



2017 AAPA EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

*Classification 1: Visual-Only Presentations*

# Iconic Bridge Construction Chronicle



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## Summary:

The Communications and Community Relations team at the Port of Long Beach is working with talented photographers shooting from vessels, helicopters, drones and even underwater in diving gear to create a complete chronicle of the construction of the new span that will replace the Gerald Desmond Bridge. The images become part of the Port's massive digital photography archive and are easily accessible for a variety of uses including PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, media materials, brochures and other publications, display materials, educational materials and much more. The new cable-stayed bridge will be the second-tallest of its kind in the U.S. and, at more than 500 feet in the air, the tallest structure in Long Beach and an instant icon on the California coastline. The replacement bridge will be taller, wider and incorporate bicycle and pedestrian lanes as well as observation towers with panoramic views of the Port, surrounding communities and the blue Pacific.



*One of the two towers that will rise to 515 feet as builders construct the new bridge between the old Gerald Desmond Bridge and a power plant.*



Workers prepare to pour concrete for a new segment of bridge.



*The orange structure is one of two “Mobile Scaffolding Systems” at the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project. It is used by bridge builders to provide a form for concrete pours. It helps to save time and material, compared to traditional formwork.*



*During a concrete pour of a bridge segment, workers help to complete a clean pour by vibrating the newly placed concrete.*



*The columns and segments of the replacement bridge rise alongside the old Gerald Desmond Bridge in the Port of Long Beach.*



*One of the two towers that will rise to 515 feet as builders construct the new bridge between the old Gerald Desmond Bridge and a power plant.*

# 7 Communication Challenges and Opportunities

The Port of Long Beach is the premier U.S. gateway for trans-Pacific trade, the nation's second-busiest container seaport and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety and environmental stewardship. With annual trade valued at \$180 billion, the Port supports more than a million U.S. jobs. Long Beach is "big ship ready," welcoming the Pacific fleet's largest vessels and serving 175 shipping lines with connections to 217 international seaports. Forty percent of inbound cargo enters the U.S. through the San Pedro Bay ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

A primary economic engine, business at the Port supports 30,000 jobs in Long Beach – one in every eight – and that number translates to more than 300,000 Southern California jobs. In order to maintain and grow market share and revenue in a highly competitive industry, the Port of Long Beach provides leading-edge green infrastructure to serve the biggest ships in the trans-Pacific fleet, innovative and efficient operations to speed cargo across the docks, and top-notch service, molded to meet the specific needs of each customer.

The Port is on track for a green future, pursuing the most aggressive capital improvements program in the nation. A primary element of the \$4.5 billion construction program is the \$1.5 billion replacement of the aging Gerald Desmond Bridge. The bridge tallies 68,000 vehicle trips a day – about 18 million trips a year – and 15 percent of all U.S. imports are trucked across the bridge annually.

The route is an important one, and a goal of the Port of Long Beach Communications and Community Relations team is to chronicle the construction of this new span, which will not only meet the needs of the city and Port well into the future, but as a beautifully designed cable-stayed structure – the second-tallest in the U.S. – will also become a landmark on the California coastline. With its two towers reaching 515 feet into the sky, it will be the tallest structure in Long Beach and an instant identifier for the city. Also of national significance, the new bridge is designated a National Highway System Intermodal Connector Route and part of the Federal Strategic Highway Network. It will be a critical structure serving the San Pedro Bay



The Port of Long Beach

## 2 Complementing the Overall Mission

Port Complex, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Orange County and the nation.

The new bridge will be higher to allow passage below by large ships, wider to accommodate more traffic and emergency vehicles, and incorporate bicycle and pedestrian lanes, and observation decks offering dynamic, panoramic views from 205 feet above the water.

Since its earliest days, Long Beach has needed reliable access to Terminal Island at the center of the Port complex, and there has been an evolution of bridges through the years. A single railroad track on a wooden trestle was replaced by 187-foot bascule drawbridge, known as the “jackknife” bridge because it opened and closed like a pocket knife. The drawbridge closed when the railroad relocated and, beginning in the 1930s, there was no direct access until, as World War II approached, the Navy needed better access to and from its Terminal Island station. A pontoon bridge that was constructed to open and close allowing ship traffic opened in 1944.

