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Joe Lhota to File Paperwork to Run for Mayor This Week

By Jill Colvin

COLUMBUS CIRCLE — Joe Lhota will file the paperwork to kick off his mayor campaign later this week, the former MTA chair revealed.

Speaking at a New York Building Congress luncheon in front of business leaders, Lhota said in his clearest terms yet that he is planning to throw his hat into the 2013 mayoral race.

"I would not have left the MTA, a job and a position that I loved, if I wasn't going to run for mayor of New York," Lhota told the crowd during the remarks on Monday, his first since stepping down from the MTA post on Dec. 31st.

Lhota, who drew praise for bringing back the subways quickly after Superstorm Sandy, also made clear that he intends to try to ride the wave of goodwill all the way to Gracie Mansion.

For too long before the storm, he said, the MTA had been derided as an incompetent, bloated and dishonest organization.

"I often thought that the MTA was being treated like a piñata, both in the press and by many politicians. Well the storm, the storm literally changed all of that," he said.

Lhota credited the goodwill partially to an aggressive media blitz, which included posting photos of flooded subway tunnels, submerged stations and other damage as it happened through outlets like Twitter, Facebook and Flickr.

"You had to actively avoid the media to not know what the MTA was doing," he said.



He also pressed for new, secure funding for the transit organization, which he said the storm had proven was critical to the city's functioning.

"It's time for all of us to band together to demand that our elected officials recognize the value of the MTA," he said.

Lhota ended his remarks with a quote from William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "The past is prologue," he said. "And if you agree that the M.T.A. is in a better condition today than it was a year ago, then imagine what I can do in my future with a much more complex organization."

New York Building Congress president Richard Anderson, who jokingly addressed Lhota as "Mayor Lhota," said that, while the group would not formally endorse a candidate, he was pleased to see Lhota entering into the race,

"Having Joe Lhota in the mayoral campaign will help the overall tenor of the campaign," he said. "How he does, the people will decide."

