

N'ICE Work If You Can Get It!



More than a dozen DEP water quality experts and police officers plunged into the near-freezing waters of Pepacton Reservoir last week to train for rescues on broken ice.

The daylong training underscored some of the more dangerous aspects of protecting New York City's water supply during extreme conditions in the watershed. DEP employees trained for potential scenarios that included falling through thin ice and rescuing an injured co-worker.

DEP police have long trained for such rescues, while water quality experts throughout the watershed began training for ice rescues three years ago. Field scientists generally do not take water samples from reservoirs when they are covered by ice. Instead, they rely on hundreds of tests from taps, streams and other key points.

But scientists could be asked to pull water samples from frozen reservoirs in extreme circumstances, including spills or

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Spotlight on Safety

Driving Down Injuries

During the fourth quarter of 2012 (October–December), there were no OSHA recordable incidents in BEDC's Bureau of Water Supply projects. This includes work done by 27 contractors—totaling 183,391 manhours—on projects such as the Catskill/Delaware Ultraviolet Disinfection Facility and Gilboa Dam.

BEDC attributes some of this success to the ongoing implementation of their Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Management Sys-

tem, which focuses on EHS performance and input from all levels of staff, from workers through senior management. Additionally, the rollout of BEDC's EHS Standards, the first of their risk control programs, ensures that personnel are always aware of the hazards and risks inherent in construction activities, and that through awareness, communication and planning they can help control, reduce, and eliminate risk. This impressive achievement shows that BEDC is on its way to becoming the safest Capital delivery program in the United States.

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



Across city government, agencies are harnessing technology to better serve New Yorkers. Last week, dozens of DEP employees were among those recognized at the 2012 *Excellence in Technology Awards Program*—an annual ceremony honoring the extraordinary contributions of New York City's employees in advancing government technology. **Kathryn Garcia** (Operations), **Jin Chang** (OIT), **Sara Pecker** (BCIA), and **William Morris** (OSP) were honored for their work on the city's 311 Integration Project. The initiative automates real-time information exchanged between 311's customer service management system and DEP's computer systems. This effort decreases the time it takes for DEP to receive customer inquiries and allows New Yorkers to report everything from noise complaints to broken catch basins on the internet at 311 Online. **Eduardo Hernandez** (OIT), **Tracy Burnett** (OIT), **Jose Garcia** (OIT), **Mohammad Zakir Hossain** (OIT), and Kathryn Garcia (Operations) were also honored for their work on the Data Element Exchange Program (DEEP), which streamlines data sharing across agencies and replaces outdated methods of transferring data, such as email and fax, and reduces customer wait times. In addition, **Alexander Koren** (OIT) and **Farhan Abdullah** (OIT) received the Excellence in IT Service & Support Award for their outstanding service at DEP. While these are just a few of the DEP employees who were honored this year, we can all be proud that dozens of our colleagues were recognized for advancing technology to

improve the way we serve the 8.4 million New Yorkers who count on us every day.

This Thursday, many DEP employees will take part in what has become another annual tradition—the Valentine's Day Tours at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. Newtown Creek Superintendent **Jim Pynn** will give more than 200 visitors an overview of the wastewater treatment process, followed by a visit to the 120-foot high observation deck located atop the digester eggs. Newtown Creek is the largest of the city's 14 treatment plants, and can treat more than 300 million gallons of wastewater a day. It went into operation in 1967, and is in the midst of a \$5 billion upgrade that will increase its wet weather capacity to more than 700 million gallons a day. In addition to being functional, the digester eggs at Newtown Creek have become an important part of New York City's iconic skyline. The plant has received two awards for excellence in design from the New York City Art Commission, and last year a replica of the digester eggs was placed on the Panorama of the City of New York at the Queens Museum of Art. The Panorama was built by Robert Moses for the 1964 World's Fair as a celebration of the city's municipal infrastructure. The Valentine's Day and monthly tours at Newtown Creek offer New Yorkers a chance to see the real New York City Panorama while also learning about the essential role wastewater treatment plants play in public health and in keeping New York City's waterways clean.

