



HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

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WINTER-SPRING 2016



TOWN OF FAIRFIELD



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AFFORD TO MISS"**



MUNICIPAL DPW CLOSE-UP: Town of Fairfield



The Management Team (from left to right): Scott Bartlett, Joe Michelangelo, Carlos Monteiro, Marc Merlonghi, Kevin Fox, Patti Finch, Geoff Cornwell, Charlotte Lee, Jeffrey Minder, George Kaczegowicz, James Ryan, and Colleen Roche.

Fairfield Director of Public Works Joe Michelangelo, P.E. and Superintendent of Public Works Operations Scott Bartlett have a combined 65 years of experience in the public works arena in Connecticut – experience that benefits Fairfield’s 60,000 residents each and every day.

“I got interested in public works through an uncle who was the town engineer in Southington,” recalls Michelangelo, who directed public works departments in Cheshire and Oxford before signing on with Fairfield three-and-a-half years ago. “I saw the Fairfield job as an opportunity to head up a great department at a point in my life where I wanted to make one last move.”

Bartlett, who will be celebrating 35 years with the Fairfield DPW in August, started out as a highway laborer in 1981. “My nickname was ‘Diapers’ because I was so young,” he says with a chuckle. “I worked my way up over the years and became general foreman of the Highway Division in 1990. I’ve been superintendent since 2004.”

Both Michelangelo and Bartlett stress that while their department’s core functions (see Facts and Figures) are typical of most public

works operations, the public works umbrella in Fairfield goes beyond those core functions. “We maintain approximately 70 town buildings, including the buildings at all of Fairfield’s beaches and parks,” explains Michelangelo, who has degrees in civil and electrical engineering from the University of New Haven and a master’s degree in environmental science from Yale. “And we also maintain all the athletic fields in our parks, as well as at schools throughout the town.”



Of course, maintaining 275 miles of town road is the core function that gets the lion’s share of Bartlett’s attention, especially during the winter. “Lots of people think we don’t get bad winters because we are more coastal than most Connecticut towns. But the truth is that we have had storms where it is 36 degrees and raining on the coast and 28 degrees with heavy snow north of the Merritt Parkway... We can find ourselves gearing up for snow in one section of town, a snow and rain mix in another section and a pure rain event elsewhere.”

Bartlett pauses and continues. “More often than not those big-event storms also bring coastal flooding. So while many towns are just dealing with snow, we are out there checking tide gates and evaluating

FACT

Seven days after Hurricane Sandy turned much of Fairfield into a saltwater lake, in addition to reacting to the storm damage, DPW crews were out plowing snow after a freak storm.



Employees from all divisions of the Fairfield DPW pitched in to help the Highway Division clear town roads after Storm Nemo dumped 35 inches of snow on February 8, 2013.

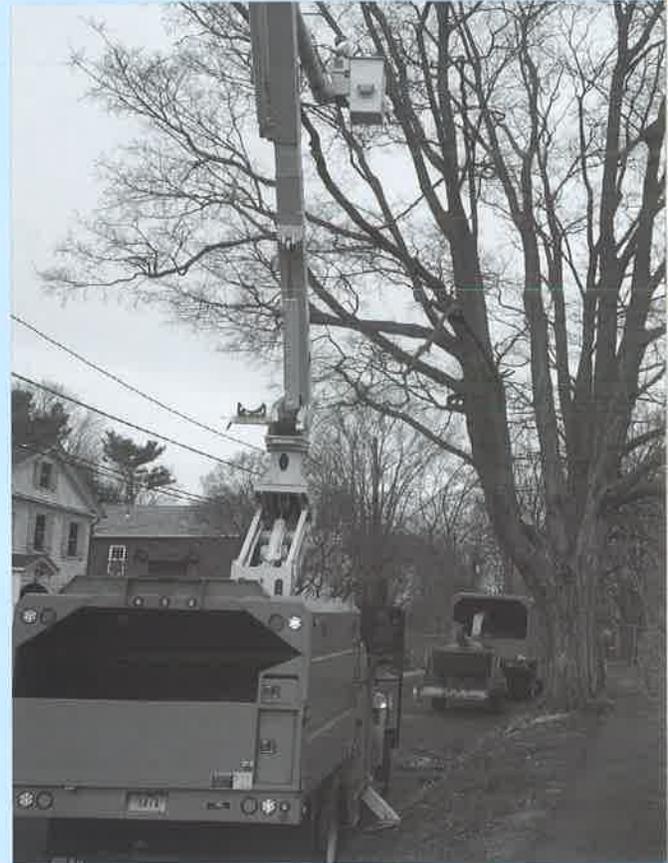
whether we have to evacuate certain neighborhoods. I'll take five inches of snow in lieu of flooding any day."

Michelangelo emphasizes that it is important to "use everything in Fairfield's toolbox" to successfully take on the diverse challenges facing his public works crews. "We are always open to operational changes, as well as new technologies and equipment," he says. "For example, we are constantly evaluating our plow routes. In fact, we just had BETA (the subject of this issue's feature on a consulting engineering firm) reevaluate our plow routes to help us determine where we can find efficiencies and optimize our operations."

Fairfield's DPW management team also is proud that it runs a seven-day-a-week operation, thanks to the union's cooperation in helping DPW create a weekend shift where four people work Thursday through Monday. "We have always tried to think outside the box and be progressive with regard to how we manage our crews," Bartlett explains. "There is a big weekend demand at our beaches and parks, so at a minimum we have four guys on duty to service the buildings there...and we also use our weekend employees for special indoor maintenance projects when most town buildings are mostly empty. I love it – and the union deserves a lot of credit for their cooperation."

