Prepare for Potential NJT Rail Work Stoppage

With the possibility of a New Jersey Transit rail work stoppage starting March 13, Human Resources and the Office of Emergency Management are providing pertinent information to employees to help them prepare.

Visit HRD’s staff resources page for the latest guidance, schedule of OEM’s transit fairs, and a repository of links to helpful online resources, including NJT’s contingency plan and details of the PA’s alternate service plan. HRD is regularly posting new.

Meanwhile in Portfolio... a Tribute to Ernesto

Last month, Portfolio editor Roz Hamlett and contributor Gregory Quinn co-authored a poignant profile honoring the late Ernesto L. Butcher—a man who through his unparalleled character and

PA Honors Fallen Friends on 23rd Anniversary of WTC Bombing

The Port Authority family gathered on February 26 to commemorate those lost in the first terrorist attack on the World Trade Center 23 years ago.

Nearly 100 employees and friends of the agency attended the annual memorial Mass at St. Peter’s Roman Catholic Church to honor and remember PA employees Robert Kirkpatrick, Stephen Knapp, William Macko, and Monica Rodriguez Smith and her unborn child, as well as John DiGiovanni, who was visiting the WTC on business, and Wilfredo Mercado, a receiving agent for Windows on the World restaurant.

The PA Police Honor Guard and Pipes & Drums began the services with a presentation of the colors. Executive Director Pat Foye read the responsorial psalm—which this year

A Path Home Restored

People used to commute to the World Trade Center, myself included... and never have to go outside to get to their office or get lunch... At rush hour, it was a swarm of humanity, but also a mixing bowl where you met friends."

World Trade Center Construction Director Alan Reiss, who served as the Director of the World Trade Department from 1999 to 2001, recalls the days when Port Authority staff would be able to walk into headquarters directly from their respective trains and enjoy bumping into colleagues on the concourse. It is something that has been missed by veteran staffers, and merely wondered

Continued on page 2
Prepare for Potential NJT Rail Work Stoppage
Continued from page 1

resources and important updates to the page, which employees can also access at home or on their smartphone by visiting paenet.panynj.gov and logging in with their Windows ID and password. HRD and OEM encourage employees to check the page regularly over the coming weeks, and stay tuned to PA Broadcasts for further guidance.

Meanwhile in Portfolio... a Tribute to Ernesto
Continued from page 1

commitment served as the pillar on which the Port Authority rose from its darkest days.

The article focuses on Mr. Butcher’s work as Chief Operating Officer, particularly his heroism and leadership during the events of 9/11 – despite having to dig out of the rubble of the north tower.

The article begins with a quote from Chairman John Degnan, which fittingly demonstrates Mr. Butcher’s enduring legacy: “I read this morning the tribute to Ernesto Butcher whom I never had the privilege of meeting. That said, he is clearly an iconic figure to Port Authority employees who, without exception, admired his courage, his integrity, and his dignified leadership in some very trying times for this agency. Thank you for reminding us all of that.”

Whether you are an employee who worked with Ernesto, or someone who just joined the PA and is curious about its history and the people who left indelible marks on it, then you should definitely read the article.

Anniversary of WTC Bombing
Continued from page 1

was Psalm 23 – and former World Trade Department Director Charles Maikish gave the first reading and read the Prayer of the Faithful.

Following the Mass, employees, family members, and friends gathered at the National September 11 Memorial’s north pool, where the victims’ names are inscribed along with those lost on 9/11. Several people shared words of remembrance and hope, including New York City First Deputy Mayor Anthony Shorris, who served as the agency’s First Deputy Executive Director in 1993.

Mr. Shorris noted that the world comes to the World Trade Center to remember what and who we lost and also to remember what we found: courage, strength, and faith.

As flowers were laid across the memorial, a moment of silence was observed both on the plaza and across the agency. Facility flags were flown at half-staff in commemoration as well.

In a PA Broadcast issued to staff on February 24, Chairman John Degnan, Vice Chairman Scott Rechler, and Executive Director Foye reflected on the solemn occasion, describing how with each passing year, the Port Authority finds only greater commitment to those we lost that day.

“As we mark this anniversary,” they said, “we ask you to join us and reflect on our fallen friends, who through our solidarity and resolve, we continue to honor.”

Achievements

Staffer Is Sworn In

For many Port Authority staffers, regional stewardship does not end at the close of business. Case in point, Assistant Director of Real Estate Services Jerry Del Tufo has held many active roles serving his community, and has now added another to the list. Mr. Del Tufo was just appointed as a member of the Planning Board of the Township of Nutley, NJ, on February 24.

As part of the board, Mr. Del Tufo will help recommend and enforce appropriate regulations and amendments to ensure best practices regarding city planning and zoning in Nutley.

