

Students Present Innovative Tunnel Catwalk Robotics Proposals

Seeing an opportunity to make better use of available space, the PA recently put out a challenge to local schools for proposals to utilize the unused catwalks at the agency's tunnels. The call was answered, with local students from across the bistate region developing and sharing their innovative ideas with the agency.

On January 16, the PA hosted a networking event for the College Challenge: Vehicular Tunnel Catwalk Robotics, a robotics competition sponsored by the [Innovation Hub](#) and supported by the [Port Authority Women's Council's](#) Women in Technology chapter.

The event marked the conclusion of the Design Phase, where 5 teams from local higher education institutions – CUNY College of Staten Island, NYIT, NJIT, and Stevens Institute of Technology – dedicated their Fall 2024 semester to creating a design proposal for a robotic solution to run on a tunnel catwalk to aid emergency response in the Lincoln Tunnel.



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Watch: NBE's 38th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Last month, the Port Authority family joined together with the [Network of Black Employees](#) EBRG in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

The theme for this year's event, which was the 38th annual celebration, was *Visibility Matters, Celebrating Us*. The program included a host of presentations and performances, including keynote speaker **Amber Greene**, former Deputy Director of Media Relations at the Port Authority, who most recently served as White House Special Assistant to the President for Racial and Economic Justice in the Domestic Policy Council and as Acting Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice at



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PAPD Revives Passenger at Bayonne Cruise Port

A pair of Port Authority Police officers recently sprang into action to save the life of a passenger who was about to board a cruise ship.

On January 27, Officers **Richard Tepedino** and **Tony Labon Calix** of the New Jersey Marine Terminals Command responded to a report of a man who was unconscious at Liberty Cruise Port in Bayonne. Upon arrival, the officers found the man lying down without a pulse and not breathing. They administered CPR and connected the man to a defibrillator. Thanks to their quick actions, the officers were able to restore the man's pulse and respirations. The man was then transported to Bayonne Medical Center.



Officers Richard Tepedino and Tony Labon Calix

Tune In to the HR Podcast



Kick off Friday mornings in style by tuning in to *HR Wants to Speak With You* – the biweekly HR podcast delivering the latest agency news, HR updates, and much more... including best-in-class banter courtesy of **Joe Monte**, **Angel Velez**, and **Asia Mazara**.

- **When:** Fridays, bi-weekly, via Microsoft Teams
- **Time:** 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
- **How to Join:** [Use this link at the start time](#) or email Jmonte@panynj.gov or anvelez@panynj.gov for the podcast invitation.

Watch: NBE's 38th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

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the U.S. Department of State.

In case you missed the livestream or would like to view it again, the [full recording is available](#) on the PA YouTube channel.



Local Students Envision a 'Future City'

Dating back to 1992, the [Future City competition](#) has promoted STEM in middle schools, and starts with a simple question, "How can we make the world a better place?"



From left: **Bharat Faldu**, **Eric Bautista**, **Ahsan Ali**, **Tejkiran Desai**, and **Scott Lubarsky**.

Bautista, **Ahsan Ali**, **Bharat Faldu**, **Tejkiran Desai**, **Ryan Laub**, and **Sudjendra Bajinath** staffed a table to speak with students about their careers and the Port Authority.

For the New York City competition, volunteers included **Jason Del Nero** (planning committee), **Raul Garcia**, and **Steven Wong**.

Today, more than 60,000 middle school (sixth to eighth grades) students across the country and around the world participate in a hands-on, cross-curricular education program using the Engineering Design Process (EDP) as well as project management skills to showcase solutions to a citywide sustainability issue. This year's topic was *Above the Current*, in which teams designed a floating city that included two innovative examples of how the city works and keeps its residents healthy and safe.

Students work through the fall, preparing four key deliverables for their regional competition: an essay, a project plan, a physical model of their city, and a formal presentation with Q&A. The winning team from each region advances to the national finals in Washington DC.

Congratulations to New Jersey region winner *Isla del Mar* from JerseySTEM in Florham Park, and New York City winner *Oceana* from Columbia Secondary School.



Ted Solages and **Sudjen Bajinath** speaking with students.

PAPD and PAPWT Shine Light on Travel Safety

The [Port Authority Parents Working Together EBRG](#) together with several members of the PAPD recently hosted an interactive info session on the importance of travel safety, particularly for those traveling with children.

