

January 15, 2013



'I would not have left the MTA . . . if I wasn't going to run for mayor'

By DAVID SEIFMAN
City Hall Bureau Chief

It's all systems go for Joe. Former MTA Chairman Joe Lhota (above) told construction bosses yesterday that he's running for mayor, emphasizing that his strong management skills at the transit agency are easily transferable to City Hall. "I am not going to talk all that much about my future," he told the annual meeting of the New York Building Congress. "But I will tell you this: 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."

That was how he began a 15-minute speech.

He ended on the same note.

"If you agree that the MTA is in a better position today than it was a year ago, then imagine what I can do in my future with a much more complex organization," Lhota teased, eliciting loud applause.

Richard Anderson, the organization's president, joked at the end of the speech: "OK, who's got a

question for Mayor Lhota?"

But Lhota — who hasn't officially declared — faces a potentially bruising primary fight before he can become the GOP nominee.

Supermarket mogul John Catsimatides told The Post he's putting up \$1 million of his own money to launch a mayoral bid on the GOP line. And Doe Fund founder George McDonald, who isn't in the same billionaire league, nevertheless reported taking in \$277,378.

Additional reporting by Carl Campanile

david.seifman@nypost.com