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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Brooklyn–Battery Tunnel General Manager Renéé; Shepherd 54,000 Daily Trips, All in a Day's Work

Renéé; Shepherd is a busy woman during the course of even the most "normal" day in her role as General Manager of the Brooklyn–Battery Tunnel. She approaches her responsibilities at this major New York City crossing with the calm efficiency and good humor that has been her trademark since she joined the MTA as a weekend Temporary Bridge and Tunnel Officer in 1987.

The Brooklyn–Battery Tunnel is an integral part of the daily commute into Lower Manhattan for many thousands of New Yorkers, and handles an average of 54,000 daily vehicle crossings by cars, trucks and express buses. On a typical day Shepherd manages the clockwork maneuvers of its 225 employees, involving everything from aiding customers, monitoring truck check points, and facilitating traffic flow during peak–hour travel, to tunnel–washing, coordinating construction and—throughout all tasks—maintaining a safe environment for customers and workers. The facility also operates a high occupancy vehicle lane in the morning and an additional Brooklyn–bound lane in the evening to accommodate commuters.

"We have a wonderful mix of very capable employees who are positive about their work, and that translates into positive efforts to make our customers' trip as efficient as possible," said Shepherd.

The Queens native is proud of her team of 150 Bridge and Tunnel Officers, Sergeants and Lieutenants. Shepherd also cites her management staff, notably Maintenance Superintendent Marc Mende and Operations Superintendent Mark Valentin, for their efficiency and agency–wide experience. In addition, the tunnel has a professional engineering contingent led by Facility Engineer Robert Kushmock.

Over the weekend, Ms. Shepherd and her staff were hosts to 20,000 runners for the Stephen Siller Run. Every September since 9/11 the facility is the starting point for the "Tunnel–to–Towers Run," commemorating the heroism of firefighter Stephen Siller. A firefighter with FDNY Squad 1 of Park Slope, Brooklyn, Siller was off–duty on September 11, 2001, when he heard about the attack and immediately headed for the tunnel. When he couldn't drive through the tunnel Siller strapped his gear on his back and ran through the tunnel; he did not survive the collapse of the towers. The annual charity run retraces his footsteps, and proceeds benefit various charities, including the NYC Firefighter Burn Center.

Ms. Shepherd, who earned her undergraduate and MBA degrees at St. John's University, has worked in a wide range of capacities at Bridges and Tunnels, beginning with her stint as temporary BTO. She was enlisted as a participant in the MTA Future Managers training program, which fosters talent in entry level employees. Ms. Shepherd has also served the agency as Safety Programs Coordinator, and in supervisory roles at the Queens Midtown Tunnel, the Throgs Neck, Marine Parkway–Gil Hodges Memorial and Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridges. She has been Brooklyn–Battery General Manager since the end of 2006. Prior to joining MTA full–time in 1993, Shepherd worked for the Queens Borough President in a variety of roles.

The Brooklyn–Battery Tunnel opened to traffic on May 25, 1950, after a decade of halted construction due to shortages of iron and steel in World War II. When it opened and to this day, it is the longest continuous under–river vehicular tunnel in North America. Average daily traffic for the tunnel is 54,000.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' facilities, which connect the five boroughs of New York City, are the Triborough, Throgs Neck, Bronx–Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano–Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway–Gil Hodges Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Brooklyn–Battery Tunnels.



Photo caption: René Shepherd, General Manager of the Brooklyn–Battery Tunnel, stands before the toll plaza in Brooklyn.