



Always Creating Excellence (A.C.E.) Employee Awards

DEP is a great agency that delivers critical services that millions of New Yorkers depend on daily. Making good on that promise requires the dedication and hard work of our nearly 5,800 employees.

The A.C.E. program recognizes DEP staff members that have exhibited outstanding effort, and have gone above and beyond the call of duty to serve the people of New York City. These awards allow for each and every DEP employee to nominate colleagues for exceptional work in four categories, including *Excellence in Leadership, Customer Service, Environmental, Health & Safety, and Innovation (with distinctions in Early Career, Sustainability & Operations, Administration & Support, Technology, and Engineering)*. All DEP employees are eligible to nominate their colleagues—individuals and teams—for awards.

We're accepting 4th Quarter nominations for A.C.E. awards thru December 15th. Submit your nominations now, with some basic information such as the nominee's responsibilities and examples of extraordinary performance, by [clicking here](#) or mail to: 59-17 Junction Boulevard, 18th Floor, Flushing, NY 11373, ATTN:ACEAWARDS. For more information, consult the Employee Resource Center on The Source, e-mail ACEAWARDS@dep.nyc.gov or call Herb Roth, Deputy Director of Human Resources at (718) 595-3377.

Awardees for the third quarter of 2016, featured in this Weekly Pipeline Extra edition, were honored at a breakfast on October 21 with **Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza, P.E.**, during which they received a certificate, a lapel pin and an A.C.E. Awards duffle bag. Some employees also won a ticket to take a DEP Employee Experience tour and will receive excused time to visit and learn about an interesting operation within DEP.

These men and women set a standard for all of us to emulate and appreciate.

INNOVATION, EARLY CAREER



Executive Bureau - **Isabella Wechsler**

Isabella consistently performs her tasks above and beyond expectations, creatively approaching problems and articulating the hard, confusing questions that less inquisitive and discerning analysts may gloss over. In her role as Strategic Advisor to the Commissioner, she works closely with seasoned veterans of the water and wastewater industry and has developed strong collaborative relationships with our partners in city government and the non-profit sector.

During her three years at DEP, Isabella has excelled at digesting complex technical information and pinpointing the critical challenges facing a policy maker. One example of this was her work around water quality issues in the wake of the Flint, Michigan crisis. She sifted through hundreds of pages of technical documents analyzing the EPA's guidelines on lead sampling protocols and public communications and compared them with information from other cities across the country before developing a recommendation for our Commissioner. She also managed a 15-plus agency effort to analyze historical records for more than 20,000 city owned buildings for lead service lines and coordinated inspections for 250 properties.

Isabella has also proven that she can deftly navigate complicated interagency relationships, working directly with City Hall to develop and communicate a citywide policy on geese management. As part of this effort, Isabella facilitated conversations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Port Authority, and non-profit groups to develop a sustainable geese management policy that aligned with the Mayor's commitment to the humane treatment of all wildlife within the city. As a testament to her poise and emotional intelligence, Isabella quickly demonstrated that she could resolve most issues without escalating them to Commissioner's attention and that she could effectively communicate directly with senior managers at City Hall.

Isabella has continuously excelled in every task she is assigned and we thank her for her strong commitment to DEP.



Bureau of Legal Affairs - **Lisa Sofio**

Within her first year of joining DEP, Lisa distinguished herself by taking a leading role in handling various major construction contract disputes and by assuming primary responsibility within the bureau for the agency's various energy supply contracts and renewable energy initiatives. As a result of her superior performance, at such an early stage of her career, Lisa was promoted to a managerial position and has proven to be an effective leader of the bureau's business team.

Specifically, Lisa has demonstrated exceptional skill and judgment in handling complex contract disputes expeditiously and thoroughly. She is highly respected by her colleagues, agency clients and opposing counsel. She has taken a leading role in working with the NYC Law Department to improve the City's Standard Construction Contract as well as working with the Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction to improve agency standard operating procedures.

Today, we honor Lisa for her significant professional accomplishments and contributions to the bureau and the Department.