Mr. Del Tufo, who has more than 25 years of dedicated Port Authority service, has also been a member of the Nutley Zoning Board and Nutley Board of Education. He also serves as a trustee of the Episcopal Manor for the Episcopal Diocese of Newark.

Employees who have Port Authority Outlook accounts can access EmployeeNet from home or any other outside location with Internet access. Just type paenet.panynj.gov and enter your Windows ID and password.

The site is for use only by authorized individuals and will not work from your office computer.

EmployeeNet at Home
SPIO Spotlight: The PATH Team

When the Port Authority acquired the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad in 1962, and officially established Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation (PATH), it made a commitment to preserve and evolve the system as a key transit link between the states.

That commitment has not faltered in the nearly 54 years since the agency acquired the railroad. In fact, as exemplified through the work of the team spotlighted here, the agency’s commitment only continues to grow.

The Special Panel Implementation Office’s PATH Team is working with the line department from which it gets its name to explore and implement measures to ensure PATH’s continued sustainability, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. These measures effectively address the recommendations by the Special Panel on the Future of the Port Authority, in step with the principles that guided the agency when establishing PATH.

Acting Chief Operating Officer Stephanie Dawson and Rail Transit Director/PATH General Manager Michael Marino serve as the team’s Executive Sponsors, and PATH Deputy Director Clarelle DeGraffe serves as the team captain. Members include PATH Chief Negotiator Cynthia Bacon, Office of Continuous Improvement Director Matt Baratz, Leadership Fellow Benjamin Engle, Security Business Resources Management and Planning Finance Manager Connie Lee, Director of Government & Community Relations – New Jersey Tina Lado, PATH Assistant Superintendent of Transportation Kevin Lejda, Engineering Deputy Chief of Design Tony Marino, and World Trade Center Redevelopment Planning & Logistics Manager Jolene Yeats. Not pictured: Tina Lado and Executive Sponsors Stephanie Dawson and Michael Marino.

Combining their knowledge and expertise, the team members are currently identifying and recommending an improved operating model(s) to enable PATH to serve the region on a sustainable basis; increased revenue opportunities, including public and private partnerships; and a communications plan to improve awareness and engagement among customers and the public-at-large.

“Our multi-disciplinary team has worked extremely well together on this panel, and I am confident that the relationships we build will continue to be fruitful across the agency, even as the SPIO effort winds down,” said Ms. Yeats, the team’s Member At Large. She’s been with the agency for two years and has more than 10 years of professional and management experience on regional transportation and construction projects.

Mr. Engle, a Leadership Fellow who just moved to Port Commerce as his fourth rotation, adds, “The SPIO process has allowed the Port Authority/PATH to take deep dives into often-referenced concerns. These deep dives have provided the team with valuable information to help inform decision-making. The process allows us to collaborate across the agency to think outside the box and discuss creative and innovative solutions to difficult issues.”

You can learn about the PATH Team’s progress by checking out SPIO’s latest monthly performance dashboard.

SPIO’s Site Tracks Teams’ Progress

The Special Panel Implementation Office and its nine staff-led teams are approaching the end of their yearlong effort. Over the last 10 months, each team – comprising employees from different career backgrounds united by the same commitment to the agency’s well-being – have advanced critical efforts to address the recommendations of the Special Panel on the Future of the Port Authority. And they have done so while continuing to effectively fulfill their regular duties. To see what your colleagues have been up to at those SPIO meetings they all talk about, be sure to visit SPIO’s eNet site, which includes a monthly performance dashboard that breaks down the progress of each team’s key deliverables.

In Memoriam

Mark Driscoll passed away on February 23, 2016. He is survived by his parents, Arlene and John Driscoll.

Officer Driscoll joined the Port Authority in October 2008 as part of the 111th Police Academy Class. At the time of this passing, he held the position of Police Officer-Aircraft Rescue Firefighter in the ARFF cadre at Newark Liberty International Airport.
Comptroller's Shares Its Two Cents, Makes a Difference

A little change can go a long way, as was proven by the staff in Comptroller's last month, as they raised more than $3,700 for a great cause, and all it took was some teamwork, some fun, and pennies on the dollar.

In recognition of National Heart Month, seven teams – each with about 11 staffers – participated from February 8 to 26 in a “Penny Wars” fundraiser to benefit the Congenital Heart Defect Coalition. CHDC is a 501(c) charity that seeks to improve the quality of life for children and adults born with heart disease by raising public awareness and money for life-saving medical research.

Teams each had to fill their buckets with the most pennies, and sabotage their rivals by dropping other coins and dollar bills to reduce their point count. Teams included the “Bravehearts,” “Famous 11 Amigos,” “Heart Throbs,” “Pace Makers,” “Pennies from Heaven,” “Penny Pinchers,” and “Penny Poppers.”

The rules were simple, in case any other departments want to join in next time: Each team was provided a container, and for each penny their members dropped in, they would receive a point. Teams were allowed to put other coins and paper currency into their rival teams’ containers, which would reduce their point counts. The team with the most points by February 26 would win and receive a breakfast party.

The teams worked together to acquire the precious copper coins, selling homemade candy, cookies, and other goodies; holding omelet breakfasts and pizza lunches; and hosting bingo games, a flea market, and even an acting class. They also occasionally “sabotaged” each other’s efforts by dropping paper currency and silver coins in their buckets.

Comptroller Daniel McCarron did the honors of doing the final tally of each team’s penny counts. The “Heart Throbs” were named the winning team, having netted $342.

“Although I don’t say it nearly enough, I am very proud of all you [the teams]; it is days like this that I reflect on why it is so special to be a member of the Comptroller’s Department,” stated Mr. McCarron as he did the final count.

“Sometimes, real superheroes live in the hearts of small children fighting big battles,” said Accounting Supervisor Elizabeth Paonessa. Ms. Paonessa, whose son was born with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, is a member of the CHDC and coordinated the fundraiser.

“Words cannot express how extremely pleased I am with how well this fundraiser worked out,” she added.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer for America Needs You

Employees are invited to apply to volunteer as Mentor or Career coaches for America Needs You (ANY), roles in which they can help low-income, first-generation college students.

As an ANY volunteer, you will have the opportunity to be a role model and help students achieve their career ambitions. You will also have the chance to network with other coaches who come from a variety of industries.

There are two levels of volunteer opportunities: long-term and short-term. Employees have the option to volunteer as a Mentor Coach for a two-year term. These employees are paired with a college student for their two-year ANY fellowship. Alternatively, employees can volunteer for a single day as a Career Coach.

Several PA employees have volunteered over the years and made a positive impact on a young person’s life. If you are interested in doing the same, visit the bulletin to learn more about program and how to apply. The deadline for New York applicants is March 7. For New Jersey applicants, it’s June 1. Email Leticia Mata at lmata@panynj.gov for more information.

Retirement News

Engineering’s Ron Gumann is constructing a bridge to retirement. You can congratulate him on March 16, noon to 3 p.m., at the Chandelier Catering restaurant in Bayonne, NJ. RSVP with payment by March 11. Please see the bulletin for details.

The GWB’s Dave Riva is all smiles as he prepares to retire after more than 36 years of Port Authority service. Wish him well on March 30, 3 to 7 p.m. at In Napoli Restaurant in Fort Lee, NJ. Check the bulletin for details.

Get PA News

If you’d like PA News sent to your personal e-mail address, send a note to panews@panynj.gov.
PAPD, Law Enforcement Partners Take a Stroll Uptown

Demonstrating the camaraderie between law enforcement partners in the region, the Port Authority Police’s Emergency Service Unit on February 29 hosted a joint training session at the George Washington Bridge with members of the New York City Police Department ESU, Jersey City Police ESU, and NYC Department of Corrections.

PAPD ESU organized this training, also known as a “bridge walk,” in part to celebrate members from each of the police departments who recently graduated from NYPD’s eight-month ESU training. This includes several PAPD officers, who are now officially members of the PAPD’s ESU.

During the walk, PAPD ESU familiarized everyone with how to access certain areas of the GWB infrastructure in the case of an emergency scenario, including preventing potential suicide attempts.

The excursion also involved a stroll up the cables to the GWB’s New Jersey tower, where the group made sure to take in all of the sights and pose for a group photo.

A Path Home Restored

Continued from page 1

about by those who joined the agency after the events of 9/11 – the thought of avoiding the bitter cold of winter while benefiting from the warmth of catching up with friends.

But as of March 3, PA employees regardless of their start date now have the opportunity to experience what Mr. Reiss was talking about, as the WTC Transportation Hub’s Oculus reached a major milestone in its development that has restored direct, below-ground access from the WTC PATH Station to the agency’s corporate offices at the WTC. In addition, the March 3 opening has provided more than 100,000 daily PATH commuters with direct, below-ground access to a new entrance at the corner of Liberty and Church streets.

PA leadership, including Executive Director Pat Foye, Chief of Major Capital Projects Steve Plate, and WTC Redevelopment Deputy Director James Kleeman, joined Oculus architect Santiago Calatrava and many staffers, business partners, and supporters in the pavilion to mark the milestone – and witness the first commuters to use the hub.

Over subsequent weeks, the agency will be opening other connections as the Oculus becomes fully operational, including direct access to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Fulton Transit Center and 11 New York City subway lines.

Mr. Plate said, “After the events of 9/11, we had an obligation and responsibility to build back, stronger and better than ever. Our hearts and prayers go out to those who were lost on that fateful day, as well as the men and women who spent countless hours to turn this miracle into a reality. Today’s opening of the WTC Oculus is truly representative of the resilience of New York and New Jersey, and the women and men of this great organization.”

To learn more, read the agency’s press release about this milestone.