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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Celebrates Effective Station Enhancement Program

Labor-Management Cooperation Gets Results at Bedford Hills and Elsewhere

Labor and management, business officials, local leaders and MTA board members were on hand Friday at the Bedford Hills train station to congratulate Metro-North employees for the recent improvements completed as part of the railroad's new, interdepartmental effort to better maintain its stations and make them a welcoming front door to the communities it serves.

Metro-North established this aggressive and comprehensive Station Enhancement Program to get station maintenance on a regular schedule to improve the environment for railroad customers.

Metro-North wants to be a good neighbor to the communities we serve," Metro-North President Howard Permut said Friday, at a ceremony honoring the workers. "We want to make sure our stations are an asset and a point of pride to all to use them."

Metro-North provides a vital service to many in our community, especially the daily commuter," said Bedford Town Supervisor Lee Roberts. "We are excited about the wonderful new improvements to the stations in both Bedford Hills and Katonah. The structures have been washed and painted and the installation of new benches, new platform station ID signs and energy efficient lighting has created a more attractive station. We are grateful to Metro-North for making traveling on the railroad a more pleasant experience for our residents."

The results of the Paint Gang initiative are a testament that management and labor can come together and produce a positive result for all," said Chris Silvera, Secretary Treasurer of International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 808, which represents the painters. "And under the leadership of President Permut the company continues to reach out to labor to produce a better outcome for our customers."

The new Paint Gangs report to work at the station they are to paint which means that there is no loss of productivity because there is no travel time. The entire shift is spent painting.

The Station Enhancement Program is a more holistic approach to station maintenance where by everything that needs fixing gets fixed, starting with a fresh coat of Hunter Green paint. While the intensity of each project varies, all upgrade work includes: changing recycling bins if needed, replacing damaged protective film on windows that prevent scratches from ruining the glass, cleaning the station right-of-way (track), re-stenciling the 'Watch the Gap' signs, repairing damaged edge board (the wooden strip between the platform and the train), replacing concrete benches with more comfortable wire ones, fixing shelter heaters, installing energy-efficient lighting, and power washing all station exterior surfaces, windows and overpasses.

The Paint Gangs are supplemented by sheet metal workers, plumbers, masons, carpenters, electricians and elevator mechanics – just about every trade is involved in this team effort.

This year, in addition to Bedford Hills and Katonah, crews are working now at Chappaqua and Mount Kisco. In addition, lead abatement was completed this year at the station building at Peekskill, which then was repainted in its historic color scheme.

In addition, five stations in Connecticut: Wilton; Cannondale; East Norwalk; Rowayton; and Springdale; got the station enhancement treatment, including painting the shelters, replacing glass windows, and installing new recycling containers. Metro-North's partner, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT), also painted most of these stations' exteriors.

Currently, Metro-North is identifying what needs to be done next spring.

We are prioritizing the work that will eventually lead to a cyclical schedule," Permut said.

The first year, two stations were painted: one small, Southeast, and one large, White Plains.

Because of the success of the new approach, in 2011, a second paint gang was created and five stations were spruced up - New Hamburg, Beacon, Cold Spring, Garrison and Cortlandt, all on the Hudson Line.

The work is scheduled so there is little or no impact on customers' commutes. If tracks must be taken out of service so that employees can work safely to paint the overpasses from high rail bucket trucks, to clean the tracks or to install edge boards, the outages are scheduled in off-peak periods.

The Station Gangs' outdoor season, when they focus on station exteriors, is from April through October, and then when cold weather arrives they head indoors to concentrate on interior work.

Last winter, they did their magic at Poughkeepsie Station on the Hudson Line: Woodwork in the Main Waiting Room was repaired by the carpenters, and then sanded, re-stained, and re-varnished; the overpass crown molding, window sills and baseboards were repainted; and the vestibule was refreshed. The Harlem-125th Street Station also got the treatment, with work done on benches, door trims, and radiator covers.

"We hope all this work will make our customers' commute a good start-to-finish experience from the moment they get to their station," Permut said. "Our aim is to provide excellent customer service."