INNOVATION, SUSTAINABILITY & OPERATIONS



Bureau of Wastewater Treatment - **Jennifer Velasquez**

Jennifer is a Project Manager with the Bureau's Process Research and Development Section. Among her responsibilities, Jennifer oversees the contracts for the procurement of glycerol—a chemical used for removing nitrogen from wastewater.

The cost of glycerol fluctuates with the commodities market, and the contractual cost to DEP is adjusted periodically to reflect these changes. Tracking these price adjustments, Jennifer has proposed that Operations switch from one blend of glycerol to another with a lower price, allowing DEP to lower the cost of procuring glycerol by over 40% with a resultant savings in excess of \$5 million. The change in glycerol blends has caused no detrimental effect on the Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) system operation or DEP's ability to achieve the limits stipulated by the BNR consent order.

Additionally Jennifer has been handling the Glycerol contracts with extraordinary attention to detail, initiative, and has been instrumental with providing support for a series of smooth start-ups of all the glycerol facilities brought on-line. Thank you Jennifer for all of your important work and dedication.

INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY



Office of Information Technology - **Vic Kayharee**

OIT continues to standardize, modernize, and consolidate the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure to reduce operating costs, secure information, and to simplify IT and business processes in the agency. In an effort to uphold the mission and vision of OIT, the CIO (Chief Information Officer) included the implementation of Windows 10 (the latest Operating System) in OIT's FY 16-17 strategic plan.

Vic was assigned as the lead technical resource for migrating the 4,000-plus desktops and laptops used by the department to Windows 10. Since the inception of the project, the Windows Migration team, under Vic's leadership, has successfully migrated over 1700 end user workstations. He has streamlined the migration process as such that the IT Service Desk has received very few support calls in comparison with the migration efforts from the previous windows operating system (Windows XP to Windows 7) update a few years ago. Vic and the Windows 10 migration team have set an objective of completing the migration by end of 2016. They are currently working on migrating the workstations for our upstate locations.

Due to Vic's innovative approach to this large scale deployment and his superior technical skills, work ethic and attention to detail, a successful implementation of this new technology has occurred resulting in improved business effectiveness.

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Bureau of Customer Services: Customer Services Correspondence Team

Vincent Mattarella
TC McLaurin
Christopher Mammarelli
Chiching Teng

Neil Rullo
David Rothstein
Kathyrine Garcia
Diana Valencia

Carmen Cruz
Chitrawatte Ramoutar

Vincent Mattarella, Director of Customer Operations, and TC McLaurin, Correspondence Manager, oversee the Correspondence Unit. They consistently take the initiative to re-evaluate current business practices for effectiveness and efficiencies. Their most recent business process review focused on assembling a team, which is nominated for the ACE Award, to significantly reduce the time it takes DEP to respond to customer requests and questions submitted through the Customer Service Inbox. The response time for Customer Service Inbox inquiries was 10 business days, on average. Providing responses primarily rested on the shoulders of one full time employee, supported by others on an ad-hoc basis. With increasing customer demands, response times had to improve.

In November 2015, this team worked collectively, each with specific supporting roles, to achieve three goals: reduce backlog, shorten email response times, and implement a consistent approach that could sustain improvements. Within two months, the average response time was cut down to seven business days and since April of this year, an average response time of three business days has been sustained.

In addition to described process efficiencies, this project resulted in increased customer satisfaction as response times are now in line with customer expectations set by other companies/utilities. Employee satisfaction also increased because the employees were part of the discussion and solution. This Customer Service Correspondence Team supported each other as successful teams do, and are well-deserving of this recognition.

Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction - Taralyn Boellmann

Taralyn was recognized for making significant improvements to the bureau's deliverables. She has consistently gone above and beyond in her daily duties to assist the bureau's portfolio and accountable managers. Taralyn uses her advanced knowledge of Excel and e-Builder to provide essential summary data to the portfolio managers (PMs) on a regular basis. The PMs use this data to manage resources. Because Taralyn is an advanced e-Builder user, accountable managers (AMs) and PMs often look to her for assistance with the system, locating information and processing workflows. She has helped identify problems and assisted with formulating solutions. Taralyn is also tasked with developing complex spreadsheets to track and manage resources. Her work is accurate and timely. Thank you Taralyn for your commitment to excellence.

