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Press Release

May 21, 2008

[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Summer Prep Time at the Rockaway Bridges

Memorial Day is on the horizon and New Yorkers will be heading to the beach, so MTA Bridges and Tunnels' two Rockaways crossings—the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and the Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridges—are gearing up for the seasonal doubling of daily traffic in a variety of ways.

The north-and south-bound ramps at the Cross Bay Bridge, which have been closed for major reconstruction, will re-open by this weekend or next weekend in plenty of time for the busy summer months. (The date is uncertain because the required paving is weather-dependent.) The agency will not close any ramps again until after Labor Day. This access is especially timely since the Cross Bay broke its own record for most vehicular trips in 2007—a total of 7.8 million, the single busiest day being Sunday, July 8th of the Independence Day weekend when 33,275 vehicles crossed.

"While most people look forward to relaxing come summer, we kick into overdrive here," said General Manager John Ryder, who oversees the operation and maintenance of both bridges that connect to the Rockaway peninsula. "Our priority is always to provide our customers with a consistently safe and smooth trip over our crossings, in summer and year-round."

The Marine-Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge had more than 7.9 million vehicles crossing in 2007, the single busiest day being Sunday, August 5th when 33,437 vehicles made the trip.

Maintenance crews at both facilities have been working hard to clear away any winter wear-and-tear and prep the two bridges for increased summer beach traffic. The annual pre-season activities include a thorough maintenance inspection of all areas at both bridges, including all roadways and approaches, lighting, signs, buildings and grounds for any conditions that need to be addressed. Any potholes and broken signs have been repaired; electronic variable message signs have been cleaned and serviced; and all 22 tollbooths have been power-washed.

Extra traffic requires extra staff and college students are brought on as temporary Bridge and Tunnel Officers (BTOs) to help with the increase in beach-related trips. This year 16 temporary workers, chosen by lottery from among 53 who responded to postings at local community boards and on the agency's website, will start work at either the Cross Bay or Marine Parkway Bridges. The first group will report in advance of Memorial Day, and the next crew in time for Independence Day. Seasonal BTOs earn \$90 a day and they are eligible for overtime pay.

"The summer employees help us handle the increase in customers and it gives students the opportunity to learn about our operations," said Ryder. "We work closely with each new seasonal hire to train them in safety procedures so they can handle the job and themselves in what can sometimes be an unpredictable environment."

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. The agency is the largest toll authority in the nation, helping more than 850,000 vehicles and more than a million people reach their destination each day.



Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge



Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge