

## Impressive Work at Gilboa Dam!



The \$400 million reconstruction of Gilboa Dam, which impounds Schoharie Reservoir, the northernmost reservoir in the City's water supply system, is currently two years ahead of schedule. Kudos to the planners, engineers, construction laborers, community outreach staff and contractors who have worked tirelessly on this critical project, which is expected to be substantially completed later this fall. Click [here](#) to see additional photos.

## Spotlight on Safety

### National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month—in part, because thunderstorms, high winds and floods are common during this time. When severe weather hits New York City and its watersheds, DEP employees often work tirelessly, both during and after the events. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) offers several resources to help workers prepare for, and stay safe

during severe weather events and natural disasters. They also offer guidance on protection during recovery and cleanup. OSHA has also developed a matrix for Hazard Exposure and Risk Assessment during hurricane response and recovery, since work conditions can change drastically. For more information, visit [OSHA: Emergency Preparedness and Response](#).

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.

## Commissioner's Corner

**Mike Moran**, DEP's Acting Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Customer Services, is a guest commentator this week.

Earlier today, DEP announced the launch of a new app that allows customers to manage their "My DEP Account" on Apple and Android mobile devices. With the new My DEP Account App, DEP's 836,000 customers can securely view and pay bills online, monitor water consumption, and receive leak notifications and new bill alerts. The My DEP Account app is compatible with iOS 6.0 or later (iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch) as well as Android 2.3 or later and can be downloaded for free from the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

As part of DEP's commitment to providing the highest quality customer service, we have introduced a number of initiatives since 2011. These include completion of a network of Automated Meter Reading devices to ensure that bills are based on actual consumption and that allow customers to access data about their water use in near real time; a leak detection system that has already saved customers more than \$55 million; the Water Debt Assistance Program, which helps property owners at risk of foreclosure manage their water and sewer debt; and the replacement of thousands of large meters on industry-recommended cycles.

Earlier this year, DEP also adopted a number of new customer service improvements that were approved



by the New York City Water Board in May, including freezing the minimum charge for customers who use less than 100 gallons of water each day at last year's rate. As a result, roughly 25 percent of single family homes—many of them owned by seniors—saw no water rate increase this year.

In addition, the City will fund a Home Water Assistance Program to assist low-income homeowners. DEP will partner with the NYC Human Resources Administration, which administers the Federal Home Energy Assistance Program, to identify homeowners who would be eligible to receive an annual credit on their water bills. DEP is also extending leak forgiveness to customers who experience a leak on maintainable fixtures, such as toilets and faucets to encourage them to make timely repairs. Finally, DEP is extending the deadline for customers to file an appeal with the water board from 30 days to 60 days, and the department will exclude any customer from the lien sale who has a pending appeal on the date the 90-day list is published.

Providing the highest quality service to its customers is one of the goals outlined in Strategy 2011-2014, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation.

I would like to extend my thanks to the nearly 500 women and men in the Bureau of Customer Services who work tirelessly to make sure that every one of DEP's customers is our top priority.





## Focus on the Field



When **Kevin Booker** tells people that he tests New York City's drinking water for a living, he is often asked the same question: "Is the water good?" The answer seems as simple as "Yes. Very good."

But, the work behind that simple answer is complicated. Booker, who supervises the wet chemistry lab at DEP's headquarters in Queens, is among dozens of scientists and field staff that gather and test water samples 365 days a year to ensure the water is of high quality and safe for consumption.

Booker started at DEP as an associate chemist in 2006. He now supervises seven analysts who test the city's water daily from nearly 1,000 sampling stations throughout the five boroughs. The lab receives and tests 80-100 samples every day, including weekends and holidays.

The tests performed by Booker's group are among the most sensitive. They require analysts to add the right amount of chemicals to the water and produce the appropriate reactions to get accurate readings. Samples tested by his group also have a shelf life—the water often must be tested within a day or two to ensure accurate results.

Tests are performed daily for some of the most baseline qualities of water, such as color, pH, turbidity, conductivity and fluoride levels. More complicated tests for nitrates, sulfates, and other parameters are done once a month. Every test allows DEP to constantly examine the chemistry of New York City's drinking water and quickly respond to any unusual results.

"What we do is extremely important because every day we ensure

that the quality of drinking water in every neighborhood is of the highest quality," Booker said. "In addition, if something were to happen, we'd know about it immediately and could make the appropriate adjustments."

After the samples are tested, Booker also examines the results to guarantee that all samples were analyzed, that they were tested according to acceptable procedures, and that quality control checks were performed to ensure the accuracy of the results. This is especially important because the data are eventually reported to the city's regulators.

"Kevin's broad expertise and calm judgment has contributed greatly to his success here at DEP," Chief of Distribution Water Quality Operations **Salome Freud** said. "Kevin has been a positive and encouraging member of the wet chemistry section since he began with us in 2006 and has contributed greatly to improved operations and efficiency."

Booker earned his bachelor's degree in biology from SUNY Stony Brook. He worked for two laboratories on Long Island, performing environmental analyses on water, wastewater and soil samples, before joining DEP. Booker lives in Queens with his wife and their two children. He is very active in his church, at which he teaches Bible study classes. Booker and his church were also instrumental in helping their neighbors recover from Hurricane Sandy. They arranged to have several truckloads of clothing, food, furniture and other items delivered to those who lost their homes, including some of his DEP colleagues.

## Press Box



**HOW NEW YORK CITY GETS ITS WATER: FROM RESERVOIR TO TAP:** "Most New Yorkers go about their days using water to bathe, make coffee, wash their hands or flush the toilet without much thought to where it originates. But behind each drop of water is a journey that can begin up to 125 miles away in upstate New York."

Read the full AM New York story [here](#).

## September Blood Drive

The Greater New York Blood Program is experiencing a serious shortage due to a fall-off in donations. To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting blood drives at the below locations and times.

Lefrak: 3rd Floor Cafeteria, 9/10 and 9/11, 7:45am to 1:30pm; Downsville Region Area: Downsville Fire Hall, 9/10, 9:00am to 2:00pm; Ken-sico/Highland Regions - Sutton Park Area: Sutton Park-2nd Floor, 9/11, 8:30am to 2:30pm; Kingston/Catskill Area: 51 Albany Avenue, 9/15, 1:00pm to 6:00pm; Grahamsville Region Area: Grahamsville Parking Lot, 9/24, 10:00am to 3:00pm.

## Welcome Aboard



Yesterday, 12 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Dwayne Collins, MD M. Hasan, Hildegaard Link, Wayne Parkinson** and **Sarin Patel** with BWSO; **Girgis Henin, Djamilya Ibragimova, Marie Meshreki** and **Farhana Rezwana** with BWT; **Renee M. Alfieri** (not pictured) and **Cyril Kudiabor** with Executive; and **Golam Sobhan** with FMC.

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