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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Conductor who Helped Nab Career Criminal Honored by Railroad

Three Employees Deemed Railroad Industry Leaders Also Honored by Metro-North

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced special recognition for four railroad employees by the MTA Board. “As varied as their achievements are, all four employees share the character and leadership abilities that help make Metro-North a great railroad,” said Joseph Giulietti, President of Metro-North.

Metro-North conductor John Kelly’s swift actions helped police apprehend a serial burglar. Anamaria Bonilla, Assistant Chief Engineer, Track and Structures for Metro-North has been recognized as 2016 Outstanding Woman of the Year by the League of Railway Industry Women. Frank Mesa, Director of Operations, Training and Development for Metro-North has been elected as both the new President of the New York chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) and a Council of Presidents’ representative on the organization’s National Board of Directors. Jeff Bernstein, Director of Finance, Administration, & Crew Management, Transportation was named a “Rising Star” by Progressive Railroading Magazine.

“John, Anamaria, Jeff and Frank have done more than meet the challenges of the job,” said Giulietti, “they’ve risen above those challenges. They help keep Metro-North running safely and efficiently, and I thank them for their extraordinary effort.”

Metro-North Conductor John Kelly Puts “If You See Something, Say Something” Into Action

Metro-North Conductor, John Kelly, put the MTA’s “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign into action when he spotted an alleged perp boarding his southbound train at the Poughkeepsie station on July 26.

Only the week before, a Dutchess County Sheriff Detective approached Kelly with a picture of the suspect. Kelly immediately recognized him. In June, the suspect boarded his train and asked Kelly if he could be billed for his ticket because he didn’t have any cash or credit cards on him. “He boarded my train and took a seat near the front of the car,” Kelly recalled. “He was wearing a baseball cap and he did not make eye contact with me, but he was polite when I wrote him a bill for the fare.” To help keep him on the look-out, Kelly asked the detective to send him an email with the suspect’s photo.

The Dutchess County Sheriff’s office believed the suspected burglar was traveling on Metro-North trains. The MTAPD put together a photo flyer with information about the suspect, and Metro-North’s Security Command Center circulated it to conductors.

“When I saw the suspect at the Poughkeepsie station, I knew he was the man the cops were searching for,” said Kelly. Keeping his cool, Kelly jumped into action. He walked to the back to an empty car and, as directed on the flyer, called the MTAPD. “You have twenty minutes to get to Poughkeepsie before the train leaves the station,” Kelly told the MTAPD Sergeant. “I’m not a cop; I’m not telling how to do your job, but if you show up at the station with lights and sirens or the suspect is going to be spooked. He’ll know he’s been identified.”

The MTAPD alerted the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office; Detectives responded to the Poughkeepsie station where they boarded the train and arrested the suspect, David Gipson. Gipson, a career criminal and convicted felon, was on parole and not allowed to leave the area when police nabbed him. Following his arrest, detectives linked him to 16 burglaries in Dutchess, Putnam and Westchester counties. The apprehension and arrest took place without any sort of altercation. Gipson was charged with burglary and is being held at the Dutchess County Jail.

“I cannot stress how important it is, that if our employees and customers see something, say something,” said Edward C. McDonald, Manager of Metro-North Railroad’s Security Command Center. “We investigate all tips—nothing goes unchecked—whether on the MTAPD or Security side.”

Anamaria Bonilla Recognized as 2016 Outstanding Woman of the Year by the League of Railway Industry Women

Anamaria Bonilla, Assistant Chief Engineer, Track and Structures for Metro-North, has been recognized as 2016 Outstanding Woman of the Year by the League of Railway Industry Women. Anamaria is responsible for the structural integrity, safety and reliability of Metro-North’s infrastructure, which includes over 800 miles of track, 385 overhead bridges, 846 undergrade bridges, 116 passenger stations and thousands of drainage facilities, transmission poles and catenary structures.

Bonilla earned the award for consistently striving to implement technological improvements that enhance the Railroad’s safety and efficiency. Among her many accomplishments, she was the driving force behind Metro-North’s installation of bridge management system, which includes an inspection app and bridge strike monitors. Working with a bridge monitoring firm, Bonilla created custom algorithms to detect all bridge strikes and report them in real time, improving the Railroad’s operation. She initiated services to provide Metro-North with machine vision inspection of all rail joints and ties, providing the Railroad with a complete rail joint inventory and an evaluation metric for joint replacement. This high tech level of inspection enables the Railroad to be even more proactive with its track maintenance, identifying potential issues before they impact service.

"Using the latest systems and software is essential to raising the standard of our practices at Metro-North, and it is indeed a great feeling to be recognized by a nationwide entity," said Bonilla. "The railroad industry is very much dependent on all of its parts, and I'd like to thank the incredible team of people who I work with every day."

Frank Mesa Elected New President of Conference of Minority Transportation Officials

Frank Mesa, Director of Operations, Training and Development for Metro-North has been elected as both the new President of the New York chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) and a Council of Presidents' representative on the organization's National Board of Directors.

COMTO's mission is to ensure a level playing field and maximum participation in the transportation industry for minority individuals, businesses and communities of color through advocacy, information sharing, training, education and professional development. Although COMTO's focus has traditionally been to recruit minority members, Mesa, who is himself of Cuban descent, said he wants to broaden the membership to include a diverse cross-section of all railroad employees—including non-minorities.

"Through our work in minority communities, we will prepare people to step into leadership roles to help make the New York transportation industry truly reflective of the diverse communities we serve," said Mesa. "In part because New York represents one of the most diverse regions in the world, we have an open door to people from every culture, race, religion and sex, and want to encourage them to join our chapter at this time."

Jeff Bernstein Recognized as Rising Star by Progressive Railroading Magazine

Hundreds of nominations flooded in from across the country. But after sifting through the pile, it came down to just 20. And Jeff Bernstein, Metro-North's Director of Finance, Administration and Crew Management--Transportation, was among the chosen.

Bernstein was recently recognized as a Rising Star by Progressive Railroading Magazine. The magazine defines a Rising Star as "someone under the age of 40, who has made or is making a positive impact on his or her company, organization, department or team and is viewed by others as an up-and-coming leader in the rail industry."

Bernstein's tech/finance/business acumen and deep knowledge about the railroad have been crucial to his work implementing new innovations and special projects that help make the Railroad even safer, including a new electronic Hours of Service (eHOS) system. The Federal Railroad Administration requires that conductors and engineers have a sufficient number of hours of rest between shifts to ensure that they're not overly fatigued. Bernstein's electronic hours of system makes it far easier for employees to record their hours and for the Railroad to certify their accuracy.

"We are in the people business and we need everyone on board to make the railroad run to its highest standard," said Bernstein. "We also want to be as accommodating as we can be to our customers while ensuring that we are operating safely, efficiently and effectively."