

The Bulletin



Electric Railroaders' Association, Incorporated

Vol. 63, No. 6

June, 2020

The Bulletin

Published by the
Electric Railroaders'
Association, Inc.
P. O. Box 3323
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

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This Month's Cover Photo:

M-7 7675 (Bombardier
Transportation, 6/2006)
leads a short six-car consist
on Train #751 from Hemp-
stead bound for Atlantic
Terminal, Brooklyn as it
crosses Hilton Avenue, just
east of Garden City station
on 2/3/2020. (Jeff Erlitz
photograph)

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24-HOUR-A-DAY NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY SERVICE DISCONTINUED

In an unprecedented move, New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo ordered the end of 24-hour, 7-day-a-week service on the New York City subway system with a daily shutdown of the entire system between 1 and 5 AM beginning at 1 AM Wednesday, May 6. A long-standing tradition since its opening day in October, 1904, New York City's subway was one of the rare systems that never shut down overnight. Unfortunately, such an operation severely hampers, if not makes it impossible, to perform any kind of thorough cleaning and now urgently-needed daily sanitizing of the subway train fleet as well as its stations.

(Editor's Note: In actuality, the subway trains are continuing to operate through the night, just not in revenue service. They are available to carry employees and emergency service workers.)

The 24-hour operation also attracted a larger-than-normal number of homeless people to take up residence on trains and in the stations. With the overnight shutdowns, the homeless population could now be ordered by the police to exit the system, clearing out all trains and stations to facilitate nightly sanitizations. The objective was to enable the thorough cleaning and sanitizing of every subway car's interior surface with an even greater focus on all surfaces that riders make frequent contact with: poles, railings, handholds, doors, door frames, and flooring.

Governor Cuomo has gone on record that the 24-hour service will resume once the pandemic crisis is over. The MTA website and notices will inform passengers of the scheduled times of the last and first trains at each station. After 1 AM all stations become exit-only. An enhanced "night bus" system (Essential Plan Night Service) replaces the subways during this time period and where

substitute bus services cannot be provided, riders will have the ability to hail a "for hire car" at the MTA's expense under the "Essential Connector" program. MTA Bus and NYCT added 1,168 additional bus trips (76% increase) and 344 buses on top of the 235 buses that normally operate during this time period (150% increase in the scheduled overnight operating fleet). Metro-North and LIRR cross-honor subway fare riders on their trains, although Metro-North services end around 2 AM as well.

As this issue goes to press, it appears that the overnight shutdowns have been a success, enabling NYCT cleaning crews to provide both the riding public and operating employees with cleaner and more sanitary subway cars to ride and work aboard. The same can be said of the stations. Early on in the program, some minor glitches had occurred, namely the inability of cleaning crews to fully clean a subway car or cars because of the occasional unavailability of police, the only persons legally authorized to remove persons from the system. Data collected by MTA Outreach workers show that the forced exit of the homeless from the subways has had a net positive effect on their population. Of the 1,682 homeless removed from the system, 930 people (55%) agreed with the outreach staff to try another venue instead of returning to the subways. Of these people, 824 were referred to shelters and over 100 others who needed medical care were taken to hospitals for treatment. (MTA press release, May 1; **New York Daily News**, May 18)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) launched the "Essential Connector" app to help essential workers plan their alternative travel to or from work during the over-

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