

## Lost in Yonkers? Head South from Hillview

Situated in Yonkers, the Hillview Reservoir is an imposing presence for drivers on the New York State Thruway. As they whiz by the 90-acre man-made lake, few drivers are aware that what they are passing is one of the most critical pieces of infrastructure in the city's water distribution system. Built from 1909 to 1915 by a DEP predecessor agency, the Board of Water Supply, the Hillview Reservoir is essentially a huge holding tank and pressure balancing mechanism that regulates the flow of water from the upstate aqueducts and reser-

voirs into City Water Tunnel Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

The Hillview Reservoir marks the point at which upstate water first enters the city's complex distribution system. In order to manage this transition, a large reservoir is necessary to serve both as a holding tank to balance pressure and ensure that the water maintains enough pressure when it leaves the reservoir and travels all the way to Staten Island, a distance of some 30 miles. As the city wakes up each morning and demand for water increases, Hillview acts as

(Continued on reverse side)

## Spotlight on Safety

### A New EHS Employee Recognition Program – EHS Matters



A new recognition program featuring the EHS Matters award is being implemented by the Office of Environmental, Health & Safety to recognize the extraordinary actions and contributions of DEP employees in promoting safe work practices and environmental responsibility.

Congratulations to this month's awardees from the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations - Queens North Sewer Maintenance Construction Laborers **Gregg DeAngelo, Joseph Contorno, and Robert Moore** pictured above. During the course of their normal, scheduled duties, they secured an

area from the spread of a gasoline leak from a private vehicle thereby preventing hazardous material from entering the storm water system. They contacted the Fire and Police departments and bureau EHS Unit and Haz-Mat Division responsible for handling hazardous materials spill emergencies.

Quick thinking, response, and coordinating with the proper authorities and responsible DEP units prevented this event from escalating into something far more hazardous and dangerous.

In the coming months, this program will be rolled out DEP wide.

## Commissioner's Corner

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## The EPA Doesn't Love New York

A key initiative in *Strategy 2011–2014* is achieving meaningful regulatory reform that will enable DEP to continue to deliver the best service to our nine million customers at a price New Yorkers can afford (Initiatives 74 to 78). That means ending the cycle of unfunded federal mandates in favor of a more collaborative approach in which the EPA treats cities like New York as partners, and not adversaries.

Earlier this year, **President Obama** asked every federal agency to consider comprehensive reforms like this that would reduce regulatory burdens and still achieve the federal government's core mission which, for EPA—like DEP—is environmental protection. Presidential Executive Order 13563 required all federal agencies to review their regulations to ensure that they are “based on the best science available,” and that public health goals are reached in the least burdensome way. This effort is a unique opportunity for the EPA to make reforms that would eliminate needless requirements, and update rules to help cities like New York spend scarce resources where they will achieve the greatest public health benefit.

To that end, DEP submitted extensive comments to EPA suggesting a number of reforms that would achieve this goal—like making sensible changes to CSO policy and enforcement. But EPA's preliminary plan for reform did not in any meaningful way incorporate DEP's comments, or those from other national organizations like the National Association of Clean Water Agencies and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. A little more than a week ago, Deputy Mayor **Stephen Goldsmith** and I submitted a letter to EPA Administrator **Lisa Jackson** expressing how disappointed we are with the Agency's preliminary plan, and expressing hope that the final plan would include substantive reforms that will reduce the multi-billion dollar burdens that New York and other cities across the country face. The Wall Street Journal first reported on it here, and yesterday, editorialized in support of our position here.

I encourage you to read the letter in its entirety, but one reform left completely unaddressed by EPA is particularly egregious: the LT2 rule. As it is currently enforced, LT2 requires DEP to construct a \$1.6 billion-plus cover over the 90-acre Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers, ostensibly to prevent possible pathogens like *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* from entering the water supply. But extensive monitoring has shown that Hillview is not a source of those pathogens, a conclusion supported by the City's Department of Health. And DEP is already constructing a \$1.6 billion UV Disinfection Facility just over 10 miles from Hillview that addresses the same contaminants.

No one thinks that DEP should ignore potential risks. **Mayor Bloomberg** has demonstrated time and again the city's commitment to improving the environment, like reducing carbon emissions through PlaNYC, the city's sustainability blueprint. In fact, the Mayor has committed more than \$20 billion to water and wastewater infrastructure since 2002, 70% of which was dictated by federal mandates. But significant public dollars should go only where the cost is justified by substantial public health benefits. Covering the Hillview Reservoir fails this test and should not be required. Instead, DEP should be allowed to continue an aggressive monitoring program, and have that data—not a one-size-fits-all rule—dictate whether a cover or other mitigation is needed at some point in the future.