Intended to be a six-month, temporary solution, it was in use for decades. In the mid-1960s, construction was finally begun on its replacement, and the Gerald Desmond Bridge, a roughly 1.5-mile span, was completed in 1968. It has served the Port and the city well for many years, however, increasing traffic volumes and the ravages of time have taken their toll, and in the early 1990s, a replacement bridge was first considered. Following more than a decade of planning and preparation, the project was finally underway with the official groundbreaking for the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project on January 8, 2013. The entire length of the new bridge will be 8,800 feet, compared to the original 187-foot drawbridge.

The groundbreaking event provided a spectacular photo opportunity, with two helicopters hovering above the channel to indicate the height of the new bridge.

The Port of Long Beach Communications and Community Relations Division maintains a massive, digitized photo archive, with images dating from before the Port’s grand opening in 1911 with one wooden dock, through the advent of containerization in the 1960s, the rapid growth of trans-Pacific trade, and this decade’s \$4.5 billion construction program. Images from the archive are accessed constantly for use in advertising and marketing materials, in news media reports, PowerPoint presentations, to illustrate posters and displays, by historians in books and other publications, by teachers and students, and many other uses.

The archive is continually updated with new photography — both still and video, and these images are most frequently utilized by the Port and most frequently requested by outside agencies. Current photographic chronicles include the construction of the new Middle Harbor Container Terminal, the addition of rail infrastructure at the Port, the arrival of the biggest vessels to ever call at North American ports — and the construction of the iconic span that will replace the Gerald Desmond Bridge.

*“Having the flexibility to shoot from a boat, a helicopter or utilize drone-mounted cameras has allowed the Port to get a whole new perspective on the construction of the new bridge. The project is massive with 200- to 400-foot-high towers and the aerial views our photographers capture aren’t just any construction photos. We’re very proud of the work they do.”*

*- Jen Choi, Manager of Creative Design for the Port of Long Beach*

# 3 Planning and Programming Components

The construction of the \$1.5 billion replacement for the Gerald Desmond Bridge is historically significant, incorporating many state-of-the-art, biggest-ever, and best-in-the-world elements. The Port considers it necessary to chronicle construction progress – and a primary medium is still photography.

The goal is to capture eye-catching images of all phases of construction and related events as an essential element of all Communications and Community Relations programs and campaigns about the new bridge – and to maintain a complete historic record for the Port’s photo archive.

The objectives set for the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project photography were to:

- Document the phase-by-phase construction with attention-getting, appealing still photography;
- Include photography of the unexpected, such as decades-old uncharted underground oil wells and utility lines.
- Document events that mark progress, such as the

groundbreaking ceremony and an event celebrating the completion of underground work and the beginning of above-ground construction;

- Select the finest photographers, both staff and contract, to capture the fast-moving progress;
- Employ helicopters, boats, towers, diving gear and drones to provide new, exciting and unexpected perspectives;
- Clearly show the massive dimensions of the project and its many elements;
- Show construction in progress featuring the construction management team and men and women at work;
- Instill an air of wonder about what is possible;

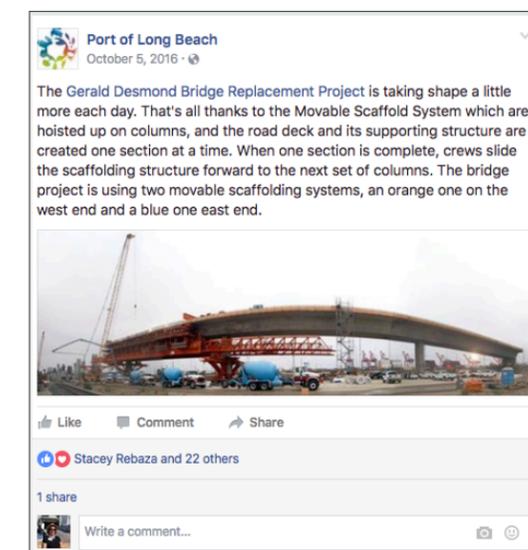
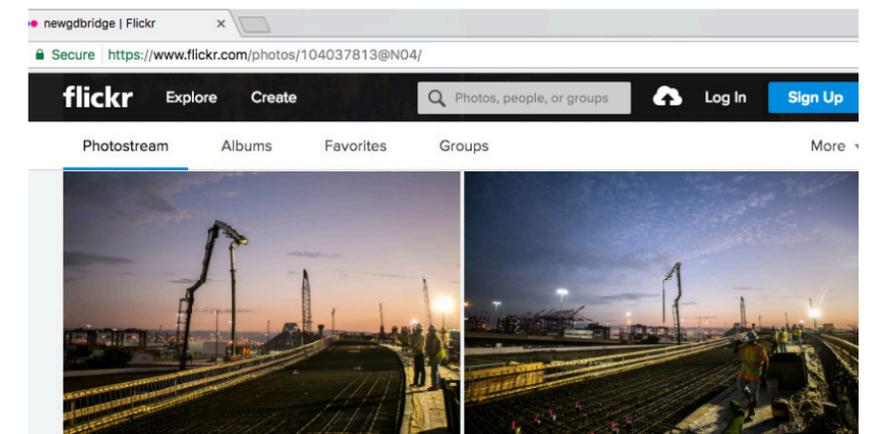
The audiences who will view and utilize the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project photography include:

