

The HEAT Goes On

Last week, summer had not even officially started and it already felt like 100 degrees. That kind of heat brings with it fans, cold drinks and illegally opened hydrants.

For years, DEP has been trying various outreach methods to address illegally opened fire hydrants throughout New York City. Some solutions, such as hydrant locking devices, have demonstrated short-term success. However, over time people trying to beat the heat have found a way to “beat” the system.

Although some may consider cooling off under the spray of a fire hydrant a rite of summer, an illegally opened fire hydrant is both dangerous and wasteful. In one hour, a gushing fire hydrant can waste nearly 60,000 gallons of water. Illegally opened hy-



drants also lower water pressure needed for fighting fires as well as for residential and commercial use. The high-pressure rushing water also poses a danger to children who can be pushed into the street.

To address this issue, DEP developed and implemented the HEAT (Hydrant Education Action Team) program in 2007. HEAT is an education and outreach pro-

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

National Safety Month: Week 4 - Driving Safety

According to United States Census Bureau statistics, in 2009 there were 10.8 million motor vehicle accidents, down from the peak of 18.3 million in 2002. There were also more than 30,000 accident deaths across the US, with 1,156 in New York State alone. Nationally, 32% of motor vehicle accident fatalities involve a driver impaired by alcohol. The National Safety Council estimates that almost 25% of crashes involve cell phone use while driving.

Sobering statistics, yet they are reminders of the importance of driving safely. Driving is one of today's most dangerous activities.

It is useful to remember the following safety tips when driving:

- Always wear a seat belt—every trip, every time
- Refrain from using a cell phone
- Put the cell phone on silent or in the glove compartment to avoid temptation
- Safely pull over and put the vehicle in park to take or make a call
- Never drive while impaired
- Keep your emotions in check, and don't take frustrations out on other drivers

Take these steps to keep yourself and others safe on the road.

Please visit Census.gov and NSC.org for more information.

Commissioner's Corner

In performing our daily operations, DEP is using new tools to maintain our existing infrastructure in addition to building for the future. Last Wednesday, I joined Deputy Mayor **Cas Holloway** and Deputy Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza** to announce a project



that demonstrates the agency's leadership. Using sonar technology, in 2010 DEP began a survey of New York City's 136 miles of interceptor sewers and found that 19% of their length required cleaning. Over the last two years, DEP cleaned 26 miles of interceptors and removed enough debris to fill three Olympic-sized swimming pools—nearly 29 million pounds of material. These interceptors now provide about 1.9 million gallons of extra capacity during storms, reducing the discharge of untreated wastewater into our waterways by nearly 100 million gallons a year. The interceptors were cleaned using Vactor trucks with 30-foot hoses, that can each remove 18 cubic yards of debris at a time. Some of the material removed included vehicle parts, and even large rocks and roadway pieces. This cleaning marks the first phase of an ongoing program to ensure that our sewer system operates at peak efficiency. I thank **Robert LaGrotta, William LeClair, Jerry Volgende, Mike McGregor, Ronald Lochan, Chris Laudando, Jesse Goldin, Linus Mensah, Frank Soviero, and Paul Kiskorna** for their tremendous work—thanks to their diligence, this project was completed two months ahead of schedule.

As the largest municipal utility in the country, DEP can drive the market to deliver technology that will improve our work. Last week I spoke at the Citi Water and Renewables Conference, addressing investors and other leaders in the global water industry on DEP's daily efforts to supply, deliver, and treat more than one billion gallons of water daily in a responsible and sustainable way. Many of our recent initiatives can be instructive for other systems, such as invest-

ing in innovative technologies like green infrastructure to clean our waterways, and installing automated meter readers to accurately and efficiently measure customer consumption. DEP is also completing projects to replace or rehabilitate power and heat generation equipment at wastewater treatment plants, integrating telemetry and instrumentation, and installing more energy efficient centrifuges that can decrease in-city greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 304,000 metric tons per year. Many of the most promising efficiency solutions include operational improvements such as more energy efficient lighting, heating, ventilation, and cooling systems. For example, in 2011 we completed modifications to five of the nine blowers at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, enhancing energy efficiency and reliability. By investing in technology to optimize our operations, DEP is becoming more efficient and sustainable while also helping to improve the environment, and I challenged the industry to provide us with new tools to better achieve our goals.

