

Hoosier Guess for Which City is Pioneering CSO Monitoring?

Reaching out to other municipalities is a cornerstone of strategic plan initiative #2 to allow the agency to innovate and implement best practices by learning from others. One area we hope to gain more knowledge is in managing CSOs—a problem that is not unique to New York City. New York, like most older cities in the Northeast and the Midwest, has a combined sewer system. A combined sewer system collects wastewater, what typically gets flushed down a drain in a residential home, and stormwater runoff, what flows into drainage systems when it rains, together in the same pipe from properties and streets. About two-thirds of New York City's sewered areas operate like this. This often presents an issue during rainstorms when treatment plants reach their capacity due to the tremendous increase in rainwater that flows into sew-



ers. To relieve pressure on the system during these high-flow periods, the largest city sewers have “regulator chambers” equipped with overflow structures that divert combined stormwater and wastewater into New York City's surrounding waterways at 422 locations around the city. This is known as a combined sewer overflow, or CSO, and is one of the remaining challenges to improving the quality of our waterways.

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

OSHA at 40: Celebrating Four Decades of Improvements in Workplace Safety

An interactive timeline commemorating 40 years of safety and health milestones is now available on the OSHA website at [OSHA](#). The Occupational Safety and Health Act was signed into law by President Nixon on December 29, 1970. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, better known as OSHA, was created on April 28, 1971. DEP's health and safety policies and procedures are foundationally built from OSHA standards.

According to OSHA the U.S. “has made dramatic progress in reducing work-related deaths and inju-

ries.” Estimates are that around 14,000 workers were killed on the job in 1970. By 2009 worker deaths had fallen to around 4,340. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 1993 there were about 12 recordable injuries per 100 employees in both manufacturing and construction. In 2009, that rate dropped to about 4.3. It is attributable to improved compliance and education efforts on both the part of industry and regulators. In next week's Spotlight on Safety, we will talk about how DEP stacks up!

Click here [to read the full article.](#)

Commissioner's Corner

The deep reservoir of expertise in our Bureau of Wastewater Treatment has been on full display recently. Last week, four DEP teams competed to represent the agency at the 24th annual Operations Challenge. Teams compete in essential wastewater skills, including pipe & pump repairs and rescue operations. The national competition is sponsored by the Water Environment Federation; the New York State finals will be held in Lake George later this month, followed by the national competition in Los Angeles in October. You can read a great recap of the action at Owls Head here [OSHA](#). Congratulations to the Turtle Surfers from Tallman Island (**Deepak Ramnarine, Sal Manfre** and **Fernando Herz**) and the Sludge Fellas from Owls Head (**Jimmy DiTomasso, Dennis Marotto, and Maurice Minickene**), who will represent DEP in Lake George—and fight for a slot in LA. Though they will not move on to the next round, **Melvyn Newton, Dave Longo** and **Anthony Cervone** (the Tide Surfers from Tallman Island) and **Christopher MacNair, Jay Sarfo** and **Joseph Miraglia** (The Unknowns from North River) did an outstanding job.

DEP recently awarded the first contract in a new insourcing pilot program that allows our unions to bid against private contractors on small maintenance jobs at our wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations. As always, contracts will be awarded to the lowest bidder; and if our unions can show they can do the job for less, they will get the work. The first contract awarded to a BWT crew—to replace submersible pumps at the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant—went to employees from locals 1320 and 3 for \$149,000, 12% lower than the next-lowest bid made by a private contractor. Local 1320 President **James Tucciarelli** summed it up well: “This is a great program for my members and the citizens of this city, providing a managed competition for the work at a savings to the city.”

Yesterday, I attended and made a presentation at the first public Water Board hearing in Staten Island about the proposed water rate for fiscal year 2012. Any rate increase is hard on New Yorkers, especially during tough economic times, but the pro-



posed 7.5% increase is significantly lower than what we projected just one year ago, when it was expected to be 11.5% [OSHA](#). Still, we have an obligation to our customers to keep rates as low as possible now and in the future. Our 100-point strategic plan [OSHA](#) includes many initiatives that will help us achieve that goal, including maintaining our Filtration Avoidance Determination by protecting the city's watershed, and securing federal and state approval for the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan. There are four more hearings on the FY 2012 rate, the first of which is tonight in the Bronx. The Water Board will vote on the proposal on May 13, and the new rate will take effect as of July 1.

Speaking of Green Infrastructure, our plan got a big boost last week when EPA launched a new program to promote green infrastructure as an effective way to reduce stormwater that can pollute local waterways. EPA will showcase ten cities from across the country that already have green infrastructure projects in place, and highlight them as a model for other cities to emulate. Deputy EPA Administrator **Bob Perciasepe** explained EPA's strong support for green infrastructure clearly: “Green infrastructure changes improve the health of our waters while creating local jobs, saving communities money and making them healthier and more prosperous places to raise a family and start a business.” While we still have a lot of work to do to get approval for the NYC plan, EPA's endorsement is extremely encouraging as we continue negotiations with the State Department of Environmental Conservation to incorporate our green approach into our long-term control plans for reducing combined sewer overflows.