LEADERSHIP



Bureau of Wastewater Treatment - **Eric Sheriff and Steven Johnson**

Back in August, it was reported that a wounded falcon was seen in a building located at the Jamaica WWTP complex. Eric immediately investigated, found the falcon, and safely secured it. Steven then took the injured animal to a local animal clinic, which determined that the bird had a broken wing. Fortunately, the falcon was tagged and it was discovered that it belonged to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and was part of their pest control program. Today, we thank Eric and Steven for their compassion and empathy.



Bureau of Labor Relations and Discipline - **Marcia Jones**

Marcia personifies someone that truly cares about the employee experience. She serves as an integral member of the Quality of Work Life Committee (QWL) and works hard to ensure that the Committee delivers beneficial programs to all employees. Marcia serves on the QWL Employee Recognition Day Gift Sub-Committee making sure that appropriate gifts are selected to reflect DEP pride, and that gift selection runs smoothly and timely.

Marcia has also been instrumental with the Holiday Party Planning Committee, bridging the gap between management and labor to ensure that the event is a wonderful experience for everyone. In addition, Marcia is a tremendous asset to the Labor Relations team by building collaborative relationships between management and labor through strong communications and assisting with grievance resolutions. Marcia is an experienced leader who shows integrity and character, an example for all to follow. Thanks Marcia for your many years of commitment, excellence and outstanding level of service to your fellow employees.



Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction - **Ellen Obenshain**

Ellen is currently spearheading the contracts validation process to upload and ensure the correctness of all historic contract data. She is the point person on a newly created team responsible for validating over 200 contracts—a critically important task, although at times tedious and thankless.

ePMIS is the Enterprise Project Management Information System and E-Builder is its main component. For the past several years, the project controls team, and Ellen in particular, have been working tirelessly to upload the bureau's existing project data. This system has allowed the bureau to track progress and complete projects more efficiently.

Ellen's inspiring leadership and approach toward both members of the team and contract managers has made this process effective. She has unflinchingly taken on the most difficult tasks of the project, such as acquiring obscure data, collaborating with contract managers, and assigning appropriate tasks and roles with ease. Ellen has been able to teach complex processes in a remarkably short time by constantly making herself available for any question or issue.

Congratulations Ellen on your award and thank you for the inspiring leadership you continue to exhibit.

ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY



Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations - **Lavern Van Dusen**

Lavern was working a shift at Brooklyn Water Maintenance one night in September when he was assigned to inspect various locations that had been served 3-day notices to see if the issues were corrected. While making his rounds, Lavern arrived at a 3rd Avenue address in Sunset Park and discovered that the plumber who had been working at the site had left the roadway plates with a 3-foot gap between them. This gap posed an imminent risk to the pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists that use the heavily traveled roadway.

Lavern immediately notified his supervisor and a Department of Transportation crew was dispatched to make the necessary repairs. Thank you Lavern for your commitment to public safety.



Bureau of Facilities Management and Budget - **Mary Lam**

Recently, Mary, an Assistant Architect in Facilities Management & Construction, was assigned to lead the carpet replacement project here at Lefrak. Mary was chosen to manage this major undertaking because of her attention to detail, keen organizational skills, creativity, and patience.

Mary successfully managed to replace carpeting on the 3rd, 4th and 5th floors of the Low Rise building. She will continue to supervise the carpet replacement in the remaining Low Rise floors during the next two fiscal years. By creating a detailed project plan and implementing an innovative “staggered” work schedule, Mary has significantly improved the aesthetics and safety for those employees on the affected floors, all while minimizing disruption to operations.

Today, we thank Mary for her consistent hard work, and for helping to make our facilities safer places to work in and visit.



