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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Railroad Public Safety Program Receives Top Honor from American Public Transportation Association

Free Rail Safety Program Reaches Students, Drivers, Train Riders and Residents

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced that it has earned the highest safety award from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). The commendation, known as the Gold Award for Safety, was awarded to Metro-North for implementing a free, community outreach program designed to educate and promote rail safety. The program, known as TRACKS – an acronym for “Together Railroads And Communities Keeping Safe” – is a project of Metro-North Railroad’s Office of System Safety, and is modeled on a similar long-standing program at the Long Island Rail Road.

Safety awareness and education around grade crossings and tracks form the foundation of Metro-North’s TRACKS outreach program. TRACKS is designed to reach as many students (grades K-12), pedestrians, drivers (civilian and commercial), train riders and residents throughout Metro-North’s territory as possible.

Since its inception in 2016, TRACKS has reached over 191,000 people, and the program has an ever growing scope of safety education elements. In 2016, TRACKS focused primarily on rider safety, grade crossing and trespassing. In 2017, the program expanded to include campaigns about emergency preparedness, gap safety and bridge plate safety, targeting efforts to prevent customer injuries and change risky behavior around trains and tracks. TRACKS continues to expand in 2018 to include suicide prevention partnerships.

To make the program more appealing to younger children, TRACKS introduced safety ambassadors, a safety super-hero known as, Metro-Man, and his faithful companion, a dog named Tracks. The characters are incorporated into safety presentations and are featured in coloring and activity books that help reinforce the safety message. Metro-Man - a Metro-North employee dressed in a special costume that features a voice modulator and LED display – and his sidekick Tracks, who is played by a MTAPD canine, also make appearances at community events and safety presentations.

TRACKS outreach includes connecting with students through programs at schools, camps and community youth organizations, reaching Metro-North customers through posters, overhead train announcements, seat flyers, social media and the Traintime App/email, and connecting with local residents and drivers (commercial and non-commercial) through community events, billboards and driver education courses.

“We’re proud to receive this honor from the American Public Transportation Association,” said Metro-North President Catherine Rinaldi. “Earning the Gold Award is a recognition of our intense focus on promoting a culture of safety throughout the organization. TRACKS allows us to take a focused, proactive and aggressive approach to promoting rail safety. Whether educating the public about the ‘safety do’s and don’ts’ of riding the train, driving through a grade crossing or walking near the tracks, the TRACKS program can save lives.”

For information about the TRACKS program, visit <http://web.mta.info/mnr/tracks>. If you know of any businesses, organizations or community groups that would benefit from our program, please have them reach out by phone 914-461-0459, or email MNRTracks@mnr.org to obtain more information or schedule a free presentation.

This is the second time in three years that Metro-North Railroad has been honored with APTA’s Rail Safety Gold Award. Metro-North won the Gold Safety Award in 2016 for developing a state-of-the art enhanced employee protection system known as EEPS. EEPS is a technology-based system created by Metro-North that allows the supervisor in charge of a work site to prevent trains from entering a given stretch of track by receiving confirmation that protection is in place along with a random, confidential "release code" via a smartphone or pager.