- Project partners, including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Los Angeles County Metropolitan

Transportation Authority (Metro), the Port of Long Beach and the U.S. Department of Transportation;

- Port customers and stakeholders who will benefit from the new bridge (and deal with the inconveniences of construction);
- Potential customers and stakeholders, locally and internationally, who will appreciate the benefits of the new bridge;
- Long Beach citizens watching the progress as the new bridge rises on the horizon;
- The Long Beach business community involved in international trade and transportation;
- Regulatory agencies who monitor construction progress;
- Port employees and contractors invested in the exciting project;
- Teachers, students and those who document historic projects and events;
- Those who follow port news in both traditional and social media.

## Social media posts



## 4 Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Used

With location oversight by the Port of Long Beach Communications and Community Relations Department, photography is completed to department specifications by a number of Port and contract photographers, coinciding with the various construction highlights. Photography fees are competitive, and images become the property of the Port.

The photographs feature brilliant primary colors — like those incorporated in the Port's logo and existing promotional images on video, publications and other printed materials. They also highlight Port infrastructure, showcase the massive size of the new ships against Port

landmarks, the impressive city skyline —and the perfect California weather. Images also juxtapose the new construction with the existing bridge to illustrate change as the new bridge rises.

Once the Communications and Community Relations team receives confirmation of the timing for particular construction elements, the photographer is scheduled, and best positions and perspectives are determined, along with specific activities to be recorded, and a budget is established.

Selected images are promptly added to the photo archive to be readily accessible for a number of uses.

*"A lot of construction photos cross my desk, but some of these photos I'd frame and put on the wall."*

*- Donna Shipman, Visual Arts Specialist for the Port of Long Beach*

## 5 Communications Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

The photographs thoroughly chronicling the construction of the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project from 2013 to present have been utilized in a variety of ways:

- Port brochures, directories, fact sheets and other publications;
- Port, project-specific and education websites: [www.polb.com](http://www.polb.com) and [www.newgdbridge.com](http://www.newgdbridge.com) and [academy.polb.com](http://academy.polb.com), and the LB Bridge mobile app;
- Port releases to the news media, including local, and national trade and consumer publications;
- Books and articles;
- PowerPoint presentations and to illustrate signs, banners and collateral materials utilized at community outreach forums, educational conferences and industry events. Recent examples include PowerPoints for the 2017 State of the Port event and the Chamber of Commerce Tribute to Trade and Transportation.
- Port newsletters, including the **re:port** community newsletter that is distributed to 200,000 homes in Long Beach; Dock Talk, the Port's electronic employee newsletter with a distribution of 600; in **tie lines**, the Port's electronic trade newsletter with more than 2,550 subscribers;
- Social media posts serving the Port's followers on Facebook (23,191), Instagram (10,144), Twitter (17,902), YouTube (1,352 subscribers), and LinkedIn (4,750).
- Agencies participating in the project;
- Port customers and contractors for use in their own communications.

## Recap

### Quick Facts:

Photographers are chronicling the construction of the new cable-stayed span that will replace the Gerald Desmond Bridge.

- The second tallest cable-stayed bridge in the U.S.
- At more than 500 feet, the tallest structure in Long Beach
- An instant icon on the California coastline
- Taller and wider with bicycle and pedestrian lanes and observation towers
- More than 15 percent of U.S imports are trucked across the bridge
- 68,000 vehicle trips a day and 18 million trips annually
- First lanes to open in 2018

### Links:

Port website  
[www.polb.com](http://www.polb.com)

Project website:  
[www.newgdbridge.com](http://www.newgdbridge.com)

Education portal:  
[academy.polb.com](http://academy.polb.com)

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