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FLEET SPOTLIGHT: NYC CLASSIC VEHICLES #2

ARMENOUSH ASLANIAN-PERSICO

Our classic vehicle summer spotlights continue with DSNY and DCAS.

DSNY maintains four special vehicles for ceremonial purposes. These include a rare 1962 Mack refuse truck with an escalator body. DSNY's collection fleet included many of these vehicles in the 1950s and 1960s. The truck has a low hopper for easy loading, and the refuse was carried by conveyor into the dump body. This "Museum Truck" is still operable and appears at special events such as DSNY graduation ceremonies. Another ceremonial vehicle is the "Mirror Truck (pictured)," a 1979 GMC refuse truck covered with mirrors. The truck, also called "The Social Mirror," is a 1983 project by DSNY Artist-In-Residence Mierle Laderman Ukeles and is displayed at parades, festivals and art events. This truck was originally a DSNY collection truck. The agency also has two 1994 Crane Carrier parade trucks designed specifically for parade use. These trucks have tiered platforms which can carry parade participants and are decorated with bunting. All of these ceremonial vehicles are maintained by DSNY mechanics at their Central Repair Shop (CRS) in Queens.



Another rare vehicle is maintained by DCAS. The agency has a 1952 Chrysler Imperial Parade Phaeton, one of only three ever manufactured. This vehicle was originally used to transport dignitaries in parades. Famous passengers include four New York City mayors, Lt. Col. John Glenn Jr., Apollo 8 astronauts, the New York Yankees, and foreign royalty. The car is still in use, including at sports championship parades. The vehicle is kept in operable condition and is always on standby for use by the Mayor's office. It has a unique design, intended for ceremonial use, with separate front and rear passenger compartments, each with their own windshield, and no side windows or exterior handles. When it is dispatched for events, it is usually brought to the events on a flatbed tow truck to minimize wear.



A backup crew also accompanies the vehicle in case of any maintenance needs. This vehicle is maintained by a collaboration of DCAS staff at the DCAS Navy Yard and DSNY mechanics at the Manhattan Borough Shop, and has greatly benefitted from DSNY mechanics' experience with classic vehicles. Over the past few years, DSNY has restored and repaired this vehicle, rebuilding brakes, lights, sirens, the fuel pump system, and electrical systems, and installing new wheels to replace the original wheels. The Imperial was originally donated by Chrysler to the NYC Department of Public Works, a precursor to DCAS, in 1961.

We appreciate the work done by these agencies to maintain and display these historic gems.