Clearly, there is a lot going on in the public works arena in Fairfield, including a host of somewhat unique challenges associated with being a shoreline town – as

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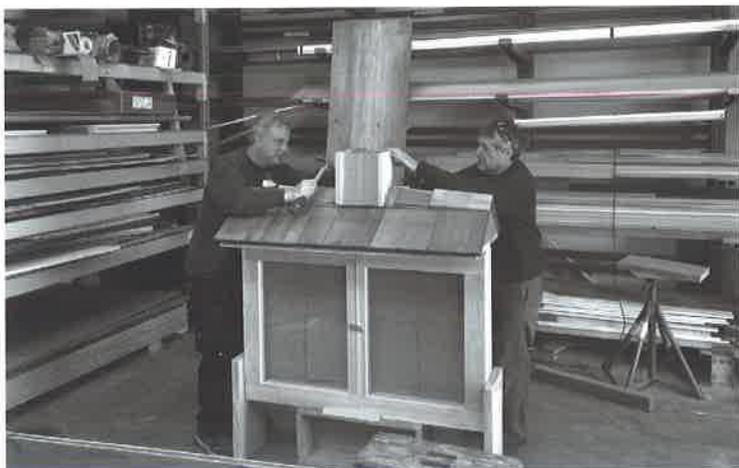
Shown here is a Tree Division employee pruning tress in one of Fairfield's many beautiful residential neighborhoods.



Here, a DPW crew installs a prefabricated concrete boat ramp at Ye Yacht Yard in the Southport section of Fairfield.



As part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Fairfield Department of Public Works took the “Pink Pledge” to benefit the Norma Pfriem Breast Center.



Building Maintenance employees Rick Sastre and Tom Riley are shown here constructing a kiosk that will be installed in one of Fairfield’s scenic town parks.



Fairfield’s DPW is responsible for maintaining 185 miles of drainage pipes. Shown here is a Highway Division crew installing a new catch basin.



Fairfield’s old landfill will soon be the site of a solar energy farm that will provide power to virtually all DPW facilities, including the town garage, wastewater treatment plant and the building maintenance facility. Approximately 20 town buildings are already being powered by solar energy.

FACT

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well as a town where a good percentage of the population commutes to New York, thus requiring DPW crews to make sure roads to the Metro North train stations and parking lots are cleared in a timely fashion – no easy task given the comings and goings of so many people.

So what are the secrets to the Fairfield DPW's success in effectively and efficiently handling these challenges? "The depth of the talent among our staff is key," says Michelangelo. "I can look for a guy ten down the list on our flow chart and know he probably has the talent to be a highway superintendent in another town. But he's comfortable here, happy here and part of a dedicated team... We have that kind of talent from top to bottom."

"Cross-training is also a key to our success," adds Bartlett, a recent addition to CASHO's board of directors. "These guys can literally do all sorts of different things. A skilled carpenter, for example, can, and will, help with snow plowing or building maintenance. Yes, it's the talent but it's also the fact that everybody is willing to help out in different divisions... There is no job too big, too small or too difficult. It's one thing to have a talented group of people. It's another to have a talented group of people with the drive to bring those talents out and get the job done."

"We have both." 

"I want to give a shout-out to our mechanics, who I dub Fairfield's finest pit crew. They know how to keep us up and running all year long, especially in challenging snow storms."

Scott Bartlett, Superintendent of
Public Works Operations



Facts and Figures

Town of Fairfield

Department of Public Works

www.fairfieldct.org

Square Miles: 31.3

Population: Approx. 60,000

First Selectman:

Michael C. Tetreau

Public Works Department

Sullivan Independent Hall

1st Floor

725 Old Post R.d

Fairfield, CT 06824

Phone: 203-256-3010

Number of DPW Fulltime

Employees: 106

Public Works Director:

Joseph Michelangelo

Assistant Director of Public

Works: Ed Boman

Superintendent of Public

Works: Scott Bartlett

Engineering Manager:

William Hurly

Garage Supervisor:

Geoff Cornwell

Parks Supervisor: Kevin Fox

General Supervisor of Streets:

George Kaczegowicz

Contract Manager: Charlotte Lee

Construction Supervisor:

Marc Merlonghi

Tree Warden: Jeffrey Minder

Supervisor of Street

Maintenance: Carlos Monteiro

Building Maintenance

Manager: James Ryan

Public Works Responsibilities:

- Engineering
- Roads
- Storm Water Drainage Systems
- Parks, Beaches and Marinas
- Public Buildings
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Sewer Collection System

Road Miles Maintained: 275

Rolling Stock Maintained: 164
pieces of equipment

Plow Routes: 30 (covering 301
miles of roads and parking lots)

**Drainage Pipes and Catch
Basins Maintained:** 185 miles

Sanitary Sewer Lines: 205 miles

Sidewalks: 117 miles

Parks Maintained: 170 acres

Athletic Facilities Maintained:

- 23 baseball fields
- 15 soccer fields
- 1 football field
- 31 asphalt tennis courts

Beaches Maintained: 5 coastal
beaches; 1 lake,

Marinas Maintained: 2 with more
than 700 boat slips and 300 kayak
racks

Golf Courses Maintained: 2-9
hole courses and one 18-hole
course

Public Buildings Maintained: 79

Transfer Station (brush and
asphalt recycling materials
handled by contractors)

Wastewater Treatment Plant:
9.0 MGD plant