

SECAUCUS Home News

Official Newspaper of the Town of Secaucus ~ Established 1910

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102ND YEAR NO. 21

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2012

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

3 Secaucus Cops Get Ready for 9/11 Charity Bike Ride on September 8th

We heard through the grapevine that three athletic members of the Secaucus Police Department are about to participate in a mega bike ride, the 11th annual Tour de Force, with the dual purpose of honoring and remembering those who were killed in the September 11th attacks of 2001 and to raise funds for the families of police officers killed in the line of duty throughout the country.

Each of these three men is raising at least \$1,000 in donations for the families of fallen police officers across America. They are Detective Sergeant Carlos Goyenechea, Sergeant Fran Cotter, and Police Officer Rod Aninipot. According to Detective Goyenechea, there are several ways that local residents can help to raise money for this charitable cause. They can go to the website at www.tourdeforce.com, scroll down to the names of our Secaucus Police Officers who are participating in the ride and then make a donation through PayPal or credit card. Or, they can mail a check to TourDeForceNY and mail it in to PO Box 395, Washingtonville, NY 10992 (please remember to write the names of our own Secaucus officers in the memo portion of your check!).

We spoke directly to Det. Goyenechea. He has been training for the vigorous ride since January, and is tapering off his training a bit to be at



Secaucus Police Bikers (l. to r.) Sgt. Fran Cotter, Det. Sgt. Carlos Goyenechea and Officer Rod Aninipot.

his physical and mental best for the ride. This year's ride will be the sixth for Sgt. Cotter, and the second for Aninipot and Goyenechea. Goyenechea told us that they will be riding a 70-mile day start-

ing in Boston, followed by two 75-mile days, and finally a 50-mile day, which will end at Ground Zero in NYC on September 11. We'll be reporting on the ride itself after it occurs.

LESS WAITING AT THE LIGHT: NJMC'S NEW SIGNAL SYSTEM

By GRETCHEN HENKEL

Ten seconds, twenty-five seconds, forty . . . you're waiting at a red light when there are absolutely no vehicles coming the opposite way. Sound familiar? Or, you're sitting at a red light when there is a left turn signal at the opposing light but no one is turning left. Yes, we've all faced these scenarios probably hundreds of times in Secaucus and elsewhere in our travels, but once the MASSTR is operational in town and in the surrounding area, these time-wasting and gas-wasting situations will effectively be non-existent.

MASSTR is the acronym for Meadowlands Adaptive Signal System for Traffic Reduction and it is the

brainchild of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) and more specifically, the special project of David Liebgold, Chief of Transportation at the NJMC. Faced with a burgeoning traffic flow in the Meadowlands region, the NJMC sat down with its transportation staff to find the best ways to handle the current traffic on overburdened highways and secondary roads in the area, and with an eye to the future when mega-developments such as the American Dream Meadowlands are built and the Super Bowl is played at the Giants Stadium in 2014.

Liebgold and his team of
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)



David Liebgold, Chief of Transportation at the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, displays a grid of the 40-square-mile area that will be equipped with the Meadowlands Adaptive Signal System for Traffic Reduction (MASSTR) in the next two years. The installation in Secaucus will be ready to go on line in October. The system will improve traffic flow and subsequently, air quality in the area.

LESS WAITING AT THE LIGHT: NJMC'S NEW SIGNAL SYSTEM

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

transportation engineers explored several options to address the traffic flow problems. They decided against adding lanes to existing roadways, because, as Liebgold explains, this procedure costs a fortune and the end result is often not what was intended. He offered that widening highways, while on the surface seems like the ideal solution, actually (and ironically) brings more vehicular traffic to that highway and surrounding roads by drivers seeking quicker alternatives to the roads they usually travel on. "This additional volume results in the same situation as it was prior to when the road was widened," he remarked.

Abandoning the idea of road widening, the transportation team considered a solution using the traffic signal system, which has not been implemented elsewhere in the state, but has been utilized in several other parts of the country. The light system originated in Sydney, Australia almost forty years ago, and incorporates three components: communication (via radios and antennas); vehicle detection (via cameras); and adaptive control (via the use of a signal controller). Once it's operational, the system will monitor all the traffic at the 32 lights in Secaucus. Eventually the system will include all the lights in the Meadowlands district, which will include a total of 130 lights covering an area of 40 square miles. The project is being installed in five phases, Secaucus being the first phase. Secaucus was chosen as the first area of installation

according to Liebgold because it had a large number of outdated lights and also suffers from heavy traffic congestion. The adaptive signal system was also chosen because of its relatively minor impact on traffic during the installation of cameras, etc. "There are no lane closures planned and only a minimal impact upon traffic," explained Liebgold.

