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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota Congratulates LIRR's Gabrielle Rodriguez on Victory in APTA 'Call Center Challenge'

Wantagh Resident Crowned Nation's Best Transit Call Center Professional

Gabrielle Rodriguez, Manager of Long Island Rail Road's Travel Information Center, was honored this week by MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota and LIRR President Helena Williams at a monthly meeting of the MTA Board of Directors. Lhota congratulated Rodriguez for winning the national Call Center Challenge competition sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in Miami last month.

Rodriguez, a resident of Wantagh, L.I., was crowned public transportation's best telephone customer information agent. In the attached photograph, she shows off her trophy to MTA Chairman Lhota (right) and LIRR President Williams (left), and her proud husband Christopher Rodriguez, who is a Lead Transportation Manager at the LIRR.

At the LIRR's Travel Information Center (TIC), located at the Railroad's Hillside Facility in Queens, Rodriguez supervises a staff of 17 and an operation that handled 1.7 million calls in 2011, an average of about 5,000 a day.

APTA's Call Center Challenge recognizes the outstanding efforts of APTA member transit system call center personnel. Each February, the best public transit call center personnel face off in a competition to crown the best in the industry. The competition is open to all public transportation call center personnel in North America. Rodriguez, who joined the LIRR in 2003 from Verizon Communications, was the first representative of the LIRR and the MTA to participate.

Participants are challenged with real life call center scenarios and judged on their ability to resolve each scenario in a friendly and professional manner. But to get into the final competition, APTA judges had to whittle down a field of 31 hopefuls to seven finalists during a pre-selection phone interview in which contestants were required to resolve two common customer call center inquiries. The finals took in front of a live audience on February 28.