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. [OSHA](#)



In 2003, **Tejendra “Tej” Gharti-Chhetry** was the first auditor to be hired by DEP after the launch of a new Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) audit program. Tej brought six years of laboratory safety and industrial hygiene experience, bolstering it with a B.A. in chemistry, and a M. S. in Environmental Technology. He draws from his broad knowledge of federal, state, and local environmental, health and safety regulations to conduct inspection type audits and programmatic assessments.

Tej has been to most of DEP’s audited worksites including shafts, well stations, chambers, pumping stations, and wastewater treatment plants. “I have conducted more than 500 EHS audits from Gilboa to Gowanus in my eight-year career with DEP,” notes Gharti. “And most people do not know that DEP audits 525 plus worksites in every two, five, or seven year cycles.”

Each audit includes a site visit lasting for one day or up to three

months, and a compliance report that contains safety and health-related findings. Findings are items requiring corrective action, immediately (within 24 hours); within 30 days, or by 180 days.

Since joining DEP, Tej has seen a complete culture change in facility employees and managers. The challenge was convincing employees that audits were not being conducted to blame individual employees, but to identify workplace hazards and non-compliance issues. Nowadays, facility employees and managers participate in these audits and assessments with great enthusiasm and superior work place safety measures. Tej directly reports to Assistant Commissioner for EHS Audits **Gerould McCoy**, whose approach to programmatic assessments has seen greater acceptance and will be valued more than ever. In his spare time, Tej enjoys taking his two sons to outdoor activities.

Kudos Corner



TOPS IN PINTS: Special congratulations to everyone at DEP who has donated blood this past year. Because of our efforts that resulted in 1,856 pints of blood, DEP was awarded the first ever Commissioner’s Cup, the top prize given out by the city’s Department of Citywide Administrative Services. Chief Financial Officer **Steve Lawitts** accepts the award from DCAS Commissioner **Edna Wells Handy** on May 3.

Q. What are the criteria for selecting the employee of the month?

A. The Employee of the Month program recognizes employees who provide exceptional service and valuable contributions to DEP’s mission on a regular basis, or who have gone above and beyond the call of duty on a particular project or aspect of their job. Nominations can be made by any agency employee, and should be sent to Human Resources Deputy Director **Herb Roth** , for review and distribution to the deputy commissioners. Final selection of award recipients will be made by the deputy commissioner of each respective category.

Employees are strongly encouraged to nominate co-workers and others who perform their work in an outstanding manner each and every day. This program is designed to recognize the great contributions that DEP employees make.

(Hoosier Guess for Which City is Pioneering CSO Monitoring?... continued)

New York City’s combined sewer system is managed in coordination between DEP’s Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO) and the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT). On March 25, BWSO Deputy Commissioner **James Roberts**, and BWT Assistant Commissioner for Operations **John Petito** visited South Bend, Indiana to witness a first-of-its-kind technology to monitor the combined sewer system in near real-time. In a partnership with EmNet, LLC and the University of Notre Dame, South Bend has installed various monitoring devices throughout their 20 square miles of combined sewer system, which are connected to data loggers and wireless transmission devices to report on water level and flow every five minutes. The system, which South Bend dubs “CSONet,” enables their operations staff to monitor their sewer system in near real-time from a central location. As a result, South Bend has reduced their annual unpermitted combined sewer over-

flow events from 29 in 2008 to only one in 2010. By reducing penalties from unpermitted CSO events, increasing inline storage, and optimizing existing operations and maintenance, South Bend believes they have avoided the \$120 million cost of building expensive grey infrastructure, like tanks and tunnels, for a \$6 million investment in CSONet.

The demonstration piqued the interest of Roberts and Petito, and DEP is looking to see if this can be done in the complex ultra-urban environment of New York City. As a next step, DEP is going to try to replicate a similar model in a pilot area within one of our combined sewer drainages areas and see if a system like this will help us clean our waterways by reducing CSOs. The knowledge gained during this field study, says Roberts, “will help DEP continue to meet the goals set forth in Strategy 2011-2014 to use new technology to measure, manage, and optimize the capacity and performance of our sewer system.”

Event Calendar

Visitor Center at Newtown Creek Summer Speaker Series – First event Wednesday, May 4; 6:30-8:30 pm; Water for Cities: Responding to the Urban Challenge. For more information please click here .

May 1-7 is Drinking Water Week. Ever wonder why NYC Water tastes so great? It comes from pristine reservoirs 125 miles north of the city and is so high in quality that it doesn’t need to be filtered. It’s also the healthiest and most affordable choice, so drink up!

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