

GIS Data Gives DEP Good Information Soon

DEP is on the forefront of technology to streamline operations and to create a cost-effective agency that can improve customer services. Over a year ago, DEP's Office of Information Technology started consolidating and centralizing the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) used by several bureaus in the agency.

GIS is the merging of cartography, statistical analysis, and database technology of any information system that integrates, stores, edits, analyzes, shares, and displays geographic information that can be used by all the departments. Sharing a centralized data repository that conforms to information technology standards can produce opportunities to reduce software maintenance costs, improve customer service, assist in regulatory compliance, create operational efficiencies and improve asset management.

The new centralized GIS data approach enables DEP to create



and maintain a single authoritative source of data for critical assets and other spatial information (data that can be mapped). Spatial data is often accessed, manipulated or analyzed through Geographic Information Systems. This single system eliminates redundant and conflicting data sources that may exist around the agency, and engages all appropriate parties across departmental boundaries in keeping the single authoritative source of data up to date. This

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

Electric Shock Hazard

Stay current on electrical safety

Follow precautions when working around electricity and electrical equipment.

Qualified workers: One who has received training in and has demonstrated skills and knowledge in the construction and operation of electric equipment and installations and the hazards involved.


- Must be authorized to implement lockout/tagout and other safety procedures.
- Are familiar with proper use of special precautionary techniques, PPE, insulating and shielding materials, and insulated tools.

Unqualified worker: An employee not specifically trained to perform electrical work.

- May not work around live electrical parts.
- Need to know electricity-related safety practices.
- Must obey all warning signs and tags, and stay out of hazardous areas.

Basic rules for electrical safety:

- Use insulated tools and PPE when working around electricity.
- Obey minimum distance requirements for overhead power lines (at least 10 feet away for lower voltages).

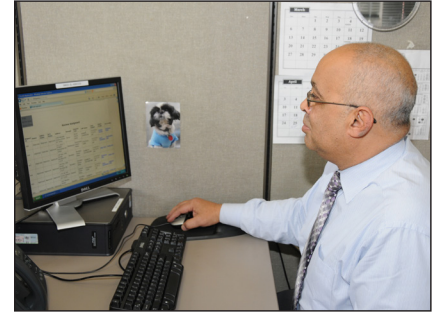
Don't touch electric tools, equipment, or cords that are wet, or with wet hands. For the full article, [click here](#) 

Commissioner's Corner

We are off to a strong start in our efforts to improve and transform customer service at DEP. Fast on the heels of the Leak Notification Program we announced with **Mayor Bloomberg** last week, BWSO launched online permitting for sewer repairs and replacements. In addition to the 835,000 customers who pay the water bills, we work closely with plumbers, engineers, developers, and contractors,

all of whom rely on us for approvals and paperwork so that they can continue to do their work and keep our city growing. You might not realize it, but DEP issues an astounding 76,000 total permits, certifications and registrations each year, including for plumbing, boilers, asbestos work and demolition—and that includes 16,000 for plumbing work on private property. In the past, licensed master plumbers would have to visit at least one DEP facility in person, or pay someone to do it for them, to get a permit for water or sewer line repairs or replacements on private property, which account for roughly 6,000 of the plumbing permits we issue each year. Spending unnecessary time and money waiting for a permit means less time that businesses can spend getting the job done; and that means less time spent building and improving the city. So last week, Deputy Mayor **Goldsmith** and I launched a new online tool that allows plumbers to apply for and receive these types of permits online. Our oversight will be the same, but using computer technology allows us to eliminate unnecessary and burdensome steps that serve no real purpose anymore. Simplifying these interactions and making them as seamless as possible is of the utmost importance, and this announcement was a significant step in that direction. **Terence O'Brien**, Deputy Director of The Plumbing Foundation City of New York, called the plan "forward-thinking" and noted that "utilizing technology benefits both the DEP and all the New York City licensed master plumbers."

Protecting our upstate reservoirs in clearly a team effort, as evidenced by a recent meeting we had with one of the most prominent environmen-



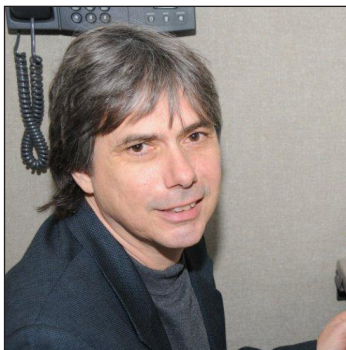
tal organizations in New York. Last Tuesday, Deputy Commissioner of Police and Security **Kevin McBride**, Assistant Commissioner of BWS **David Warne** and DEP Police Chief **Peter Fusco** met with the Hudson Riverkeeper Executive Director **Paul Gallay** and **Katherine Hudson**, the newly appointed New York City Watershed Program Director. DEP Police ensure that our reservoirs remain safe from any potential harm, but having more eyes and ears on the ground and in the community is essential. Over the years, DEP has forged a strong working relationship with Riverkeeper. To strengthen this cooperation, we agreed to quarterly meetings in order to foster better understanding of our missions, share information and work towards common goals; and Riverkeeper offered to help refer environmental enforcement issues to us that necessitate additional investigation. We look forward to this continuing partnership.

Last week, I spoke at the Celebrating Ashokan Connections reception. Ashokan is an education group, based out of the Ashokan Center, that runs outdoor/environmental education and living history programs for school groups since 1967. More than 5,000 children attend these programs each year, including students from NYC who for the first time get to see what a reservoir system looks like firsthand. These educational programs are vital—connecting upstate and downstate teachers so that they understand our mutual responsibility in protecting the watershed, and helping students understand how a watershed works from their own classrooms. At the reception, we were all treated to music from **Jay Ungar** and **Molly Mason**, who not only run Ashokan, but also play American acoustic tunes.