Technology allows BWS staff to keep a constant close eye on reservoir system levels to plan for contingencies, but our water supply system is still reliant on natural cycles. Earlier this year there was some concern that the relatively dry winter weather could lead to drought conditions in the city water supply this summer. I am pleased to report that DEP's current reservoir levels are at more than 96% capacity, roughly average levels for this time of year. That's welcome news for all nine million New York residents who rely on us to provide water every day.

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



Jeff Jay is the Acting District Supervisor for the Manhattan Water Maintenance Yard. Although he now spends a large portion of his work day in an office, he spent the first 21 of his 24 years at DEP in the field, but has always worked for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO). He started with DEP as a construction laborer, and later became a water maintenance field supervisor, before taking on his latest challenge as a district supervisor. Even in his office duties, Jay is easier to reach by cell phone than at his desk; being out in the field is not easy to let go of.

Jay's office work starts earlier than most; some of his busiest hours are between 6:30 and 8:00 am. He prioritizes calls from

New Yorkers that have reported water or sewer problems to 311. These calls can range from water main breaks and cellar leaks, to illegally opened fire hydrants, or a routine valve survey. "Day to day you never know what to expect!" says Jay about the Water Maintenance Yard jobs. With the summer heat already here, Jay predicts that there will be many open hydrant calls coming up this season.

The Manhattan yard is responsible for all the water maintenance in the borough. If there is a job that requires special attention or there is a major problem, Jay will still go into the field himself to help out. Whether dealing with leaks in the subway underground, hydrants spewing water into the air, or even organizing reports at his desk, Jay "is always willing to go the extra step and make sure everything is done correctly, especially in emergency situations" says **Anthony Marchese** his BWSO supervisor.

When he is not spending time keeping the New York City water system flowing smoothly, Jay enjoys spending time with his family, especially going to his three sons' sports games.

Beyond New York



The Toilet Seat Museum

Barney Smith's Toilet Seat Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas is in the garage behind his home. Smith is in his 90s and has collected more than 1,000 toilet seats. Each toilet seat lid has been made into a work of art using a variety of media such as paint, engraving, photos, and various other pieces of memorabilia. The subjects of

his artwork cover historical events ranging from the fall of the Berlin Wall to Operation Desert Storm. Smith also captures personal moments in his life including vacations and anniversaries, as well as sporting events like Super Bowls and the Olympic games.

DEP BLOOD DRIVE TOTALS: DEP employees donated a total of 581 pints of blood during the June blood drive. Thank you to all of the donors and staff who worked on this for another successful drive.

Ask Carter

askcarter@dep.nyc.gov 

Q. How many people have access permits to DEP reservoirs?

A. We currently have 118,821 access permit holders, which are recreational permits. They allow the permit holders to enjoy our lands and reservoirs for hunting, hiking, or fishing, depending on the location. We also have 11,753 Boat Tags, which allow permit holders to boat, canoe, kayak and fish on our reservoirs.

(The HEAT Goes On... continued)



gram that deals with the issue of illegally opened fire hydrants on a community level. HEAT is made up of "street teams" staffed by young adults from the Department of Youth and Community Development's Summer Youth Employment Program. Each team comprises 10–12 members, who canvass communities with high incidences of open fire hydrants to inform community members about the problems associated with these illegal openings and how to obtain a legal spray cap from a local firehouse.

Over the years, the HEAT team members have become increas-

ingly creative in their approaches to educating their communities. These efforts have ranged from naming the program back in 2007—to working on a rap song for this year's program. **Sara Pecker**, Chief of Staff for the Bureau of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs, developed the HEAT pilot program based on a traffic safety program that she created at another government office. Pecker's experience with that program led her to believe that a similar approach could be effective in dealing with the issue of illegally opened fire hydrants. "No one has their finger on the pulse better than the people who live within the community, and many of the initiatives developed by the team members are geared to speak to their friends and neighbors," said Pecker.

The areas that have historically had a high prevalence of illegally opened fire hydrants include Bronx Community Boards 4 and 5, and Manhattan Community Board 12 (Washington Heights/Inwood). The problem in Manhattan CB 12 is compounded by its elevation—pumps are required to provide water to these neighborhoods. It is within these communities that DEP has and will focus the majority of its education and outreach efforts.

Kudos Corner

Donna Lamb of the Bureau of Customer Services has earned a Customer Service Professional Certificate issued by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services' Training Center and the Mayor's Office of Operations' Customer Service Group. To receive this certificate, Lamb completed three required courses and one elective. Through her hard work, Lamb has learned and applied skills from these courses, and she has shown a commitment to providing the best customer service to New York City's businesses, residents, and visitors.

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