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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Talking Kiosk Unveiled at Penn Station

MTA Chairman E. Virgil Conway today led the unveiling ceremony marking the installation of Penn Station's new "Talking Kiosk." Joining him were MTA Long Island Rail Road President Tom Prendergast and Jane Crotty, Director of Community Relations and Economic Development for Baruch College.

Designed for easy use and offering way-finding information to help a blind or visually impaired traveler navigate the station, the kiosk will be permanently installed in the LIRR terminal at Penn Station.

Chairman Conway said, "Technology has changed our lives for the better in so many ways, and I am pleased that we have been able to develop such an easy-to-use information system to help thousands of visually impaired customers find their way around this complex transit facility."

The "Talking Kiosk" combines a tactile and large-print map of the station with a talking computer that responds when points on the map are pressed. By following simple instructions, customers can be directed to LIRR ticket windows, track locations, MTA New York City Transit subway lines, MTA Police Headquarters, restrooms, and other important passenger services. It also gives directions to Amtrak and New Jersey Transit services at Penn Station.

The system was designed so that additional information, such as scheduling and fares, can be added in the future. Also, it will automatically collect data on the type of information requested so that the MTA can better understand and respond to customer needs.

The MTA and LIRR provided funding for the "Talking Kiosk," which was originally piloted for five months in 1996 with information focusing on LIRR. It was developed at the Baruch Center for the Visually Impaired in collaboration with the American Foundation for the Blind and the Stein Partnership, and with assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration, and Project ACTION of the National Easter Seal Society.