

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers

May 2017

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Our Track Record

Every spring our Track forces (*that's Maintenance-of-Way employees to us insiders*) shift into high gear as we continue to make improvements to our infrastructure that will ensure your commute is safe and reliable.



The 2017 "Track Season" kicked off on April 1

(one day before baseball season), and we have an aggressive program planned as we work to bring our infrastructure to a state of good repair.

Let's start with railroad ties.

We're planning to replace 42,000 of them before the end of the year. That's 19,000 on the Hudson Line, 7,000 on the New Haven Line, and, on the other side of the Hudson River, 16,000 on the Port Jervis Line (which we own and maintain in New York State).

Of course, new ties need new rail.

We are looking to replace 1.5 miles of rail on the Hudson Line, 7 miles on the New Haven Line, and half a mile on the Harlem Line.

We are also planning on renewing 34 switches

(a switch allows your train to be guided — or "switched" — from one track to another), seven in Grand Central (already completed), eight on the Hudson Line, two on the Harlem Line (already completed) and 17 on the New Haven Line.

If all of the above isn't enough, our ambitious Grade Crossing Renewal Program will also continue.

In 2016 our forces renewed 18 grade crossings (replacing rail, ties, stone and concrete crossings). We are looking to do 17 this year, with one slated for renewal on the Hudson Line, five set for the Harlem Line, and, on the New Haven Line, six set for the Danbury Branch and five for the Waterbury Branch.

Finally, on several railroad bridges throughout our territory...

we will be making steel and masonry repairs as well as installing new bridge timbers. And, since we are talking about bridges, we will also be making upgrades to four overhead highway bridges that carry local roads over our tracks and we are responsible for maintaining.

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The Tale of the "Albatruss"

No, not the bird that caused so many problems in "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*" (*That was the albatross! Who can forget "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink!"*)

Our teams from Power, Maintenance-of-Way (*remember, that's Track*), and Capital Engineering recently put in place the first of 36 trusses that will form a whole new system that will make managing the power on the New Haven Line much more reliable.

It was installed at a section where the AC catenary has ended and the DC third rail has taken over. (*We called it the 'Albatruss,' because the 100-year-old infrastructure has been a thorn in our side for years!*)

The new truss will not only support the new Con Edison supplied feeds out of Mt. Vernon to New Rochelle, but also the existing aerial feeders and transitional de-energized "change-over" overhead catenary wires between Mt. Vernon Station and the AC electrical phase break at Pelham.

What follows is a "blow-by-blow" description of the installation that occurred overnight, as to not disturb your commute:



The first photo, taken in 1912, shows the old bridge supporting the now defunct Boston – Westchester line just east of Mt. Vernon. The bridge itself was taken down before WWII, but the old concrete piers are still

there, adjacent to our New Haven line tracks between the Mt. Vernon and Pelham Stations.



At the site of the old bridge piers, at about 2 AM, after the last New Haven line train has passed: Here, a 100-ton hydraulic crane lifts a 30-inch diameter by 65-foot tubular truss. This supporting structure was lowered to, and spanned across the old bridge piers. It is at this point along our

tracks that the overhead AC catenary wires change over to the DC powered Third Rail.

The new truss is turned sideways and parallel to the catenary lines (over the tracks) then lowered. New electric 27,600 Volt-AC feeders (called FT3 and FT4) will be installed from the Con Edison supplied Mt. Vernon Substation 23 to the New Rochelle Substation 61. These AC feeders will be strung over the New Haven Line catenary system and supported by the new truss, and 35 similar truss type structures. Those feeders will provide a more robust power supply to our AC system.

After passing the transmission wires (on each side of the tracks), the truss is turned perpendicularly (across our tracks) to be connected to supports mounted to the old bridge piers.

After the truss is in place, it supports the catenary wires (middle) but also the two new feeders on either side.



And just like that, the *albatross* "no longer hangs around our neck — a burden never more!" (*With all apologies to the spirit of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*)



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No Leftovers in These "Doggie Bags"



"It's all in the bag,"

and these could save the life of a specially trained canine in the event of a terror attack or other major threat.

A new Canine (K9) Operational First Aid Kit

developed by the MTA Police Department weighs about 5 pounds and fits over an officer's shoulder.