Sensible rule reform is not the only way DEP hopes to reduce costs for New Yorkers. We're tightening our own belt and have cut the expense budget by about 14% since 2010. But real long-term relief must include a significant reprioritization of federal requirements. DEP is doing its part to provide the best service at the lowest possible cost, and we need EPA help where it has the power to do so. Eliminating mandates with virtually no public benefit and making sensible rule reforms would be a good start.

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



Even after 23 years at DEP, **Oommen Kuruvilla** still marvels at the dedication and teamwork of his colleagues in delivering great drinking water to New York City. Oommen is a supervisor of water supply management at Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers. The 900-million gallon reservoir has two basins, and provides balance and storage, while also maintaining adequate pressure for the network.

Oommen monitors chlorine and pH levels at Hillview, and is involved with other plant operations including disinfection,

maintenance, and staffing schedules. He enjoys interacting with his colleagues, particularly in problem-solving. "Our staff is from all over the world. The workplace is an exciting 'melting pot' where we solve problems through a team effort. I remember the big snow storm last December where we worked for 16 hours until another shift could make it in to relieve us. I was proud of my boss and the team that day."

Oommen thinks that most city residents, who don't think twice before taking a drink of water from the tap, or using the water to shower, might not understand how much goes into providing high quality water.

In his spare time, Oommen enjoys travel, listening to music and spending time with his wife **Santhi**, and two children: **Chris** is an engineering student at Manhattan College, and **Sherry** is attending Bronx High School of Science.

## Kudos Corner

Last week, DEP completed the installation of 710,119 wireless water meters, which puts us 85% of the way towards completion, on time and on budget. The amazing pace of this work is made possible by the entire Technical Services Staff along with the OIT team and the Borough Offices Field Staff, most notably **David Acosta** of Technical Services for Field Training and Supervision during the entire project from pilot to production; **Steve Wallace, William Ocasio, Ken Martin, Lionel Leslie** and **Vaughn Greene**, from Technical Services – Field Training and Support; **Linden Alphonso, George Arthur, George Negron, Harold Fogle** and **Mike Mostoslavsky** of Central Inspections – AMR Installations; along with **Tiara Street** and **Sheena-Kay Palmer** from Technical Services – AMR Tracking and Research, **Anitra Singh** and **Dan Cunningham** for Contractor Oversight, And special recognition to the driving forces behind the project: **Warren Liebold** and **Michael Roach**.

**OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS – SUIT DRIVE:** DEP will be participating in the Suit Drive for Veterans that the Mayor's Office of Veteran Affairs is launching, which will run from July 5 through July 22. Collection bins for new or lightly worn interview attire are available from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday, in the reception areas at the following locations: Lefrak - 18th floor; and the main floors at Sutton Park, Kingston, and Grahamsville. For more information please click here [🔗](#).

## Event Calendar

**Visitor Center at Newtown Creek Summer Speaker Series** –Tuesday, July 12; 6:30-8:30 pm; A Sustainable Future: Green Innovation. For more information please click here [🔗](#).

DEP's **NYC Water-On-the-Go** fountains will be out Tuesday through Sunday every week through Labor Day. For more information, click here [🔗](#).

(Lost in Yonkers? Head South from Hillview... continued)



a reserve tank to supply the three city water tunnels with the water they need to meet the day's demand. And as demand decreases during the night, water from the upstate aqueducts refills the depleted reservoir to ensure that it is fully stocked for the next morning. As a result, reservoir levels are constantly fluctuating.

In addition to its role as a flow regulator and holding tank, the Hillview Reservoir is the point at which secondary disinfection of the water supply occurs. DEP treats its water supply with various chemicals that provide a range of benefits both to customers and to the distribution infrastructure itself. Each day, the DEP employees at Hillview add chemicals to the water supply to disinfect the water, balance pH levels, and control corrosion within the distribution system. This daily chemical treatment is critical to the safety of New York's drinking water.

Although Hillview is located in Yonkers, it represents the beginning of the in-city distribution system and is operated and maintained by more than 50 employees from the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO). Given its critical mission, Hillview is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by around-the-clock

shifts. These DEP employees perform a variety of duties including pump adjustments, gatehouse inspections, and water flow tracking. They also implement the secondary disinfection program by monitoring pH levels, taking water samples, and ensuring that chemical targets are being met. One of their most important jobs is to maintain regular communication with employees from the Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) at Kensico Reservoir to ensure that the flow of water is being properly managed.

Although most people drive right by without even noticing it, the Hillview Reservoir provides a vital service that should not be taken for granted. For security reasons the reservoir is not available to the public and DEP Police take a number of preventative steps to keep the reservoir safe. **Vijay Rao**, the operations manager for all in-city reservoirs, notes that "after the FDNY and the NYPD, we are the unsung heroes of New York City."

So the next time you're driving south on the New York State Thruway, take a moment to appreciate the bright blue waters of Hillview Reservoir, and the hard work of the DEP employees who operate our complex water supply system.

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).** [🔗](#)