

Stormwater Sponge Park in Gowanus

DEP, in partnership with design professionals, local elected officials, and community leaders, recently announced plans to build a Sponge Park adjacent to the Gowanus Canal. The 1,800 square foot park will be located where 2nd Street dead ends on the west side of the Canal and will be specially designed to capture and retain stormwater that flows down 2nd Street before it reaches

the Canal. DEP is providing engineering and construction administration services for the roughly \$1.5 million park which was recognized last month by the New York City Public Design Commission. Working in conjunction with DEP's more than \$200 million in ongoing and future water quality initiatives around the Gowanus Canal, the park will help beautify the neighborhood and improve the cleanliness of the water.



Spotlight on Safety

Avoid Electrical Hazards in the Office

The presence of electrical equipment in the typical office space can expose workers to serious hazards that can cause shocks, burns, and fires. These types of incidents are usually a result of faulty or defective equipment, unsafe installation, or misuse of equipment, including power strips plugged into power strips.

Here are a few tips to help protect against electrical incidents:

- Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances and never plug in more than

one high-wattage appliance at a time.

- Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock and fire.
- Inspect electrical cords to ensure they are not frayed, cracked, or otherwise damaged.
- Do not run electrical cords through high-traffic areas, under carpets, or across doorways.

For additional information on avoiding electrical hazards in the office read [OSHA's Fact Sheet on Working Safely with Electricity](#).

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. 🐱

Commissioner's Corner

For many college students, summertime is all about taking a break from school work, reuniting with friends, and enjoying the nice weather. However, for one group of dedicated young professionals, this summer has been spent working alongside the nearly 6,000 professionals here at DEP in our summer internship program. A strong internship program is a summer tradition at DEP. It is part of our efforts to recruit and retain the best and the brightest which is one of the reasons we continue to be among the top water utilities in the nation. This summer 75 interns representing more than 20 schools and majoring in engineering, chemistry, biology, political science, law, wildlife sciences, history, English, and business dedicated their time and energy to learn about the important work we do and expand their skill sets.

This year we were also fortunate to have five interns who worked with us last summer return to continue their professional development. **Sorock Kim** is pursuing a Master's degree in Civil and Urban Engineering at NYU Polytechnic Institute and has been interning in the Office of Engineering Audits. **Shreya Amin** is also studying at NYU Polytechnic Institute, majoring in Environmental Science and interning in the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment. **Kate Roosa** is studying Environmental Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and spent this summer working in the Bureau of Water Supply. **Callie Siu** is majoring in Environmental Engineering at City College (cuny) and worked in the Office of Green Infrastructure. And, finally, **Aminul Haque** is a Mechanical Engineering major at NYU Polytechnic Institute and interned in the Bureau of Environmental Compliance.

Many of our summer interns go on to have great careers at DEP, and at other organizations in our industry. In fact, BWT Deputy Commissioner **Vinny Sapienza** got his start in DEP's summer internship program in 1981 and began working for the department two years later. This week marks the end of this year's summer internship program.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our summer interns for their hard work. I look forward to seeing the presentations they have prepared about their summer projects Thursday morning in the 3rd floor cafeteria at Lefrak.

Another summertime tradition in New York is the City's observance of National Night Out—an annual event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watches in which local police precincts organize anti-crime rallies with the participation of local business and civic organizations. In New York, the NYPD hosts community block parties, and many city, state and federal agencies take part. The first National Night Out took place on Tuesday, August 7, 1984. That first year, 2.5 million Americans took part across 400 communities in 23 states. National Night Out has grown tremendously and now involves over 37 million people in 15,000 communities from all fifty states, U.S. Territories, Canadian cities, and military bases worldwide. This evening, in celebration of the 30th annual National Night Out, I will present a proclamation on behalf of Mayor Bloomberg to the 115th Precinct which patrols East Elmhurst, North Corona and Jackson Heights. National Night Out is a fun event for the whole family and a great opportunity to meet the men and women who protect our City. I encourage anyone who is interested to join me this evening at the 115th precinct, or visit a National Night Out event in your community.

