

Sewer Build Out on Staten Island



DEP recently completed a \$24 million water and sewer infrastructure upgrade on the south shore of Staten Island that will allow 150 homes in the Rossville neighborhood to connect to the City's sewer system. The project included the installation of nearly three miles of sanitary sewers, more than a mile of storm sewers and 52 catch basins, as well as new drinking water distribution mains throughout the area. Prior to this project the Rossville neighborhood did not have a sewer system and street flooding was a common problem when it rained. The newly installed catch basins will allow precipitation to drain into the new storm sewers where it will be diverted to the Bluebelt system, which will help to alleviate street flooding during heavy rain storms. The new sanitary sewers will allow homeowners to connect to the City sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks. [Go here](#) for more information on the project and [here](#) to see photos of the work.

Spotlight on Safety

Don't Get Distracted!

Every year thousands of people die in car accidents that were caused by a driver who was using a cell phone. In fact, the National Safety Council estimates that 25 percent of vehicle collisions involve drivers who were using a cell phone. Coincidentally, did you know that car accidents have been identified as the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities?

In New York State, it is illegal to talk on a hand-held cellphone or text while driving. As April is "Distracted Driving Awareness Month," employees are

encouraged to help one another break the distracted driving habit. If you are in a vehicle with a distracted driver you have the responsibility to speak up and encourage your co-worker to put the cell phone down.

To combat the threat of distracted driving:

- Do not use hand-held cellphones while driving
- Do not text and drive

To learn more about the fight against distracted driving, visit the [National Safety Council](#) and the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#).

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

Last week, we announced new initiatives that will improve air quality and public health, including a rule that increases the efficiency requirements for boilers in large buildings. The new standards for boilers that burn heating oil and natural gas will reduce a significant source of pollution and build upon the efforts that have helped make New York City's air cleaner than it has been in 50 years. Boilers will also be required to undergo annual tune-ups and combustion efficiency tests to ensure they meet the new criteria. These regulations will also help building owners control their costs. Increasing an existing boiler's efficiency from 80 to 83 percent will significantly reduce the amount of fuel that is being burned and save owners tens of thousands of dollars in fuel costs each year.

In 2011, more than 5,200 buildings in the city burned No. 6 heating oil, the dirtiest grade of oil. A rule that took effect that same year required all buildings to convert from No. 6 heating oil to a cleaner burning fuel by July 2015. To date, more than 3,000 buildings have made the switch and no longer burn No. 6. As a result of those regulations, and other City initiatives, air quality in New York City last year reached levels of cleanliness not seen in more than half a century.

The Department of Health estimates that 800 lives will be saved and approximately 1,600 emergency department visits for asthma, and 460 hospitalizations for respiratory and cardiovascular issues will be prevented every year as a result of the improvements in air quality. Further, as more buildings make the conversion from No. 6 heating oil and increase boiler efficiency, the City expects to see continued improvements in air quality and the health of all New Yorkers.

The Bureau of Environmental Compliance worked hard to



craft these practical regulations and continue to help ensure that building owners make timely conversions. I'd like to thank **Angela Licata** and **Mike Gilsenan** for their leadership on these important initiatives. In addition, I'd like to recognize **Russ Pecunies** with Legal Affairs and the Air Enforcement and Engineering teams including **August Buffa**, **Daniel Phelan**, **Anton Hana**, **Gerry Kelpin**, **Joseph Scaffidi**, **Kit Liang**, **Chandrak Patel**, **Krish Radhakrishnan**, and all of the enforcement inspectors and air engineers.

Later this year we will re-introduce a proposed update of New York City's Air Code to the City Council. If enacted, this will be the first major revision of the code in nearly four decades and will simplify compliance requirements and the permitting process. The new code will also update emission standards and focus on pollution sources that currently have little or no emission control requirements, such as commercial cooking establishments.

On all fronts we are working to improve our environment and public health. From protecting the sources of our drinking water, to upgrading our wastewater treatment plants to make them more resilient to climate change and storms, to improving the quality of our air, the work that all of you do each day is helping to improve New York City's air and water, and the health of its residents and visitors.

Focus on the Field



One of DEP's most unique facilities is tucked on the other side of a stone railroad trestle, where the states of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania share a border. That is where **Dan Baumgardner** and **Jim Smith** oversee the Port Jervis Wastewater Treatment Plant—the only wastewater facility owned and operated by New York City that is located neither in the city, nor in any of the watersheds that provide its drinking water.

The origin of the plant dates back to 1931, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that New York City could take drinking water from the Delaware River by damming some of its tributaries. In exchange for using that water to feed its growing population, New York City was required to improve the quality of effluent in Port Jervis—a small city that sits at the confluence of the Delaware and Neversink rivers—by building and operating a wastewater treatment plant there in perpetuity.

The Port Jervis facility has the most capacity of any upstate wastewater plant operated by DEP. It processes roughly 1.2 million gallons of wastewater every day for a small city whose population hovers around 8,800.

The plant is run by Baumgardner, the chief operator, Smith, the assistant chief, and four additional full-time operators. To meet regulations set by New York State and the Delaware River Basin Commission, the staff at Port Jervis test the plant's effluent nearly 5,000

times a year for parameters such as temperature, dissolved oxygen and pH. Those samples met their compliance goals 100 percent of the time in 2013.

“All we're doing is what nature does, just a lot quicker,” Baumgardner said. “That's our job—to keep the biological process going.”

The original sludge pumps from 1954 are still in great working order, but the plant's settling tanks, circulation pumps and some other infrastructure have recently been replaced. DEP will soon invest another \$19 million at the plant, which must be updated to meet new regulations by providing tertiary treatment. Tertiary treatment adds the use of ultraviolet light and other processes to further improve the quality of effluent going into the rivers.

“Dan and Jim do an amazing job running our highest-capacity upstate wastewater treatment plant,” said **Tina Johnstone**, director of operations for the Bureau of Water Supply. “Their work in Port Jervis helps DEP meet its commitments to parties along the Delaware River, which is important to the overall operation of our water supply system.”

Baumgardner has worked at DEP for 22 years, and previously ran a wholesale food-delivery warehouse. Smith has been with DEP for 17 years, working previously at a concrete manufacturing facility and in nuclear security for the U.S. Air Force.

Have a Blast!



Christopher Pepino, an EHS officer with BWS and the winner of Water For the Future's *Have a 'Blast' With Us* Contest, recently had the opportunity to detonate a blast at one of DEP's upstate construction sites. The contest helped to promote awareness of the Water For the Future Program, which will repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct, repair and ensure the reliability of our second largest water tunnel, the Catskill Aqueduct, and restore groundwater resources—while leading a citywide water conservation effort, to ensure that New Yorkers continue to enjoy our world-renowned drinking water. Learn more [here](#).

Did You Know...

The Employee Suggestion Program offers cash incentives for cost-effective ideas that result in operational savings? For a complete description of the program and instructions for submitting your suggestion, visit <http://suggestions>.

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