The NJMC didn't just reach into its budget to start this massive project, which will take two years to complete. It applied for a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, which Liebgold's team worked arduously on. Their diligence paid off when the DOT awarded the NJMC a \$10 million dollar grant for the project, one of only thirty grants out of one thousand applications and one of the largest grants awarded. The NJMC was required to provide a \$2.5 million dollar matching grant.

Once the lights, cameras, communication devices and poles are installed and the system is operational, the traffic flow data will be analyzed by the NJMC transportation department and that data will translate into how the traffic signals at each location are synchronized with each other. For instance, all the lights on Paterson Plank Road will "talk" to each other and adjust to the traffic flow at different times of the day and night. Motorists might not notice any discernible changes in the traffic light timetable at rush hours, but at other off-peak times, the wait at a red light should be noticeably shorter. By having the traffic



Newly-installed MASSTR traffic light system on the the Plank Road looking east with town hall on right.

flow more efficiently, Liebgold said, the overall congestion on our roadways will lessen. Another example of how this new system will work will be evident at the intersection of Paterson Plank Road and County Avenue. In the future, drivers heading east on the Plank Road (at the Town Hall) will not have to wait to proceed if there are no vehicles turning from the left-turn-only lane on the Plank Road going west. Or, if there are no vehicles approaching in either the east or west lanes of the Plank Road, the light controlling County Avenue traffic will turn green or remain green to all the traffic to proceed. The data will not be gathered from a single day's traffic, but from several days at all different times of the day and night.



with in a blizzard or a hurricane.

Are pedestrians in jeopardy with this new system that seems to "favor" motorists in an already dangerous situation at many "hot" intersections in town? Liebgold offered that pedestrians should

What happens if there is a power failure or a malfunction of the system at a particular location? Liebgold, who earned a master's degree in transportation engineering from UCLA at Berkeley, said that some, but not all of the units will be equipped with backup batteries which will cycle on in the event of a power failure. If a unit malfunctions, this event will immediately be communicated to the control room at the NJMC where a virtual fix will be made. If the virtual fix does not work, a crew would be sent to correct the problem in the field. Also, nearby units will have the ability to adapt to the one offline unit, and those other units would alter

their red and green lighting timing to reflect the break in the system. Likewise, severe weather would rarely, if ever, cause a breakdown of an individual signal, and, as Liebgold pointed out, there would be less traffic to deal

continue to press the "walk" buttons, which will work the same way as they did before the new system is in place. He said that some adaptive signal systems can detect the presence of pedestrians and even sense if a pedestrian has walked away from the crosswalk and not crossed! However, the MASSTR is not that kind of system.

The NJMC anticipates that the MASSTR will result in an annual 20% reduction in delays and travel times, realizing a \$20 million dollar savings to motorists, a 40% reduction in stops, a 12% reduction in fuel consumption (a reduction of 600,000 gallons of fuel), and a 14% reduction in airborne emissions. The system is projected to be effective for at least twenty years at the end of which time new technology will be put in place to effectively deal with a much heavier volume of traffic.

Liebgold anticipates that the Secaucus phase of the project will be operational some time this October, and that it will take some time before all the traffic data can be reviewed and the units synchronized. "It will be a good day when there are no traffic jams on Route 3," remarked a hopeful Liebgold.

TRIP TO TRUMP

The Golden Age trip to the Trump casino in Atlantic City will be held Tuesday, September 11. It will leave from Third Avenue at 8:30 a.m. Call Jennie, 201-865-4344.

Meadowlands Hospital Hosts Stroke Prevention Seminar



On Friday, August 24, 2012, Meadowlands Hospital presented a Stroke Prevention Seminar to the residents of Secaucus and local communities. Denis Tighe, Nurse Manager of the Emergency Department, facilitated the event and educated the attendees of the warning signs of a stroke and communicated ways to help prevent a stroke from happening. Emergency Services Director, Young Yoon, MD, was also available to hear comments and answer questions from the group. Both speakers were able to instruct about the differences between a hemorrhagic and ischemic stroke and how they both vary from a transient ischemic attack or TIA. Balancing your life with physical activity, a healthy diet and abstaining from smoking are the three main ways to assist your body in preventing a stroke.

Following that philosophy, healthy refreshments which included baked turkey bacon, fresh fruit cup and whole grain baked goods were distributed. Educational materials focusing on blood pressure maintenance, and dietary issues such as limiting certain foods and sodium to avoid high blood pressure were available to participants. This event was just the first in a series of presentations that the facility is planning focusing on such areas as podiatry issues, good nutritional habits and Women's Health that will be presented in the future. Please look for upcoming notices in local newspapers, MHMC website, Town of Secaucus website and area libraries.

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