



**Environmental
Protection**

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Cas Holloway, Commissioner

WEEKLY

PIPELINE

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Meter Testers Calibrate Customer Satisfaction

Tucked directly beneath the Manhattan Bridge and hidden in a maze of one way cobblestone streets in downtown Brooklyn sits an unassuming building, far from the Lefrak City offices. Although it lacks the visibility of many DEP locations, its staff are responsible for performing a vital function; ensuring that the City's water meters are working properly and accurately. Headed by Associate Water Use Inspector-Manager **William Calbert**, the Meter Test Facility carries out a range of critical services that benefit both DEP and its customers. Mr. Calbert and his staff are responsible for providing field support to the borough office inspectors, ensuring the upkeep and accuracy of water meters, managing water meter inventory, and performing meter accuracy tests of large meters in the field to monitor accuracy and help target replacement efforts.



While meter testing takes place on site, much of the facility's work is done in the field and on the fly in response to broken meters, burst pipes, and other customer complaints. There are two types of field staff at the Meter Test Facility; plumbers and inspectors. The inspectors typically repair and replace meters ranging in size from 5/8 of an inch to two inches. Plumbers perform more

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Spotlight on Safety

Fire Prevention Week

During National Fire Prevention Week, October 3 - 9, 2010, attention is focused on promoting fire safety and prevention; however we should practice fire safety all year long.

The primary goal of fire safety efforts is to protect building occupants from injury and to prevent loss of life.

• A fire must have three things to ignite and maintain combustion:

- Fuel
- Heat
- Oxygen

• The basic strategy of fire prevention is to control or isolate sources of fuel and heat in order to prevent combustion.

If all three are not present in sufficient quantities a fire will not ignite or a fire will not be able to sustain combustion

OSHA requires employers to have a fire safety plan that covers workplace fire hazards and contains procedures and responsibilities for preventing fires.

Know and follow DEP's fire safety plan (a copy is available for review on the 11th floor at the Facilities Management office).

Practice good housekeeping to keep fuels away from heat and ignition sources. For more information on fire safety, click here [🔗](#).

Commissioner's Corner

A dry summer has given way to a wet and windy fall, conditions that put all DEP operations into overdrive. In the watershed, BWS grapples with turbidity; on city streets, BWSO crews unclog catch-basins, clear highway flooding, and respond to sewer back-ups; and at our 14 sewage treatment plants, BWT manages stormwater flow that on some days has been many multiples of the design capacity of our plants. From the torrential rains that blew through the city on August 22, to the tornados that touched down two weeks ago, to the three inches of rain that fell last Thursday, it's been a very challenging six weeks. And we are not alone. OEM, the Parks Department, and Sanitation are still spearheading the tornado clean-up, which felled trees from Park Slope to Forest Hills. DEP—led by BWSO's Emergency Operations Unit Manager **Paul Vilella**—is supporting that effort with dump trucks and roll-off container trucks to help cart away trees. Thanks to them, and everyone for performing so well in response to the many challenges mother nature has thrown at us.

Though our 14 wastewater treatment plants work hard when it rains (thanks in no small part to the hard work of plant superintendents like Coney Island Superintendent **Ojpal Auluck** and his staff), certain storms exceed the system's capacity, resulting in combined sewer overflows (CSO) [🔗](#). Storms like the one last week underscore the importance of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan [🔗](#), which **Mayor Bloomberg** announced last week, with the support of several environmental stakeholders. The plan will improve water quality in New York Harbor and protect our vital infrastructure through a network of green investments that will capture stormwater where it falls—so it never enters the sewer system. The Mayor summed up best why we are asking State DEC to endorse the plan: "Green infrastructure is the best, most cost-effective strategy for reaching a goal that we set in our PlaNYC agenda: Opening 90 percent of the City's



waterways for boating, fishing, and other forms of recreation by the year 2030."

On Thursday, I participated on a panel at the fifth annual State of the Construction Industry, moderated by New York Building Congress President **Richard Anderson**. With \$11 billion in active construction, DEP is a major engine driving the industry right now—generating roughly 5,000 jobs for each of the next four years. With a capital plan of this magnitude, strong project controls are critical to ensure that New Yorkers are getting the best price for their investment. I discussed some of the initiatives that DC for Engineering, Design & Construction **Kathryn Mallon** is taking to manage capital projects more effectively, including the new Projects Control Division headed by **Chris Jenkins** that will help us to reduce project costs and improve on-time delivery.

For soccer fans out there, while the next World Cup is four years away, DEP is already supporting the United States' quest for soccer glory. Today, I joined Time Warner Cable, FOX Networks, the New York Red Bulls, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, local elected officials and dozens of smiling kids to unveil a new community soccer field located at the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant. DEP provided the land to FC Harlem, a not-for-profit organization that teaches soccer to local youth, and Time Warner Cable paid to transform the space from an empty lot to a first-class soccer field. It's a great way to give back to the community—and just in time to kick-off the new soccer season!

