



MTA Press Releases

Select Language | ▼

Press Release

July 9, 2008

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA Long Island Rail Road Turning 'Trash Into Cash'

REPORTS \$3 MILLION IN REVENUE FROM SALE OF SCRAP SINCE 2006

MTA Long Island Rail Road President Helena Williams reported today that the sale of scrap metal salvaged by the LIRR has brought in more than \$3 million since 2006, including \$718,469 so far this year.

"We know that our neighbors appreciate a clean right-of-way," said Williams. "Clearing debris has obvious environmental benefits and is important for safety. But it has also become a revenue source that helps offset the cost of our cleaning efforts. Wherever feasible, 'trash for cash' is the way the Long Island Railroad is going."

This initiative comes as MTA Executive Director Elliot G. Sander has ordered the LIRR and other MTA agencies to tighten their belts by reducing expenses and operating more efficiently in the face of budget pressures brought on by a worsening economy. Sander has ordered all MTA agencies to reduce spending by six percent during the next four years. The LIRR 'trash for cash' program generated an extra \$400,000 that will help close this year's budget gap.

Since 2006, more than 6,000 gross tons of scrap - mostly old running rail replaced during routine maintenance - has been collected by LIRR workers doing targeted clean-ups with a high-rail crane equipped with a giant magnet. Old train wheels and axles, metal shavings, copper wire and railroad tie plates and fasteners are also part of the salvage sold off.

With 700 miles of track, cleaning the right-of-way is an ongoing effort. In some cases, debris has accumulated along the track bed over many years. To ensure it is getting a fair price for the used metals, the LIRR uses a truck scale at the Hillside Maintenance Facility in Hollis, Queens to weigh the salvaged materials.

In 2007, LIRR workers combed 69 miles on the Hempstead, Main Line, Oyster Bay and West Hempstead branches removing over 2,700 tons of scrap, 183,089 old railroad ties and 29,750 cubic yards of debris.

Through April of this year, crews have so far removed 1,399 gross tons of scrap metal, 38,761 railroad ties and 9,350 cubic feet of debris. In each of the last three years, the revenue from scrap metal sales has exceeded the LIRR's own projections.

The scrap metal recycling program is in keeping with the Railroad's efforts to meet environmental goals set in April by the MTA Commission on Sustainability. The Commission was created last year to study ways the agency could become more environmentally friendly.

The Railroad is taking steps to reduce its hazardous waste output, working to recycle waste at each of its stations and using only environmentally safe cleaning products.

"We are working closely with the Commission on Sustainability and the MTA and are committed to using more renewable resources, minimizing waste and decreasing our impact on the environment," said Williams.