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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA LIRR Ridership Up Slightly In 2012 Despite Serious Setbacks of Superstorm Sandy

Ridership Was on the Rise for 13 Straight Months until 4th Quarter

LIRR ridership rose last year, as a steadily improving economy and popular new service to Barclays Center boosted the number of train customers above the previous year despite the loss of millions of rides from Superstorm Sandy.

Total ridership for 2012 was 81.7 million, 0.7 percent higher than in 2011. Ridership had risen for 13 straight months until October, when Sandy ravaged the region, forced temporary service reductions and caused hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of damage to the LIRR.

With repairs underway, service restored and new service investments scheduled to be implemented in March, LIRR President Helena Williams is optimistic about 2013.

Williams said: "We're pleased that ridership last year is up overall despite the difficulty posed by Superstorm Sandy."

Among the 2012 bright spots for the LIRR, now in its 179th year of operation, was the opening in late September of the much-anticipated Barclays Center in Brooklyn, where big draw entertainers like Jay-Z, Barbra Streisand and Justin Bieber and the arrival of the NBA Brooklyn Nets fueled ridership to and from Atlantic Terminal by 334%. Improved on time performance, the restoration of half-hourly weekday service on the Port Washington Branch and the success of events like the PGA Barclays Golf tournament were other factors.

The new Barclays Center is located across the street from the LIRR's new Atlantic Terminal facility at Flatbush Avenue and Atlantic Avenue and the Railroad was ready with enhanced service in September tailored to serve to the arena's sports and entertainment events.

Prior to Sandy, total ridership was up 4.3% over the same period in 2011, strongly suggesting that the LIRR would have enjoyed continued ridership growth if not for the storm.

The impact continued through November and early December largely because the LIRR did not have full use of the two Amtrak tunnels flooded during hurricane. LIRR ridership was off by 17.7% in November compared to November 2011 and the overall loss of ticket sales as a result of Sandy cost the LIRR an estimated \$10.2 million in operating revenue.

With the reopening of the Amtrak tunnels, the LIRR was able to restore full service on December 10th.

Beginning March 4, the LIRR will be enhancing service on the Ronkonkoma, West Hempstead, Atlantic, Montauk and Long Beach branches.

"History shows that more frequent service means more ridership," Williams said. "As the economy improves, we want to be ready with appropriate levels of service."