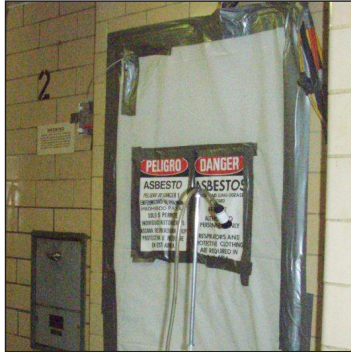


## They Put the “Best” in Asbestos Control

Part of DEP’s myriad responsibilities includes making sure that the city maintains healthy air quality levels for its residents. One critical component of this responsibility is the careful regulation of asbestos, a naturally occurring mineral that was used for insulation, construction, and fireproofing throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although asbestos in place poses no risk to the public, any activity which has the potential to expose asbestos fibers into the air must be regulated under federal, state and local laws.

This is where DEP’s Asbestos Control Program comes in. Comprised of 40 employees working for the Bureau of Environmental Compliance, the program is responsible for protecting workers, the public, and the environment by ensuring the controlled abatement of asbestos containing materials. Renovations to older buildings will often involve disturbing asbestos containing materi-



als. In order to safely remove any asbestos containing materials that are found, abatement contractors are required to follow strict city regulations that mandate proper procedures for containing and removing asbestos.

The program enforces these regulations by responding to complaints, conducting unscheduled inspections, and by issuing notices of viola-

(Continued on reverse side)

## Spotlight on Safety

### Happy New Year!

#### Resolve to stay safe in 2011

It’s hard to believe that another year has passed and that we’re beginning 2011. Before you know it, we’ll be celebrating New Year 2012! But in the meantime, it’s a good time to re-commit ourselves to safety and a renewed sense of environmental responsibility.

This year resolve to:

- Use your knowledge, skills, and common sense to avoid accidents, injuries or near misses.
- Take the time to think about a task before you jump into it! Identify the potential pitfalls or hazards before you act.
- Check your equipment before and after use, even when you don’t have to, and always operate it according to manufacturer’s instructions.

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever it is necessary or prudent to protect you against workplace hazards. Keep alert for safety hazards, and report any hazards you spot that you can’t safely eliminate yourself.

- Attend all safety meetings and training sessions.

- If you ever believe that you are being asked to carry out a task that might be unsafe or dangerous to the environment, stop and talk to your supervisor, safety officer or the Employee Concerns Hotline (800-897-9677).

You can probably think of many more safety resolutions that apply to your job. Add those to the list, and stay safe in 2011! For the complete article, click here [👉](#).

## Commissioner’s Corner

As 2011 gets underway, it’s a good time to re-focus on the fundamentals—DEP’s four core strategic functions: (1) delivering more than one billion gallons of the best quality drinking water and treating 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day; (2) designing and building \$14 billion of capital projects throughout the city and upstate to help us better achieve our operational needs; (3) providing the best possible customer service for New Yorkers; and (4) making the city sustainable for New Yorkers by helping to provide clean water, clean air, and as much peace and quiet as possible. Throughout 2010 we have been working on a Strategic Plan with goals—and concrete plans to achieve them—in each of these four areas. Thanks to your efforts over the last year, we are building on a strong foundation: we are achieving monthly Clean Water Act Standards for wastewater treatment at our 14 wastewater treatment plants; we’ve now completed roughly 575,000 wireless water meter (AMR) installations and made up-to-the minute consumption data available for our customers online; we started design on a \$1.2 billion plan to repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct; and we launched the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan to dramatically reduce CSOs and improve harbor water quality. These are important milestones in the achievement of major long-term goals that are part of a comprehensive Strategic Plan. As we get close to its release, I’ll use some of the Commissioner’s Corner to review each strategic function and its importance to our overall mission.

In more immediate news, last week, President **Barack Obama** signed the bi-partisan “Get the Lead Out” bill into law. Since NYC Water is virtually lead free, lead in drinking water is typically caused by pipes in older homes which have either lead service lines or lead plumbing fixtures. In response, DEP and the Health Department launched the “Run Your Tap” campaign to inform city residents about simple steps that they can take to reduce any potential exposure [👉](#). But even newer plumbing can sometimes contain lead because the Safe Drinking Water Act allows plumb-



ing fixtures with up to 8% lead to be labeled as lead free. The “Get the Lead Out” bill changes that. Going forward, the federal “lead-free” standard for newly installed pipes and plumbing fixtures is being lowered to 0.25% (read about it here [👉](#)). Lead-related illnesses in children in New York City have been dropping for years, including 2009, when the New York City Health Department reported the fewest incidents of lead poisoning among children ever [👉](#). But the best exposure is no exposure, and this legislation is another step in that direction.

And finally, on Thursday, we broke ground on one of our largest green infrastructure demonstration projects to date. The \$730,000 project, which is being overseen by Director of Ecological Services **John McLaughlin** and Research Biologist **Bob Will**, created a 13,000-square-foot bioretention zone in a nine-acre drainage area bounded by Sutter Avenue, North Conduit Avenue, 80th Street, and South Conduit Avenue in Queens (read about it here [👉](#)). This below-ground water-retention system made of vegetation, sand, and soil will capture approximately 90% of the stormwater that accumulates within this drainage area during a moderate storm—about 200,000 gallons. Projects like this are a central part of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, announced by **Mayor Bloomberg** in September that could save New Yorkers \$2.4 billion while improving harbor water quality and greening the cityscape. City Councilman **Eric Ulrich** agreed, noting that the project “will have a positive impact on our local environment, especially for Jamaica Bay.”

