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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Rebuilding Efforts Top Metro-North's Agenda in 2015

Aggressive Track Maintenance Program Continues

The major safety initiatives and aggressive track improvements that defined 2014 for MTA Metro-North Railroad will continue in 2015, Railroad President Joseph Giulietti announced Tuesday.

The railroad also expects continued improvements as the last of the 405 M-8 cars are placed into service on the New Haven Line this spring.

"Numerous safety initiatives, both implemented and underway, and our ongoing, aggressive track maintenance program are paying off as reliability increases, slowly but surely," Giulietti told the Metro-North Committee of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board. "It is critical that we bring our infrastructure to a state of good repair and that we continue to focus each and every employee on the importance of safety as our core value."

The railroad achieved record ridership in 2014 carrying a projected 84.7 million customers, higher than the previous record of 83.6 million set in 2008, and a 1.4% increase over 2013.

Giulietti also announced on-time performance goals for 2015 of 93% for trains operating in the AM and PM peaks and 92% for off-peak trains. The slightly lower goal for off-peak and weekends acknowledges that this is when most track work is performed. In 2014, Metro-North achieved an overall on-time performance of 91.5%.

Metro-North also set a goal for equipment reliability, known as mean distance between failure, of 185,000 miles, an increase from the 2014 goal of 160,000 miles.

Achievements in improved safety include the installation of alerters on the entire fleet to ensure that train engineers remain responsive, the launch a pilot program to identify key employees who may have sleep apnea, and the award of a contract for the purchase of inward- and outward-facing cameras onboard all trains in the fleet.

Customer complaints in 2014 dropped 30 percent overall through December and complaints about late and cancelled trains dropped 60 percent.

Here are some highlights of Metro-North's track program in 2014:

Railroad workers replaced 42,500 crossties on all three lines, re-surfaced 83 miles of track across all lines resulting in upgrades to 20 miles of right of way, including drainage improvements. Two dozen new switches (where tracks move from one track to another) were installed on the main lines, at Grand Central Terminal and in yards to improve operational flexibility.

Three highway grade crossings were renewed at Chippawalla Road and Pleasant Ridge Road on the Harlem Line and at Manitou Road on the Hudson Line. Workers replaced 7,000 feet of continuous welded rail on six curves on the Hudson Line and 4,700 feet of rail on three curves on the New Haven Line.

Steel repairs were made to four under grade bridges and timber bridge decks were replaced on nine bridges east and west of the Hudson River.

New timber ties, continuous welded rail, new miter rails and presence detectors were installed at the WALK Bridge, in Norwalk, Conn., and new timber ties were installed at the DEVON Bridge in Milford, Conn., and at the Harlem River Lift Bridge, that connects Manhattan and the Bronx.

In 2015, Metro-North Maintenance of Way forces will continue to clean or replace "foul ballast" throughout the territory. Ballast refers to the small stones that stabilize the track structure that sometimes gets contaminated and become less effective.

Metro-North also will create a new gang that focuses solely on drainage improvements, as standing water is damaging to good track.

Another specialty track gang will be created to replace ties in areas that are difficult in which to work, such as interlockings and adjacent to station platforms.

Also on tap is the installation of eight miles of continuous welded rail, replacement of eight grade crossings in Connecticut and installation of fiberglass brackets and channels to support new aluminum third rail that will be installed in targeted locations.

"The progress that has been made is due to the hard work and dedication of the workers of Metro-North and I am proud of them," added Giulietti, who took the helm less than a year ago, on February 10, 2014.

