

Cool Under Pressure



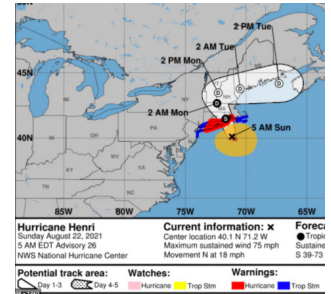
Skilled Building Technician **Dave Smith** inspects the portable chiller used during the Police Department AC failure. Dave has been with PWD for an impressive 43 years! Thanks Dave!

This past year helped the world redefine “essential personnel.” That certainly is true of Public Works’ Facilities Division. People don’t think of them much when everything is running smoothly but when something goes wrong, they are thrust into the limelight. So when the ‘AC chiller’ at the Groton Police Station went down during a dramatic hot spell this summer, all eyes shifted to Facilities Supervisor Bob Charette. Just as it sounds, the chiller is the part of an air conditioning system that does the cooling. No chiller in a heat-wave? “Not cool.” But Bob and his crew promptly set-up a temporary chiller and generator and worked tirelessly to keep it working, even when COVID circumstances limited availability of needed equipment. So let’s thank the Facilities team for keeping their cool while they kept the Police Station operational. And thanks too to Lindsey Zyski, Engineering, who saw their hard work first-hand and was inspired to offer the ‘hot’ news tip.

“Here at the Police Department, we cannot thank Bob Charette & his maintenance staff – Dave, Todd, Mike, and Jacob – enough for all they do! Whether fixing a broken window or leaky faucet, moving furniture, or making us comfortable during an AC failure— they are always efficient and pleasantly responsive!” Jeannie Vislosky, Executive Asst. to Chief Fusaro

A Bunch of Hot Air?

Though gratefully Hurricane Henri didn’t cause as many problems as was feared, for Public Works any extreme forecast means a heightened state of activity.



Administrative preparations must be made for staffing, supplies must be checked, and cost-tracking initiated. Emergency generators are tested and current projects secured. Storms necessitate added monitoring of buildings and pump stations, with essential crews brought in to be on call, ready for deployment. Henri didn’t pack the punch it could have but it still meant extra work. Felled trees needed prompt removal, streets had to be made safe for passage, and the sewage system kept up and running. It is not always as recognized as other emergency services, but Public Works is counted among community first responders.

One of the new features of the recently completed Mystic River Magnet Elementary School is a sturdy FOOTBRIDGE over Fishtown Brook. The upgrade was requested years ago by Parks & Recreation with the school project finally enabling its funding. The structure connects the Judson Avenue neighborhood trail to school grounds and was designed by Colin Kelly, Town Engineer. The scenic viewpoint offers safe stream crossing as well as an added outdoor teaching space.