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



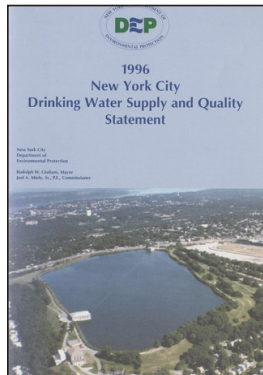
When **William Calbert** (better known as “Cal”) joined DEP in 1980 as a Water Meter Reader, he had no idea it would lead to a 30 year career spanning nine Commissioners and four Mayors. Steadily working his way through the ranks, Cal became a Water Use Inspector in 1983 before moving to Queens to work in a supervisory role as Assistant Chief Inspector in the Queens Borough Office. In 1993, he was promoted to Chief Inspector at the Brooklyn Borough Office, where he managed a staff of 54 Water Use Inspectors. Since 1997, he has served as Manager of the Meter Testing Facility, a critical DEP division that is responsible for ensuring the quality and accuracy of all water meters in New York City. Working from his office underneath

the Manhattan Bridge, Cal is responsible for running the water meter testing program, supervising a staff of plumbers and inspectors, and working with vendors to maintain an adequate inventory of water meters.

Cal describes his role as “quality assurance for water customers” and has greatly enjoyed the variety of challenges his job presents on a daily basis. If a pipe breaks or other critical plumbing problems arise while a DEP inspector is performing their work, Cal and his plumbers at the Meter Test Facility are there to ensure that repairs are performed and the customer’s water keeps flowing. Cal noted that these “split second judgment calls in the field” represent some of the quality customer service that he and his staff are most proud of providing. After 30 years of devoted service to DEP, Cal plans to retire at the end of December. As an avid sports fan, he’s hoping to spend more time watching his favorite New York teams; the Yankees and Jets, as well as learning to play tennis and spending more time with his five year old granddaughter.

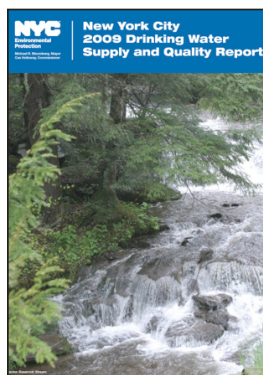
Then:

In 1997, DEP issued the 1996 New York City Drinking Water Supply and Quality Statement, the first report for New York City required by the New York State Public Health Law which mandated that DEP produce an annual water supply statement on the source of their drinking water and the levels of contaminants found in the drinking water. This first report was printed double sided on a 17" x 48" sheet, which was folded in four to produce a pamphlet 4 ¼" x 12".



Now:

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 1996 there were new federal requirements for utilities that expanded the existing State requirements related to the annual statement referred to as a “consumer confidence report,” which took effect in 1998, and required additional information, such as on the source of drinking water, contaminants, and health effects. DEP has been making changes to the Drinking Water Supply and Quality Statement. It is produced in color, and in a larger size as an 8 ½" x 11" booklet. These annual reports provide consumers with detailed information about the water supply, and allow DEP to highlight all the hard work that goes in to maintaining a high quality water supply that delivers 1 billion gallons of water to over 9 million people daily.



Kudos Corner

Photo by DEP Police Detective **Erik Johnson** of Chief **Peter Fusco** and Officer **Tim Sauveur** teaming up with the Catskill Watershed Corporation to collect and properly dispose of pharmaceuticals from nursing homes before they are improperly discharged and potentially impact NYC’s upstate reservoirs.



Press Box

“While New York is by no means the first city to develop green infrastructure, the scale and ambition of this effort is impressive. The Bloomberg administration has again demonstrated its ability to marry sound business and environmental principles. They have once again placed themselves at the forefront of the emerging field of sustainability management. **Commissioner Cas Holloway** and his team at the Department of Environmental Protection should be applauded for this extensive and cost efficient plan.” – **Steven Cohen**, Executive Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University; October 4, 2010

(Meter Testers Calibrate Customer Satisfaction... continued)

complex or more specialized work than inspectors and generally repair and replace meters ranging from two to six inches in size. Both inspectors and plumbers must receive confined space training and are often required to enter crawl spaces and other dangerous situations in order to repair and replace meters. Ventilation equipment is needed to ensure safety during these situations and fresh air must often be pumped into crawl spaces to eliminate the risk posed by toxic gases. In addition, plumbers and inspectors are often required to be on call 24/7 in case of an emergency situation and may be in the middle of dinner when they are called away to respond to an incident.

Despite the often dangerous and unpredictable nature of their job, the plumbers and inspectors at the Meter Test Facility are truly passionate about their work and especially enjoy being able to provide quality services

to a frustrated customer. **Robert Graziano**, a Master Plumber who has been working with DEP for over 20 years seems to have a bottomless knowledge of the plumbing business. His favorite part of the job is taking care of peoples’ problems and just making them happy. He says “we’re there for three hours, and in those three hours we change their life.” One grateful customer even sent a letter to Mayor Bloomberg, writing that “it must be great to know you have these people working for you!” Plumbing Supervisor **Robert Morrison** and Plumber’s Helper **Alex Dionne** say that they often give out their phone numbers when they’re in the field, so that a customer can get a quick answer to any question they may have. Whether it’s corroding pipes in the Bronx or a burst meter in Staten Island, the plumbers and inspectors at the Meter Test Facility are ready for the job.

Milestones

Best wishes to **Richard Rossbach**, BWSO-Reservoir Operations, and his fiancée **Valerie Ruocco** on their upcoming wedding, 10/10/10, at the Glen Island Harbour Club in New Rochelle, NY.

DEP’s Mission Statement is now online. Read it here.

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.