

Commissioner's Corner



Earlier today, I joined DEP staff, members of the Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee, and several special guests who play a role in the health of our harbor to celebrate the commissioning of three new, state-of-the-art cargo vessels that will play a critical role in the wastewater treatment process and help to protect New York City's waterways for decades to come. The three new ships are equipped with the latest marine technology, have a greater car-

go capacity and more versatility than the older models, including a shallower draft that allows them to navigate under the Pulaski Bridge and into Whale Creek, where they can dock directly adjacent to the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. The new ships also burn ultra-low sulfur diesel and meet stringent EPA Tier II emissions standards. In addition, because the ships have a greater cargo capacity, they can make fewer trips and burn less

fuel, which will help to reduce greenhouse gases.

The versatility of the new sludge vessels allowed DEP to dismantle an 800,000 gallon storage tank along the shore of the East River in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. That land will be used to develop new affordable housing and expand Newtown Barge Park. Construction of the three ships, the *Hunt's Point*, the *Port Richmond* and the *Rockaway*, was financed, in part, through a \$53 million federal stimulus grant provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

Sludge is the residual organic material that is removed from wastewater. First, raw sludge is placed in an oxygen-free environment and is heated to at least 95 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 to 20 days. This stimulates the growth of anaerobic bacteria, which consume the organic material in the sludge. The digestion process stabilizes the thickened sludge by converting much of the material into water, carbon dioxide and biogas. The "digested" sludge is then transported by sludge vessels to a dewatering facility where it is put through centrifuges, which remove much of the remaining water.

Sludge vessels have been a part of the City's wastewater



treatment system since the late 1930s and the Federal Work Projects Administration funded the first three motorized sludge vessels. Today, DEP operates a fleet of sludge vessels that transport nearly 1.2 billion gallons of material each year. The three new ships join the *North River*, which went into service in 1974, and the *Red Hook*, which went into service in 2008. The *Newtown Creek*, which went into service in 1967, was recently retired and will be sold at auction.

In 2009, DEP was awarded one of the largest ARRA grants in the country and Bollinger Marine Fabricators in Amelia, Louisiana was awarded a contract to build the new sludge vessels. Over the last few months, as each ship was completed and passed

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Spotlight on Safety

Working in Extreme Cold Weather

Extremely cold weather can expose workers to hypothermia and frostbite. Early symptoms of hypothermia can include shivering, fatigue and confusion. Signs that someone may be experiencing frostbite include numbness and tingling. It is a good idea to work in pairs when conditions are extremely cold, so that workers can monitor each other's condition, in addition to their own. If you suspect someone is suffering from either of these conditions, alert a supervisor, call for emergency

help and move the victim into a warm room.

To protect yourself while working in extremely cold weather, follow these guidelines:

- wear layers of loose clothing
- ensure the ears, face, hands and feet are properly covered
- wear waterproof and insulated boots

For more information, visit DEP's [Exposure to Extreme Heat and Cold Guidance](#).

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.



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!

Robyn L. Mery, **Gina N. Shcherbenko** and **Kevin Wilbur** (not pictured) with BWS; **Anne M. Gallo**, **Michael Kim** and **Jason L. Parker** with BEDC; **William P. Bennett** and **Lauren Hamid-Shapiro** with BWSO; **Andres F. Garcia** with Sustainability; **Thomas Hand** with CFO/FMC; **Jonathan McGrath** with Executive and **Komal Saini** with BWT.

Press Box



"City government often looks small. Petty, even. The parking ticket. The real estate tax bill. Sanitary inspection grades. Window-guard surveys. The fruitless call to 311 at 2 a.m. to complain about jackhammers outside. From here, however, government doesn't look petty at all—here being the bottom of a 350-foot-deep, 35-foot-diameter shaft through a 460-million-year-old shale formation in Orange County, 70 miles north of City Hall." — [NY Times](#)

Holiday Food Drive

The 2014 Holiday Food Drive has been a great success. Thank you for all your generous donations, which will help make a happier holiday season for our less fortunate neighbors. Thank you also to all the bureau food drive liaisons for their hard work. To see photos of the collections at the various locations [click here](#).

DEP will begin its annual [Coat Drive](#) at Lefrak this week. Please consider donating your gently used coats. A collection bin is now in the lobby of the low-rise building. We will begin collecting for the holiday toy drive next week. Please check the newsletter for specific information for your location.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Kudos Corner



Moein Karim is DEP's Process Engineer at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, the largest such facility in New York City. Over the last decade, he has overseen process management operations at the plant while it underwent a comprehensive, \$5 billion upgrade. Karim has also played a significant role in the effort to reduce energy consumption at the plant and he was recently recognized by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) as an "Energy Champion." DCAS works to improve the energy efficiency of municipal facilities and, as DEP constitutes 12 percent of the total energy use among City facilities,

conservation efforts at DEP can help to reduce overall energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Karim attained the greatest energy reductions through modifications to the operation of the plant's air blowers. This included adjustments to the 120 motorized process air valves, which reduced header pressure and the energy consumption of the blowers. He also changed certain operating procedures to reduce electrical loads during peak demand periods. Karim's work has resulted in a 1 megawatt reduction in electrical demand at Newtown Creek, enough electricity to power more than 1,000 homes.

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its sea trials, they sailed from Louisiana, around the tip of Florida and up the east coast to New York City. The vessels then went through a post-delivery inspection and adjustments at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

The sludge vessels operate seven days a week, and each has a six person crew, including a captain, chief engineer, assistant engineer, mate and two mariners. The new ships are 290 feet long, 70 feet wide and have the capacity to transport 140,000 cubic feet of sludge, or roughly 1 million gallons. The new ships weigh 2,872 tons

and are designed to travel at 10 knots, or approximately 11.5 miles per hour. On a typical week, each vessel makes 14 round trips and visits eight wastewater treatment plants.

I would like to extend our thanks to a few of our fellow employees who played a critical role in the design, construction management and testing of the new vessels, including BWT's **Jim Aird**, **Gordon Arnold**, **Scott Belfield** and **Kevin Byrnes**, and BEDC's **Robert D'Attila**, **Eric Lehan** and **Igor Sagalovich**. To see photos of the new ships [click here](#).

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