Focus on the Field



DEP's commitment to providing transparent, high-quality, and efficient customer service requires skilled staff that are equipped with the best possible tools, which means there is a regular integration of innovative technologies. And, Project Manager for Customer Information System Modernization **Michael Weinberg** is at the forefront of this effort. As part of the Office of Information Technology (OIT), Weinberg's work is critical to DEP's ability to fulfill its mission.

Weinberg has been at DEP for nearly two decades, and prior to that he held positions in city agencies that handled finance and technology. As he sees it, "both ratepayers and DEP staff rely on our services so it's critical that we operate in a transparent fashion while ensuring that we meet our customer's needs."

Weinberg manages in-house design and support for numerous applications. These applications include customer billing, water use and meter-

ing, online permitting and other programs used by staff both upstate and in-city, as well as consumers, plumbers, and other stakeholders. Weinberg is also shepherding OIT staff through a training initiative led by industry leader, the Project Management Institute.

Weinberg has always welcomed challenges, whether during his time at Stuyvesant High School, when majoring in physics in college, or earning a Master's Degree in Talmudic Jurisprudence.

"Michael brings many years of IT experience with a strong focus on meeting bureaus' business needs," said Assistant Commissioner **Jin Chang**. "He works very hard and is currently leading modernization of our billing system project."

Outside the office Weinberg enjoys spending time with his family and studying the Torah. He also stays active by working out at the gym and swimming several days a week.

Welcome Aboard

Yesterday 13 new employees attended orientation and today they began their assignments. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Kevin DeLorenzo, Sam Luksich, and John Reina with BWSO; **Eugene Donofrio, Daniel Jacobson, and Thomas Wandell** with BWT; **Spencer Salzberg and Chun Wei Tong** with BEDC; **Alberto Hurtado and Eddie Wan** with OIT; **Jared Lopes** with BWS; **Charmine LeBrew** with BCS; and **Rachel Greer** with FMC.

Volunteer Opportunity

Parts of DEP's Staten Island Bluebelt were heavily littered with debris in the wake of Hurricane Sandy and need your help in restoring them to their natural beauty. The agency is organizing a volunteer cleanup day from 9:30 am until 1:00 pm on Saturday, February 23. Volunteers will collect trash and other debris washed into the Bluebelt by the storm surge. Space is limited, so please email your RSVP before February 20.

(N'ICE Work If You Can Get It!... continued)



severe storms. That's why water quality field scientists train in a classroom and on the reservoirs once each year.

"I always tell them to remember this: there is no such thing as safe ice," said DEP Police Sergeant **Rich Irwin**, who led last week's training for scientists working on west-of-Hudson reservoirs.

Field scientists were trained to rescue themselves three times from Pepacton Reservoir, using ice picks and a rolling technique to pull themselves out. They were also pulled from the water by someone using a tow rope—a scenario that simulated how an injured person would be rescued.

Scientists and police wore special jumpsuits—affectionately known as "Gumby suits" because their oversized booties and mittens resemble the popular clay animation character—to protect themselves from the dangerously low water temperatures.

In a real-life scenario, water quality experts would be required to work in teams of at least two people while taking a sample from a frozen reservoir. They would also be required to maintain radio and visual contact with someone on the shore. Such operations would also be coordinated with support from DEP Police for added safety. Environmental Police Officers involved in the training included Sgt. Irwin, **James Feldbauer, Paul Krum, Paul Dwon, Giuseppe Multari, Charles Chapman, Mike Upshaw, and Cheryl Gerken**. Water quality experts who received the training included **Allison Bennett, Lori Froehlich, Francis Huber, Emily Kinne, Thomas Mills, Michael Spada, Paul Brown, Serena Matt, Joseph Miller, Chris Morgans, and Kim Nezelek**.

DEP field scientists who work on east-of-Hudson reservoirs will receive their ice-rescue training this week.

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