

**Avaltroni, Robert**

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**From:** Hotz, Jonathan [Jonathan.Hotz@edelman.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 06, 2002 2:51 PM  
**To:** Bob Avaltroni (E-mail)  
**Subject:** DEP article  
**Importance:** High

Bob,

Penny has been kind enough to update the numbers, and Krish is in the process of getting me a current tally on the square footage cleaned.

We plan to post the story tonight for tomorrow's website.

I was wondering if you could give it a once over. You're quoted several times in the story. While not verbatim, the substance of these quotes was boiled down from the many things you said during our discussion. I think they position you and the DEP strongly.

Thanks again for all your help--and congratulations to the DEP on a job well-done.

Jon

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#### NYC DEP Completes Downtown Cleanup

By November 30, 2002, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will officially wrap up a six-month effort to remove potentially hazardous dust and debris that had accumulated on the roofs, windows and facades of downtown buildings following the World Trade Center (WTC) collapse. The project has been both a feat of labor and logistics with DEP crews working around the clock and making every accommodation possible to minimize disruptions to area residents, businesses and institutions as they clean more than 1.8 million [CONFIRM] square feet of exterior building space.

Beginning in January 2002, the DEP set about inspecting buildings in Lower Manhattan for exterior residue containing more than 1 percent of asbestos, the threshold amount set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Labor, New York State and the DEP. In a small sample of downtown buildings in close proximity to the WTC site, 48 percent tested positive for asbestos contamination, prompting the DEP to commence a comprehensive inspection of the more than one thousand buildings in the area.

"There was a great degree of anxiety among people in Lower Manhattan," said Robert Avaltroni, Deputy Commissioner of the DEP. "We felt that we needed to act quickly to relieve that anxiety in order to help people who live and work in the area move forward with their lives."

When the full inspection was complete, the DEP found the problem to be somewhat smaller than preliminary tests had suggested. Of the 1,072 buildings the DEP inspected, 326 - less than 30 percent - were found to have asbestos-contaminated WTC debris and were earmarked for cleaning.

The DEP conducted outreach to the owners of the affected buildings to notify them of the need for cleanup, giving them the option to have the work done by the DEP or through an independent contractor of their own choosing. The owners of 100 buildings elected to have their buildings cleaned independently. The DEP later re-inspected these buildings and certified that asbestos-containing material had been removed.

DEP cleanup crews went into action beginning June 3 and worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the exception of major holidays and days when inclement weather made cleaning unsafe. To date, DEP contractors have cleaned 190 buildings totaling 1,8XX,XXX [CONFIRM] square feet of building exterior space.

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The DEP has worked closely with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the EPA throughout the process of inspection, cleanup and re-inspection.

"We went into every crevice and every corner of the buildings we cleaned," said Avaltroni. "Wherever we saw debris, we removed it."

DEP crews used various means to reach building surfaces, including cherry pickers, scaffolds and platforms, and cleaned these surfaces with low-pressure spray-guns as well as by hand. The New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) played an integral role in securing necessary permits and helping erect scaffolds and riggings. The DOB also responded promptly to any potential building hazards identified by DEP crews, including loose bricks and cracked facades, and took the necessary steps to protect pedestrians.

Liz Berger, a long-time resident and employee in the area, is very appreciative of the effort put forth by the City and the DEP. "The City and the DEP were genuinely interested in understanding the issue and solving the problem," said Berger. "Thanks to their efforts, I feel much better in the apartment where I live and in the building where I work."

The owners of 13 buildings have failed to respond to the DEP's repeated attempts to reach them. These buildings will be re-inspected in the coming weeks. Those that fail DEP inspection will be subject to the issuance of a Commissioner's Order if sampling indicates the presence of asbestos-contaminated material. The DEP cleanup officially draws to a close by November 30.

#### A Day in the Life of a DEP Cleaning Crew: Juggling Schedules and Moving Automobiles

While DEP crews tended to the cleanup in expeditious fashion, they also went to great lengths to ensure that downtown life went undisturbed as they went about their work. "We took into careful consideration the patterns of everyday life downtown," said Avaltroni. "As hard as we worked to clean up the area, we strove equally hard to minimize any disruption to residents, businesses and institutions."

Doing so required some logistical feats on the part of the DEP. In certain cases, building cleanups had to be scheduled at off-hours. For example, the cleanup at St. Peter's Church at 16 Barclay Street could only be conducted on weeknights from 6 pm to midnight so as not to impede parishioners from entering the church or disturb church services.

In addition to juggling schedules, the DEP frequently had to move vehicles parked in front of job sites despite posted notices of sidewalk and street closures issued by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). In several cases, the DEP working with the DOT deployed teams of tow trucks to lift cars gingerly from front and back — so as not to damage them — move them away from the cleanup site and then return them once cleanup was completed. In one case where a car could not be moved without risk of damage, DEP crews wrapped the entire vehicle in plastic to protect it.

"We're proud to have done our part to make Lower Manhattan a better place to live," said Avaltroni.

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“There was a great degree of anxiety among people in Lower Manhattan,” said Robert Avaltroni, Deputy Commissioner of the DEP. “We felt that we needed to act quickly to relieve that anxiety in order to help people who live and work in the area move forward with their lives.”

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The DEP inspected 1,072 buildings of which 326 – less than 30 percent – were found to have some form of asbestos-contaminated WTC debris and were earmarked for cleaning. While many were below possible detection levels, DEP made a decision to have all 326 buildings cleaned intent on providing positive reinforcement for all lower Manhattan residents.

The DEP conducted outreach to the owners of the affected buildings to notify them of the need for cleanup, giving them the option to have the work done by the DEP or through an independent contractor of their own choosing. The owners of 100 buildings elected to have their buildings cleaned independently. The DEP later re-inspected these buildings and certified that asbestos-containing material had been removed.

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