MTA PD K9s, which number about 50, have become super-important to our operations.

The explosives-detection canine is the best barrier between the terrorist and us.

And that's why it's so important to be able to save those animals that have been injured.

The pack carries special first aid products useable on the dog and on its

handler — and get this — and on a third person — in the event of a terror attack, explosives, chemical attack, or gunshot wounds.

Inside each shoulder bag is Atropine and 2Pam, two drugs that come in auto-injectors to reverse the effects of nerve agents and other chemicals and insecticides.

There is enough in the pack for the dog, the handler, and a third person to reverse the effects of a nerve-agent on the system.

The MTA PD's veterinarian consulted with military researchers

to come up with the right antidotes that could be used with the same applicator and dosage across species. (*Brilliant!*)

Also in the bag is Naloxone, a drug that will reverse the deadly effects of a narcotic overdose, such as heroin. (K9's often have to sniff through discarded bags loaded with opiates, and one big sniff could be deadly.)

The drug works on humans too, and MTA PD have already saved six people from dying of opiate overdoses.

Also inside the kit is a bandage called Quick-Clot, which is applied to arterial wounds to stop bleeding (such as after a major cut from equipment or an explosion).

Private grant funding was obtained to make the bags for the 50-plus K9 units

in operation around the MTA 24/7/365, and to have some left over to give to the NYPD and other local police departments.

Now those are doggie bags worth taking with you!

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Safety Rule of the Issue

A safety reminder from Metro-North:
It's Spring,
so please remember to...

- Walk, don't run, for your train.
- Stand back from the platform edge.
- Watch the gap.
- Avoid moving from car to car, especially on a moving train.
- Keep off the tracks at all times.
- Stop using smartphones/tablets when walking on platforms, stairs & near crossings.

TRACKS
Together We Make It Happen
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Your safety is always our first priority.

MTA

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Courtesy Corner

Journey finally got inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame!

And to celebrate, their fans everywhere, including on our trains, are streaming "*Any Way You Want It*" on their smartphones at full volume!



But what if you don't like Journey? (*Since singer Steve Perry left the band does anyone?*) Should you really have to listen to *"Wheels in the Sky"* bleeding through your neighbor's headphones? (*No, you shouldn't!*)

So *"Don't Stop Believing"* Journey is a great band! Just keep the volume down on your headphones so they can't be heard by others, especially when riding in one of our Quiet Cars. (*Or spring for a pair of those noise cancelling ones! Because good headphones do make good neighbors... And why would you want to listen to Journey on anything else!*)

It's the courteous thing to do!

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Speaking of "Any Way You Want It..."

The best way to "journey" to some of the region's coolest attractions is on Metro-North, after you've purchased one of our discount "Getaway" packages. (*Who doesn't like to save money on rail fare and admission?*)

May we suggest:



Break out your bell bottoms and head to [The Clearwater Festival](#) June 17 & 18

at Croton Point Park! Journey won't be appearing, but Lake Street Dive (*a new Mileposts favorite*), Los Lobos, Richard Thompson and the continually amazing Nick Lowe (*all Mileposts favorites*) will perform.

Or, shake your "tail feather" and take the train to [Green Chimneys 25th Annual Birds of Prey Day](#) (Sunday, June 4)!

It's fun, flight and falconry with more than 100 birds of prey on display and activities for the entire family!



Of course, if your tastes run toward flying reptiles, you may want to head to [Rye Playland](#)

to ride the Dragon Coaster! There are more than 50 major and Kiddyland rides and attractions; a beach, pool, and pier on Long Island Sound; lake boating, entertainment, fireworks, and lots of great food.

See a complete listing of our [Getaways packages](#).

Purchase your discount packages from any Metro-North ticket office (except the destination station) or full-service ticket vending machine.

And don't miss our Staycation Showcase on May 17 in Vanderbilt Hall.



Metro-North's
GetawayDay

**Staycation
Showcase**
in **Grand Central!**



mta.info/mnr/getaways

Wednesday,
May 17
11 AM – 3 PM

Enter to win
Hotel and
Getaway
Packages!

Music Under
New York
Concert

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