

New York & Atlantic Railway Takes Out the Trash

BROOKLYN, N.Y., March 27, 2009 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ ----Long Island short line helps Brooklyn by hauling municipal waste by train; Cuts traffic congestion, reduces emissions, saves energy

While many people balk at taking out the trash, it's a job that the New York & Atlantic Railway does gladly -- hauling 1.7 million pounds of residential and municipal waste each day, destined to Dixie in sealed containers riding aboard extra-long flat cars.

Monday through Saturday, a NY&A train crew goes over to the Varick Avenue transfer station in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where they couple up with 10-to-12 89-ft. flat cars loaded with up to 48 22-ft. long containers. Each has been stuffed with 18 tons of refuse, collected from homes and businesses in North Brooklyn.

The Varick Avenue facility was redesigned recently to accommodate rail shipments. It is owned and operated by Waste Management Inc. -- one of the nation's leading transporters and processors of municipal waste. NY&A began test movements in late January and handled its first regular shipment on February 16, 2009.

"The diversion from truck to rail reduces greenhouse gases and other pollutants in the region," says Paul Victor, NY&A president. "This will save more than a half-million gallons of fuel over the next ten years." Prior to using the NY&A, waste was trucked to a land fill in Pennsylvania. Victor notes, "Trains are three times more fuel efficient than trucks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds or more."

Rail shipments will eliminate about 13,000 truck trucks per year, according to New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. "That's not only going to help reduce congestion on the borough's streets and highways, it also will reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions and improve the air we breathe -- especially in communities that have long been unjustly saddled with handling other people's waste."

Containers on flat cars are moved from Varick Avenue to NY&A's yard at Fresh Pond, where they are interchanged with CSX Transportation for the 750-mile trip to a Waste Management land fill in Virginia. En route, the flat cars are coupled with other container flats loaded with refuse from the Bronx and Staten Island, forming a unit train.

New York City's Department of Sanitation began shipping trash by train in 2006, when it adopted its Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP: undefined, undefined, undefined%). The Sanitation Department estimates SWMP will eliminate nearly six million miles of truck trips per year in New York City, while ensuring that every borough has the capacity to handle its own waste and recyclables.

Staten Island, which was the first borough to export waste by rail after Mayor Bloomberg reactivated the Staten Island Railroad, currently generates about 750 tons per day. This was followed by shipments from the Bronx, totaling about 2,100 tons daily.

NY&A has also been handling smaller shipments of waste and recyclables from elsewhere on Long Island and hopes to begin moving trash from other New York City boroughs as early as 2011.

The New York & Atlantic (www.anacostia.com/nyar/nyar.html) provides freight service on 269 route miles of track owned by the Long Island Rail Road. NY&A is an affiliate of Anacostia & Pacific Company, Inc., a rail development and consulting firm with offices in Chicago and New York.