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



From the late 1950s through the 1970s, asbestos was a fire retardant building material commonly used in walls, floorings, ceilings, and pipe installations. Unfortunately, it was later discovered that this fibrous mineral caused life-threatening diseases in the lungs. That prompted government agencies to ban its use and that asbestos be handled safely and only by qualified personnel.

**Peter Lee Kim** is the Director of the Asbestos Control Program's Technical Review Unit, A-TRU for short. Peter has been with the Asbestos Control Program since its launch 25 years ago, when he first joined DEP. At DEP he is has been keen on underscoring safety and par-

ticularly enjoys helping the public. In 2009, the City enacted a number of new laws to ensure that asbestos abatement is conducted safely, and modified how asbestos projects are filed, approved and inspected. It also has resulted in new levels of cooperation among DEP, the Department of Buildings, and the Fire Department, the agencies that oversee asbestos and construction safety.

Peter and Deputy Director **Norma Richardson** are part of the 14 person technical review staff. Reviews make sure that appropriate safety precautions are taken during abatement, and sometimes require that a registered architect or professional engineer is hired to create a Work Place Safety Plan. When A-TRU finishes its review, concluding that the project will meet safety requirements, an Asbestos Work Permit is issued.

Peter is fond of tinkering with his car and taking on other "hands on projects around the house." He shares his home with his wife **Anna**, and their two children **Patrick**, a college student, and **Philip**, who is following his older brother's footsteps and attends Stuyvesant High School.

## Press Box

"Monitoring 1.2 million acres of watershed is a gigantic task. Especially when more than eight million people depend on that water for drinking, bathing and flushing." – Times Herald-Record feature story [📄](#) on the amazing work that goes on each day at DEP's Kingston Lab.

## Out of the Archives

### Manhattan Company Water Tank, 1913

Workers standing near excavation of a Manhattan Company water tank located at Center and Reade Streets in Manhattan. In 1799, before the existence of a municipal water supply system, the Manhattan Company was given the exclusive rights to convey water to the city via the Bronx River. The modest water system that the Manhattan Company developed included wells, a 550,000 gallon reservoir



on Chambers Street and 25 miles of wooden water mains serving 2,000 customers. When the city was hit with a devastating fire in 1828 and a cholera epidemic in 1832, it was clear another source of water had to be found and in 1834 New York City's leaders approved the development of a municipal water system.

## Did You Know

...although today we know of the harm asbestos in the environment can cause, its use was common for thousands of years? Ancient civilizations, including the Greeks and Romans, were discovered to have used it in cookware and the Chinese wove it into their precious fabrics. When they needed to clean the clothing made from asbestos they would just toss it into a fire—cleaning occurred and the fabric remained intact.

### (They Put the "Best" in Asbestos Control... continued)

tion to work sites that fail to comply with regulations. They review and approve applications from individuals seeking to engage in asbestos abatement and investigation, which requires passing an examination prior to certification, and processing thousands of recertifications for individuals who are trained as asbestos handlers, supervisors, and investigators. In Fiscal Year 2010 alone, the program responded to 1,170 asbestos complaints and, carried out 4,000 inspections.

Led by Director **Krish Radhakrishnan**, P.E. and Deputy Director **Steven Camaio**, P.E. the program has played a critical role in managing some of the city's biggest crises. In response to the dust and debris released after September 11, which included large amounts of asbestos containing materials, DEP led a survey of approximately 1,000 buildings below Canal Street and coordinated a comprehensive cleanup of rooftops, facades, ledges, and other contaminated surfaces with disaster funding provided by the Federal government.

In the aftermath of the tragic fire at the Deutsche Bank building, the Mayor's Office convened a working group to assess how the city regulates construction, demolition and asbestos abatement operations, including enforcement and field operations. The goal of this assessment was to make recommendations to improve the safety of worksites for workers, first responders, and the general public. The recommendations focused on four key areas for implementation: oversight of abatement operations,

oversight of demolition operations, inspection protocols and data exchanges amongst agencies.

Out of these recommendations, the Asbestos Technical Review Unit (A-TRU) was created as a new inter-agency permitting operation, which includes DEP and DOB staff who review and permit asbestos abatement projects that impact public safety. In addition, a web based Asbestos and Reporting Tracking System (ARTS) and a permitting process, aimed at projects posing certain safety risks, were implemented in the fall of 2009. Data from all asbestos projects is transmitted electronically to FDNY on a daily basis.

Building upon the success of ARTS, in 2010 the bureau also created an electronic verification program for private Certified Asbestos Investigators who make initial determinations on the presence of asbestos prior to construction activities. The system will now screen all applications submitted by the investigators and will be able to track their work. This is another step toward a completely paperless process in the immediate near future.

Program Director of Enforcement **Carlstien Lutchmedial** notes that "we run a tight ship. We get a lot of work done and we make sure to keep our inspectors busy." And whether it involves the renovations of major capital projects, or just the replacement of piping in an old apartment, the inspectors of the program are working hard to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all New Yorkers.

## Milestones

Congratulations to **Christopher Duerkes**, BWSO, and his wife **Erin Moriarty** on the birth of their son **Leo** on December 21. Both baby and mom are doing well.

Congratulations to **Mervyn Frankel**, OIT, and his wife **Ellen** on the birth of their granddaughter **Tova Gittel** on December 31.

Congratulations to **Alfred Young**, BWSO, on the birth of his granddaughter **Adrianna Nicole** Young on January 3.

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