

NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM
BRINGING
BACK Mass Transit
Responds to Crisis
THE CITY

**“BRINGING BACK THE CITY” EXHIBITION
SHOWCASES NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT SYSTEM’S
PREPARATION AND RESPONSE IN TIMES OF CRISIS**

*Exhibition at the New York Transit Museum Opens
September 30*

New York, NY, Sept. 1, 2015 – With its new exhibition, *Bringing Back the City: Mass Transit Responds to Crisis*, the New York Transit Museum delivers a fresh perspective on recent major events, including the attacks of September 11, the 2003 Northeast Blackout, the Blizzard of 2010, Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy. The exhibition opens Wednesday, September 30, at the museum’s Downtown Brooklyn location. Through images, artifacts, oral histories and engaging multimedia experiences, the exhibition offers a glimpse of the vital, often unseen, work of New York’s transit employees and the critical role they play in preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters. Visitors will hear the powerful stories of many of these employees in their own words — from bus drivers who helped New Yorkers evacuate Ground Zero on September 11, to workers who repaired flooded subway tunnels after Superstorm Sandy.

The exhibition’s four content areas highlight the unique challenges of restoring the city’s complex transit system and helping the city’s return to normal after crisis strikes. The areas include:

- **9/11: Response** – Within minutes of the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center, workers from across the transit system contributed their specialized skills, equipment, and knowledge of the city’s infrastructure to help evacuate frightened citizens, transport first responders, assist in the rescue and recovery effort, and get the city moving again.
- **Blackout of 2003: Rescue** – North America’s largest blackout struck New York City at 4:10 pm on Thursday, August 14, 2003. With no advance warning, the city was thrust into chaos: Traffic lights went dark, thousands of commuters were stranded at Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal, and hundreds of subway and commuter trains were stopped in their tracks. Over the next three hours, NYC Transit workers successfully evacuated to safety 400,000 subway riders through darkened tunnels, and across bridges and elevated train structures.

- **Wicked Weather – Readiness:** Some crises strike unexpectedly. Others — particularly weather-related threats — arrive with advance warning, making solid preparation possible and enabling the MTA to take steps to protect infrastructure, organize rescue and repair crews, and alert the public. The lessons learned from the post-Christmas blizzard of 2010 led to critical preparations for Hurricane Irene less than a year later.
- **Superstorm Sandy – Resilience:** New Yorkers had never seen anything like Sandy. The October 2012 hurricane well-earned its nickname “superstorm,” testing the city’s infrastructure in unprecedented ways. Lessons learned from previous disasters, including Hurricane Irene just a year earlier, helped staff prepare for Sandy. And transit workers’ ingenuity and resourcefulness brought the system back far more quickly than many had predicted, considering the scope of the damage.

“We started thinking about this exhibition when we reopened the museum two days after Superstorm Sandy and began to hear stories of what our colleagues were up against to restore service and recover from damage. We heard about MTA staff spending five straight days on the job, the extent of the damage and what it would take to repair it. And then, remembering the other crises we’ve faced, it seemed like a story that needed to be told. Most New Yorkers don’t realize that transit personnel are also on the front lines when disaster hits the city,” said Gabrielle Shubert, Director of the New York Transit Museum.

By examining the transit system’s response to key events, the exhibition touches on topics ranging from sustainability and climate change, to urban planning, engineering, new technologies, and the cultural landscape of New York City.

“This exhibition offers a new lens on events with which many may already be familiar. By considering the effects of 9/11 or Sandy on New York City’s transit system, we gain new insight into these defining events, while also more fully appreciating the critical role the city’s public transportation system and its workers play within the life of the city — both in times of crisis and on a day-to-day basis,” said Josh Feinberg, Exhibition Curator.

The exhibition also looks to the future, exploring the ways transit workers are planning for a more efficient, sustainable future, making the city’s transportation system even more resilient in the face of climate change and rising sea levels.

“Bringing Back the City” opens September 30. The New York Transit Museum is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and is closed Mondays, major holidays and for special events. General admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children 2-17 years old, \$5 and free on Wednesdays for senior citizens 62 years and up, and free for museum members. For more information on hours, admission and directions, please visit: <http://web.mta.info/mta/museum/#general>.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will present a series of panels and tours that explore related themes and topics. Some of the exhibition’s content, including videos and images, as well as details regarding panels and tours, will be available at <http://bringingbackthecity.com/>.

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ABOUT NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM:

The **New York Transit Museum**, one of the city's leading cultural institutions, is the largest museum in the United States devoted to urban public transportation history and one of the premier institutions of its kind in the world. The Museum explores the development of the greater New York metropolitan region through the presentation of exhibitions, tours, educational programs and workshops dealing with the cultural, social and technological history of public transportation. Since its inception more than a quarter century ago, the Museum – which is housed in a historic 1936 IND subway station in Downtown Brooklyn – has grown in scope and popularity. The **New York Transit Museum** operates a Gallery Annex in Grand Central Terminal that presents changing exhibitions. As custodian and interpreter of the region's extensive public transportation networks, the Museum strives to share through its public programs their rich and vibrant history with local, regional, and international audiences.

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MEDIA INFORMATION:

A press preview is scheduled for Tuesday, September 29. Images, videos and interviews are available upon request. For more information, please contact:

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