

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers October 2014

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Slime Time



October means Halloween, more horror film sequels (*Paranormal Activity 5, anyone?*) and the return of slip slide season.

You've probably heard our train crews mention "slip-slide" to explain minor service delays. This condition is created by a slimy substance left by crushed leaves on our rails that gets even more slippery after it rains.

When a train attempts to speed up or slow down, this gelatinous "slime" can cause the wheels to slip or slide along the rails. In severe cases the train will automatically make an emergency stop, because the on-board computer system perceives "slip-sliding" as the train not slowing down when it should. And this slip-sliding during braking also creates flat spots on the train's wheels, forcing us to take much-needed equipment out of service for repairs.

Over the past several years, we have taken a very proactive approach to combating this "curse" (*no garlic or wooden stakes were involved*), and you've been experiencing the horror of slip slide delays less and less frequently.

[See more details.](#)

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It's Back...



...and ahead of schedule, too!

No, we're not talking about yet another season of *The Walking Dead*. (*But we still can't seem to get enough of those zombies...*)

We're talking about the control house on our New Haven Line near Greenwich that was destroyed by a fire back on May 10.

This critical piece of equipment controls switches and signals allowing trains to switch between all four tracks in a nine mile stretch between Stamford and Port Chester.

A temporary fix had been in place. An emergency panel was installed in late May allowing for manual control, allowing train traffic to safely pass through the area with three of the four tracks available for inbound AM-peak and outbound PM-peak service, which eased congestion.

An initial long-term strategy for rebuilding the damaged control house was to use equipment from a retired one. This would have allowed us to return the control house functionality by year's end, a vast improvement over the typical replacement time for a new control house of 18 months. (The standard process requires design, fabrication, installation, and testing before it can be installed and made fully operational.)

But thanks to the efforts of a special in-house team made up of members of our Communications & Signals Department, the control house was back online by the second week of September!

[See more details.](#)

The End is Near!



But there is no need to panic.

Crews working on the massive New Haven Line Catenary Replacement Project have "hit the home stretch," and the finish line is in sight for this massive effort.

Work started last month on the final two segments—from East Norwalk to Green's Farms and from Bridgeport to Milford— and involve replacement of about 10-1/2 miles of catenary along track and in our Bridgeport Yard.

Once this project phase is done in spring of 2017, the catenary upgrade project on the Connecticut-side of the line will be completed!

This new work will require a continuous outage of only one of four tracks, which will have a minimal impact on your commute through the area. This project is being funded and managed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

[See more details.](#)

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A Real Chiller!



Metro-North has received a 2014 BuildSmart NY Awards distinction for our comprehensive upgrade and replacement of utility systems with energy-saving components throughout Grand Central Terminal, a century-old national landmark building.

A lot has been done in the name of energy conservation — we've replaced or upgraded chillers, cooling towers, fans, compressors, air handlers, and an extensive steam distribution system.

The most complex component entailed the cooling system replacement. This required transporting equipment by rail out of, and into, the underbelly of GCT, plus the placement of four cooling towers on the roof. The towers were swung by crane from 42nd street over the iconic statue of Mercury and a priceless Tiffany clock.

The BuildSmart NY Awards were created by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to recognize a commitment to investment and innovation in technology that New York State needs.

The energy cost savings of the project, estimated at \$3.3 million and \$5.5 million kilowatts of electricity annually, will be used to repay Metro-North's partner, the New York State Power Authority over 11 years.

[See more details on the cooling system.](#)

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Safety Rule of the Issue

This time of year, the only combination of words more scary to us than "double, double, toil and trouble" is "slip, trip and fall."

Yet this is the number one reason for injuries on the railroad. So to help break this "curse" this Halloween (and every other day, for that matter), we recommend you take a few of the following simple precautions;

- Always watch your step when getting on or off the train. **Watch the gap!**
- Always walk, **never run** for your train.
- Always **use the stair handrails**, especially after rain or snow, when steps and platforms can become wet and slippery.
- Always **use the handholds** located near the car doors when standing in the vestibule of a moving train.

See, no black cats or special amulets are required! We bring you these monthly incantations... ehm, we mean reminders... because your safety is always our first priority.

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Courtesy Corner



Flying through the air on a broom... dancing naked around a bonfire...texting while talking...

All of these things are considered evil (*though we think two of the three sound pretty cool*). But none are as evil as:

- Putting your feet or your bag up on a seat, so that another person can't sit there.
- Leaving your trash behind when you exit the train for someone else to pick up
- Talking loudly on your phone in a Quiet Car. (This is one time when texting is not evil.)

So this Halloween, resist giving into "evil." Remember: Courtesy counts.

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Sheep Thrills!

Take Metro-North's discount package to **The New York State Sheep and Wool Family Festival (Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 18th and 19th)** at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds.

The Northeast's thriving sheep industry (yes, there is one) is showcased and celebrated each year in this famous festival that draws 30,000 visitors from across the country to the lovely village of Rhinebeck. And there's more here than sheep, llamas, alpacas, and their luscious fibers. See amazing sheepherding demonstrations and sheepdog trials, a petting zoo, hay maze, and other children's activities, plus the ever-popular Punkin' Chuckin' competition on Sunday.



[See more details on our discount package to this event.](#)

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

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Calling All Boys and Ghouls...



Going to the 2014 Village Halloween Parade?

Avoid the horror of traffic, tolls, and finding parking by taking Metro-North.

For more info on the parade, [go here](#).

To be magically transported to our train schedule, [go here](#).

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