Bureau of Wastewater Treatment - **Dragan Pilovic**

During a 3–11pm shift one night in August, Sewage Treatment Workers (STWs) Dragan Pilovic and James Murphy were assisting with the offloading of a sludge vessel at the Bowery Bay WWTP. An issue arose with the operation and both men went to inspect the proper settings of the pipeline valves. During the inspection, the pressurized pipeline separated at a dresser coupling causing a high velocity discharge of sludge. Dragan acted quickly and selflessly, pulled James over a railing, and helped him up the stairs to safety. Thank you Dragan for your heroism.



Employee Experience Site Tour Drawing

At today's ceremony, 15 lucky employees won passes to participate in an upcoming DEP Employee Experience Site Tour.

Farhan Abdullah, Kathyrine Garcia, Mary Lam, Patricia Turner, Chiching Teng, Isabella Wechsler, Kimberly Cipriano, Jennifer Velasquez, Mauro Orpianesi, Carmen Cruz, Lisa Sofio, David Rothstein, Neil Rullo, Vlada Kenniff and Benjamin Huff.

COMMISSIONER'S AWARDS



Bureau of Water Supply: Restoring Fluoride Treatment to NYC's Drinking Water

Alexander Margolis
Robert Houlihan

David Chu
David Stretch

James Roche
Salvatore Siciliano

Michael Gonzalez

DEP crews were called to the Fluoride Treatment Facility at Kensico Reservoir one day in August when a transformer, which feeds the facility caught fire. The Fluoride Treatment Facility is a critical part of the water supply system and treats drinking water for the millions of New Yorkers who depend on it every day.

First responders quickly arrived at the scene, including police and fire departments, as well as Con Edison and DEP's own Kensico Electric Shop electricians and engineers. The DEP team acted immediately to ensure that all breakers were locked out to protect everyone's safety. They then proceeded to manage a variety of critical tasks, including hooking up generators, investigating the cause of the fire, and gathering information to procure a new transformer.

A new transformer was installed in 100-plus degree heat by electricians James Roche, Robert Houlihan, and Alexander Margolis, field crew engineers Dave Stretch and David Chu, Supervisor of Watershed Maintainers Salvatore Siciliano, and Watershed Maintainer Michael Gonzalez.

The quick thinking and leadership that this team demonstrated is illustrative of the high level of service that DEP continually strives to provide. On behalf of DEP and all New Yorkers, Acting Commissioner Sapienza thanked the team for its dedication and excellent service.



Bureau of Sustainability: Creating a Breeding Ground for 50,000 Oysters in Jamaica Bay

Pinar Balci
Vlada Kenniff

Benjamin Huff
David Lin

John McLaughlin
Qi (Jackie) Chen

Mikeal Parlow

This team is receiving the Commissioner's Award for their innovative work in creating a breeding ground for 50,000 oysters in Jamaica Bay. DEP has been working with the Billion Oyster Project, an ecosystem restoration and education project that is trying to restore one billion oysters to New York Harbor. The project has multiple benefits, including improving water quality and reviving habitats for fish and wildlife.

One of the remarkable aspects of this initiative is the unlikely source of the materials used to create the oyster beds. DEP is currently replacing older, inefficient bathroom fixtures in 500 public schools as part of a citywide effort to promote water conservation. This water conservation program plays an important role in helping to ensure efficient water use and consumption in advance of the Delaware Aqueduct shutdown and repair. In particular, the full upgrade of bathroom fixtures in schools is expected to conserve a total of 4 million gallons of water during each school day. Already, more than 10,000 outdated fixtures have been replaced with new, high-efficiency fixtures.

Rather than send those older porcelain fixtures to a landfill, the team from Sustainability identified a creative opportunity to put them to use by cleaning and crushing the bathroom fixtures, and using them to create hospitable habitats in Jamaica Bay to incubate oyster growth. This project is a perfect example of the innovative, holistic approach to improving harbor water quality and resiliency that sets DEP apart from other water utilities nationwide.

Acting Commissioner Sapienza commended the team on behalf of DEP and NYC for their resourceful thinking and commitment to the department's mission.