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



The adage “a picture is worth 1,000 words” aptly describes **Gary Leunis’** work developing geographic information systems (GIS) at DEP. As the GIS Administrator, Gary values GIS for “taking information from many sources, such as reports, and transforming it into an image.” GIS helps you answer questions and solve problems by looking at data in a way that is quickly understood and easily shared. GIS allows users to view, understand, question, interpret, and visualize data in many ways that reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the form of maps, globes, reports, and charts. If you can imagine using Google Earth, or using your GPS while traveling in your ve-

hicle to a new destination, then you have benefitted from GIS.

At DEP its uses are many. There is a GIS that contains maps showing shut-off valves throughout the city, and another showing electricity use by facility—represented by circles of varying sizes, with larger circles representing varying amounts used. Or if you are using a residential water consumption map, color coded parcels each signify levels of residential water consumption.

Gary has worked at DEP for more than 20 years. Previously he worked for five years at the Queens Borough President’s Office Topographical Bureau. One challenging component of Gary’s work is balancing security concerns while sharing information with other agencies. For Gary, using his creativity to solve technical problems is the most interesting area of his work.

Gary enjoys the outdoors including bicycling and traveling with his wife **Joanne**. Recent adventures include trips to Greece, Italy, England, Egypt and the Grand Canyon. It wouldn’t be a surprise to find out he uses GIS for his travels, as much as he does at his job.

Milestones

Congratulations to **Richard Quick**, BWSO, on completing 30 years of service.

Congratulations to **Matthew Ruderman**, BLA, and his wife **Lori Schneider** on the birth of their son **Felix** on January 27, 2011.

Japan Disaster Relief

Visit the Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC to learn how you can aid in the Japan disaster relief effort .

Idea Market: Have Coffee with Deputy Mayor Goldsmith



Earlier this year Deputy Mayor Goldsmith launched NYC Simplicity Idea Market, an innovative way to capture the ideas of city employees who know New York City best to make this city run better.

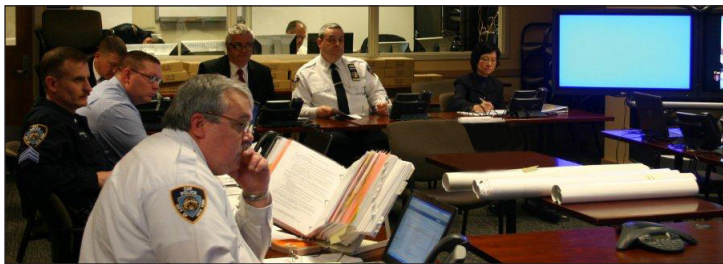
We have already seen great ideas about how to be more effective and efficient. Based on your feedback we’ve cleaned up the look of the site and made it easier to use.

This month’s challenge question is “How can we make NYC paper-free?” While double-sided printing is good, city employees still use 185,000 cases of paper a year, enough to circle Central Park eight times or build a tower 130 times taller than the Empire State Building. At DEP we have already begun to reduce the amount of paper we use by offering paperless billing and online permits for plumbers doing water and sewer repairs. But there is so much more to do.

For this challenge, we’ve even sweetened the deal. The person who posts this month’s winning idea will have coffee at City Hall with Deputy Mayor Stephen Goldsmith.

So don’t wait. Start posting your ideas today. Visit www.nyc.gov/ideamarket to register or sign in.

Kodak Moment



On Thursday, March 10, DEP’s Bureau of Police and Security held an internal, teleconferenced “Securing the Cities” (STC) tabletop exercise in the Emergency Operations Center at the DEP Police Headquarters Precinct in Eastview and the Police Academy in Kingston. STC is a federally funded program which is designed to protect New York City and the surrounding communities, including the watershed and DEP infrastructure from a radiological or nuclear attack. This drill progressed from a simple general notification of a minor radiological incident, to a specific threat directed towards a DEP facility. This tabletop exercise will be followed up by a functional drill and ultimately a major drill in the future.

(GIS Data Gives DEP Good Information Soon... continued)

data source is then shared across departments and job roles through a variety of applications, such as desktop software, smart phones and mobile applications for field users, and web based applications and dashboards for managers and directors. This allows DEP to deploy applications, ensuring that anyone in the organization is able to interact with it in a way that is most appropriate to their role in the agency. “This approach reduces our overall cost of data maintenance and ensures that both operational and managerial decision making is based on the same information and understanding,” said **Cecil McMaster**, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Information Technology.

For instance, the recently announced Green Infrastructure Plan found a good partner in GIS to promote and develop programs that can be helpful to New York City communities. In developing the project, the Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis (BEPA) relied on the cost-benefit and GIS analysis on costs and performance of watershed level opportunities. BEPA used GIS to develop statistical models to analyze current and future water demands. BEPA is also responsible for tracking population, demographics, zoning, land

use and development trends in GIS to understand the implications of growth on DEP’s system. The Bureau of Water Supply uses GIS as part of its Land Acquisition Program. The GIS allows them to analyze and decide which parcels DEP needs to acquire using criteria that includes locations and ownership possibilities among other things.

This innovative technology allows DEP to publish external services and web applications. For example, the department can dynamically share information with other agencies within the city, such as DEP water and sewer infrastructure in the field. DEP has also partnered with the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications to develop a Webmap, which will allow the public to enter their own Green Infrastructure projects through a form linked to GIS. This will allow stakeholders to participate in helping DEP map and track new Green Infrastructure projects.

Increasingly, water utilities around the nation are choosing to share some of their GIS data directly with customers through web based applications. Ultimately GIS enables us to communicate more effectively with other government agencies and with our customers.

Event Calendar

DEP Blood Drive

Lefrak, 6th floor training room: 3/15-3/17, 8am to 1:30pm.

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