervisor **Anthony Rivera** has seen a lot in his nearly 28 years with DEP. He is in charge of Queens North Sewer Maintenance Operations and is responsible for leading a team that responds to sewer backups and reports of flooding, and also cleans and maintains catch basins and sewers. Rivera has also played a key role in BWSO's transition from reactive to proactive sewer work through the agency's Sewer Operations and Analysis Program, or SOAP as it is commonly known.

SOAP combines sewer and geographic data to identify areas with a high frequency of sewer backups. Proactive sewer cleaning in problem areas has resulted in a year-over-year decline in the number of sewer backups experienced by city residents.

"Anthony's hard work and leadership in our SOAP initiative has helped us improve the opera-

tion of our sewer system, which translates into fewer problems for homeowners," said Queens Borough Manager **Thomas Anello**.

SOAP's success relies on the seven BWSO District Supervisors headquartered in yards across the five boroughs. As the District Supervisor for Queens North, Rivera directs his 24 member team to respond to customer complaints, street flooding and to perform proactive maintenance such as vactoring, liquid degreasing and unclogging catch basins.

Yet the emergency response element of Rivera's job still remains. He saw the damage firsthand as one of the DEP employees manning a command station in the Rockaways following Hurricane Sandy. "The devastation of the homes was unbelievable" Rivera recalled. "Thankfully, crises like Sandy are the exception and not the rule," he added.

"Thanks to the effectiveness of SOAP and hardworking employees like Anthony, DEP is doing more good than ever before," Anello said.

Rivera is an avid Jets fan and as a season ticket holder he attends most home games. When Gang Green is on the road, Rivera and his whole family enjoy donning their team jerseys and watching the games together. Rivera says he is family man who enjoys spending time with his four kids and cooking.

New Police Recruits Sworn In



Last week, a group of 36 new recruits were sworn in at the DEP Police Academy in Kingston and they have since begun seven months of training in counterterrorism, the environment, police science, the use of firearms, and defensive tactics. In addition, the recruits will take courses in environmental conservation law, land navigation, fish and wildlife, and watershed protection. Five of the recruits serve in the military reserves or the National Guard, 13 speak a non-english language, and they hail from Greene, Putnam, Dutchess, Delaware, Orange, and Westchester Counties, as well as all five boroughs of New York City.

(Strategically Speaking... continued)



Lee a year earlier, DEP employees have shown their commitment to innovation across the board," said **Commissioner Strickland**. "I am proud to report that, in two years, we have accomplished more than half of the initiatives set forth in *Strategy 2011-2014*."

Among the most significant achievements is the substantial completion of the installation of Automated Meter Reading devices, which have saved customers more than \$26 million through the Leak Notification Program and reduced the number of estimated bills issued by 60 percent. In addition, DEP took important steps to improve worker safety through the completion of programmatic EHS audits and the creation of a new hands-on water and sewer operations training center in Queens.

Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** was very excited about the agency's progress. "It's amazing to see the full range of the agency's mission in action," Deputy Commissioner Ritter said. "This report really shows the com-

mitment that DEP employees have to their work."

In the last year, DEP has also made progress on a number of construction projects, including the installation of nitrogen removal technology at the Hunts Point and Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Strategy 2011-2014 also lays out significant sustainability goals, including expanding the Staten Island Bluebelt and implementing the landmark Green Infrastructure Plan. Last year, DEP made significant progress by signing an amended consent order with the State Department of Environmental Conservation that formalizes the inclusion of green infrastructure in DEP's plan to reduce sewer overflows.

While DEP took great steps in 2012 toward meeting the goals, there is still more work to do in order to complete the original 100 initiatives. Among these are the completion of the Croton Water Filtration Plant and the activation of Stage 2 of City Water Tunnel No. 3, both of which are expected to be completed this year.

DEP March Blood Drive

Lefrak: 3rd Floor Cafeteria, 3/13-3/14, 7:45 am to 1:30 pm;
Kensico/Highland Regions-Sutton Park Area: Sutton Park-2nd Floor, 3/14, 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

NYC's Five Boro Bike Tour

DEP employees are invited to join industry professionals and others in supporting Water For People's water and sanitation programs in communities around the globe, by riding in the Five Boro Bike Tour on May 5. Spots on the team are very limited and requests will be accommodated on a first come-first served basis. For more information click here [🔗](#).

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov [🔗](#)