Focus on the Field



The Air Pollution Control Code, or Air Code, is one way in which the City aims to improve and protect our air resources and DEP's Bureau of Environmental Compliance (BEC) is responsible for enforcing the Code's rules and regulations. Air Pollution Control Engineer **Remond Rizkala** has been with BEC since 1989 and he works with an important segment of the city's small business owners, specifically dry cleaners, to ensure that their industrial cleaning equipment, a potentially significant source of pollution, is correctly permitted, installed, and operating so that it complies with the Code.

Originally from Egypt, Rizkala earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Assuit University and a master's in metal working from Cairo University. For a number of years he oversaw production at a large steel company before relocating to the United States and earning a P.E. degree from the University of Albany. Rizkala joined DEP as an Air Pollution Inspector and was later promoted to Air Pollution Control Engineer. His time in the private sector informs his work as he makes every effort to work with small business owners to encourage compliance.

"For small businesses, there is often a very fine line between earning a profit and suffering a loss," said Rizkala. "Part of my job is to help them understand that New Yorkers will reward those businesses that are good neighbors and comply with environmental regulations."

Dry cleaning businesses are present in almost every residential section of the city and many use perchloroethylene, or perc,

in the cleaning process. The use of perc is highly regulated and BEC reviews and approves all plans for its use by dry cleaners, issues permits, and conducts inspections. Working with **Kit Liang**, the Director of Air Engineering, Rizkala conducts regular compliance inspections.

During a recent inspection in Queens, Rizkala used a diagnostic instrument to take perc readings from inside the drum of an industrial dry cleaner, from the clothes themselves once they were removed, and from the area surrounding the machine. If a reading is captured that exceeds the allowable threshold, Rizkala will recommend corrective maintenance. A follow-up inspection is conducted within 30 days and a certificate of operation is issued only when all operations are found to be in compliance with the Air Code.

"Remond's background in engineering and his experience in the private sector allow him to effectively convey to business owners that compliance with the Air Code will be good for their bottom line," said **Mike Gilseman**, Assistant Commissioner for Environmental Compliance. "Remond is a dedicated professional and his work helps ensure the safety of all New Yorkers."

Rizkala played soccer in the past and he continues to be an avid fan of the sport. He also regularly reads *Scientific American* and other technical publications to keep up with the latest engineering trends. Now a resident of Queens, Rizkala is very proud of his family including his three sons, a pharmacist and two doctors.

Flushing Bay Bioswales Blooming



The ancillary benefits of the installation of bioswales are in full bloom around Lefrak headquarters! The 21 bioswales installed in the Flushing Bay drainage area thus far are collecting and managing the stormwater that falls on rooftops, parking lots, sidewalks, and streets, and keeping it out of the combined sewer system. This helps reduce overflows and improves the health and cleanliness of Flushing Bay. The bioswales also bring some welcome color and shade to the streetscape.

Barrels of Fun on Staten Island



This past Saturday, DEP distributed hundreds of 60-gallon rain barrels to homeowners on Staten Island. The rain barrels connect directly to a home's downspout and collect and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. This water can then be used over time to water lawns and gardens. By collecting the stormwater that would otherwise run off into the street, the use of rain barrels helps mitigate roadway flooding and eases pressure on the City's sewer system and treatment plants. Rain barrels also help reduce homeowner's water bills as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. Since 2008, DEP has distributed more than 2,300 rain barrels and this past weekend's event was held at the College of Staten Island.

A Hike Worth the View



As part of the ongoing effort to open City property for low-impact activities and help bolster the tourism economy in the watersheds, DEP is working with the Catskill Mountain Club to build a new hiking trail overlooking the Pepacton Reservoir in Delaware County. Look for an announcement later this month!

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