On January 29, dozens of employees came together in person and virtually to hear from the PAPD, who provided important travel tips, whether commuting alone to work or with family, and also specific to various modes of transportation, including public transit, by air, and by car.

The presentation included a K9 demonstration featuring **Tazzo** and **Amo**. While the pups were the star attraction, the PAPD officers also answered many questions from participants. Interest in the event was so high that a follow-up session is planned for a later date.

Thanks to all who participated!



STAFF NEWS

Alan Reiss has been promoted to Deputy Chief of Major Capital Projects. Before his promotion, Alan Reiss served as Director of World Trade Center Construction since 2013.

Alan's Port Authority career spans over four decades, serving in progressively responsible roles in Aviation and Major Capital Projects. In November of 2001, Alan was appointed Deputy Director of Aviation. During this time, Alan worked with the 9/11 commission on their investigation into the attacks on the World Trade Center, testifying at their televised hearing in New York City on the events of the day and the Port Authority emergency response. He was also a key contributor to the National Institute of Standards and Technology's investigation of the building collapses and their recommendations to improve building codes. He received two letters of commendation from the 9/11 Commission for his cooperation in their investigation and assistance in implementing their recommendations and was recognized by NIST for his assistance in their investigation.

In May 2007, he returned downtown, to rebuild the site to honor those lost, as the Director of the World Trade Center Construction Department, responsible for the construction of the WTC PATH station, the Oculus, Retail Mall, 1 World Trade Center, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, Liberty Park, infrastructure, and streets and other portions of the rebuilt WTC site.



Alan Reiss

Amanda Rogers, P.E., CCM, LEED AP, will be joining Major Capital Projects as the new Director of Construction. In this role, Amanda will lead the construction of the Midtown Bus Terminal and Gateway Projects.



Amanda Rogers

Amanda most recently served as the agency's first female Deputy Chief Engineer where she managed the day-to-day operations of the Port Authority's Engineering Department. Amanda joined the agency in 2001 as an Engineering Associate. In the ensuing years she handled a broad array of assignments of increasing responsibility within the Construction Management Division (CMD) of Engineering. Before her appointment as Deputy Chief Engineer, Amanda served as Chief of Aviation Construction within the Engineering Department.

In 2024, Amanda received the Trailblazer award from Women Builders Council (WBC) recognizing her dedication to empowering women and advancing diversity and inclusion across all sectors of the building industry. Other notable recognitions include Professional Women in Construction's "20 Under 40 Outstanding Woman in Construction", WBC's "Woman Build of the Year" and NJ Alliance for Action's "Salute to Women in Construction".

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Participants met a host of PA staff and learned all about the agency's innovation efforts, and students were formally recognized for their proposals. Also announced were the two teams – A.R.E.S. from NYIT and L.I.N.C. from the Stevens Institute of Technology – that will advance to the next phases of the competition, where they will prototype and pilot their proposals. Students from both teams also secured a summer 2025 internship with the PA.



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CALENDAR

PAWC-WIT: Revisiting Rally

Thursday, February 20th from 2 to 2:45 p.m. The Port Authority Women's Council's Women in Technology chapter is excited to showcase United Healthcare's Rally and its new features for this year. Representatives from UHC and HRD will discuss the new benefits offered in the new Rally app. Please email WIT@panynj.gov for any questions. [Use this Teams link](#) at the start time.

RETIREMENTS

Join together in wishing **Elia Zedeno**, Manager of Engineering Business Services, well in her retirement.



Elia Zedeno

Elia, whose last day was on January 17, had been with the agency for nearly 45 years, making her the longest tenured employee in Engineering.

Elia started with the agency in 1980 in the Human Resources Department. She quickly rose through the ranks, later working in Comptroller's, Management & Budget, and finally, Engineering.

Elia had long been the subject matter expert on Engineering's financial matters. The Engineering Department greatly appreciates her hard work, dedication, and contributions.

Please join together in extending your best wishes to Elia as she embarks on this new chapter in her life. Employees are welcome to post a message on [Elia's Kudo Board](#).

GOT NEWS FOR NEXT TIME?

Do you have news from your team, department or employee group to share in the next PA News? Send it to panews@panynj.gov by February 21 to be included in the February 28 issue.

