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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: Metro-North President Rinaldi Appears on 107.1 The Peak

MTA Metro-North Railroad President Catherine Rinaldi appeared on 107.1 The Peak with Coach Chris Rodriguez to discuss Metro-North's leaf-fighting, slip-slide efforts.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

The Coach: Coach here on 107.1 The Peak. Via zoom I'm here with a very special guest, who I think may have a little bit of beef with me, and understandably so. Her name is Cathy Rinaldi, and she is the head of the MTA if I'm not mistaken, right, Cathy?

Catherine Rinaldi: No actually, thank God I'm not. No, I'm the head of Metro-North.

The Coach: Metro-North, excuse me, Metro-North, yes. Now, on a day where it's rainy, Pete the other day said that there was approximately, I think, yesterday said there were some problems on the tracks where we were slipping and sliding all over the place. And I just threw out there maybe some drying ideas; maybe a shammy, maybe a hairdryer. Now please explain to me what the problem is keeping these tracks dry.

Rinaldi: Okay, so I'm driving to work the other day, just like minding my own business and, and you got the report about our having 10 to 15 minute delays because of slip-slide, and you actually used the word "bogus" to describe that. So whenever I hear bogus and Metro-North in the same sentence, I kind of pick up my head. So basically, slip-slide is something that happens every fall, every railroad in the northeast deals with it. Basically, you know, leaves come down and the pectin in the leaves kind of adheres to the rail and makes the rail really slippery. And on rainy days, but especially like misty days or drizzly kind of days, it just gets particularly slippery. So we do have a solution, it's not a hairdryer, because it's not really the wetness, it's the slipperiness. So we have a power washer that we use to just basically hose down the rail, and it runs essentially all fall long to keep the rails clear. But on those mornings, where it's a little drizzly or wet, we just tell our trains to go a little bit more slowly. And that's why you're seeing those kinds of delays in the mornings when we have those kinds of conditions.

The Coach: See now, there was my confusion. Because I feel like it rains all the time, but I never hear about slip-slide until, so I guess it's really just because of the fall and the leaves.

Rinaldi: Yup, exactly. It's just in the fall, it's just for these few weeks when we have the leaves down, you know, all over the place. And, you know, once the leaves are all down in the winter this is not an issue anymore. So it's just these few weeks when we have the leaves coming down all over the territory, and yeah, so we just like basically blast them off with the power washers that run all over the rails up and down, and, you know, we do we always tell our train crews to be out for these conditions. I mean, I think that, you know, some of our customers have had the experience where they'll be riding on the train, and the train will actually slide right past the station. So our trains, you know, then they'll have to back up to go back into the station. It happens, you know, a fair amount during this time of year. So we just tell our, yeah.

The Coach: It's not even really that it's sliding off the track. It stays on the track, it just keeps going.

Rinaldi: Exactly, exactly.

The Coach: Huh, that is fascinating.

Rinaldi: Yeah, it is. Yeah, it's something that not everybody knows about. So anyways, so we just tell our train crews that on those mornings, where we actually see the conditions out there, or think that it's likely that we're going to see the conditions out there, they just go a little bit more slowly. Which is why, you know, you'll get those reports for 10 to 15 minute delays.

The Coach: I see. So, a hairdryer really wouldn't help at all in this situation. I was just trying to throw out, I'm a brain, they call me an idea man Cathy. I throw out some ideas you know, hey who knows what works, but now we know it's a power washer is what you need.

Rinaldi: It's a power washer, exactly. No the hairdryer was a good idea, absolutely. But yeah, so power washer does the trick, and we've had it for a long time now. And it usually works and you know, in a couple weeks all the leaves will be done we won't have this problem anymore until next year.

The Coach: What do you guys now, while we're on the topic of clearing these tracks, what do you guys do in the snow? That's what I always wondered. See, that's a little trickier. You can't just throw a plow on the front of one of these trains let it go.

Rinaldi: Well you know, when the snow, when the snow is not so bad we actually want to keep running. You know, just keeping running the trains when you have you know, just a few inches of snow kind of keeps thinking keeps things clear. Big storms, when snow gets really high, that's when, you know,

we actually start suspending service. Because, you know, the most important thing is making sure that everybody stays safe, so we don't want to have trains stranded out there when you have a lot of snow over the third rail. So, you know, if you have just a couple inches here or there we just keep going.

The Coach: You know, it's something I guess we take for granted, that the trains are always kind of running.

Rinaldi: Yeah.

The Coach: And there's somebody who's getting those trains running on time, and that's Cathy, that's Cathy Rinaldi.

Rinaldi: Not me personally, I've got a great team. So you know we do we do the best we can, and you know it's obviously a tough time now with COVID and everything else but I've got a fantastic team and, you know, they get the job done and we try to get people going where they need to go every morning and bring them home every night.

The Coach: That's right. That's the goal. Get those trains running on time and keep everybody safe. All right, Cathy, thank you. Well, let's see, now I feel like, now that I know you're a listener anytime I have any Metro-North questions, I know who to go to. That's good.

Rinaldi: That's exactly right. You have your people call my people, you know, they can hook us up.

The Coach: Will do, it'll keep me from saying dumb ideas on the air and how to solve these problems. I'll get the actual answer. Anyway, thanks, Cathy.