



2021 AAPA LIGHTHOUSE AWARDS – COMMUNICATIONS

CLASSIFICATION #11: SPECIAL EVENTS

Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project

Grand Opening Ceremonies

Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project

The 10/2/20 Grand Opening Event –
<https://youtu.be/kLMUUVaseMg>

Summary

The \$1.5 billion Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project (Bridge Project) is a centerpiece of the multibillion-dollar capital improvement program at the Port of Long Beach – the biggest capital investment of any U.S. seaport. The bridge connects several terminals in the San Pedro Bay port complex with the 710 Freeway, a major cargo corridor. About 15 percent of all containerized cargo coming into the U.S. travels over the new bridge that was opened to traffic on Oct. 5, 2020. Three days prior on the morning of Oct. 2, the Port of Long Beach performed a virtual grand opening ceremony to celebrate the completion of the seven-year-long construction of the Bridge Project, a yet-to-be-named 100-year bridge that now stands as an icon for the City of Long Beach and Southern California region.

Traditionally, the Port of Long Beach, along with Bridge Project developer SFI (Shimmick Construction Co. Inc., FCC Construcción S.A. and Impregilo S.p.A) and three other funding partners (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans], U.S. Department



of Transportation and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority [Metro]), would commemorate the opening with a large in-person gathering worthy of the largest infrastructure building project in the Western U.S. However, concern for public safety and COVID-19 health directives issued by the state's governor prohibited the possibility of any large-scale in-person event.

Despite this, the Port of Long Beach orchestrated a hybrid digital and live event that included a one-

hour prerecorded broadcast featuring 17 speakers offering well-wishes on the completion of the project as well as a 30-minute live broadcast featuring a simultaneous truck, car and boat parade punctuated by a flyover by five vintage Tiger Squadron planes.

A spectacular LED lighting system, with variable color settings to illuminate the new bridge to suit the occasion, was then premiered at a Dec. 14, 2020 ceremony, and future events will celebrate the naming of the new bridge, the opening of the

Mark Bixby Memorial Bike/Pedestrian Path and observation decks atop the nearly 2-mile-long new bridge, and the demolition of the original Gerald Desmond Bridge.

Ultimately, the Port of Long Beach secured the attention it deserved and provided a significant positive portrayal of the Port as an advanced and modern international cargo-handling facility as well as a public agency giving back to the community. The ever-changing lighting draws ongoing attention to the magnificent new bridge.

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Communication Challenges and Opportunities

The Port of Long Beach is the Port of Choice – the premier U.S. gateway for trans-Pacific trade and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety, environmental stewardship and sustainability. As the second-busiest container seaport in the United States, the Port handles trade valued at \$200 billion annually and supports 2.6 million trade-related jobs across the nation, including more than 575,000 in Southern California. The Port of Long Beach prides itself on its top-notch customer service, state-of-the-art infrastructure and operational excellence, and in both 2019 and 2020 industry leaders named it “The Best West Coast Seaport in North America.” In 2020, the Port handled 8.1 million container units, the busiest year in its history.

Founded in 1911 with a single municipal dock at the mouth of the Los Angeles River, today the Port encompasses 3,200 acres with 35 miles of waterfront, 10 piers, 80 berths and 70 gantry cranes. The five-member Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council, is responsible for setting policy for the Port of Long

Beach and managing the City’s Harbor Department.

More than 40 percent of seaborne cargo that enters the United States passes through the neighboring San Pedro Bay ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, with about 2,000 vessels calling at the Port of Long Beach each year, serving 175 shipping lines with connections to 217 seaports around the world. The Los Angeles/Long Beach complex handles more containers per ship call than any other port complex in the world, and goods moving through the Port of Long Beach reach every U.S. congressional district.

During the past decade, the Port of Long Beach committed \$4 billion to capital projects to support trade and jobs growth, including terminal, railway, roadway, waterway and bridge improvements. This decade, another \$1 billion has been committed to increasing on-dock rail accessibility and other improvements to ensure that the Port of Long Beach remains the Port of Choice for its customers.

A centerpiece of the Port’s capital improvement program was the



replacement of the Gerald Desmond Bridge, which connects several terminals in the San Pedro Bay ports complex with the 710 Freeway, a major cargo corridor. About 15 percent of all containerized cargo coming into the U.S. crosses this bridge. The Gerald Desmond Bridge opened in 1968 and was not designed to handle today's volume of car and truck traffic. Lane configuration on the bridge caused weaving and merging, as there were three lanes ascending but only two lanes descending in both directions. Lastly, the 155-foot-high water clearance over the Port's Back Channel limited the size of vessels that could enter the Port's Inner Harbor. In short, the Gerald Desmond Bridge had become what engineers refer to as "functionally obsolete."

The new bridge, designed for a 100-year lifespan, was built with a cable-stayed design that lowered costs, resources, and time in construction versus traditional suspension bridges. With 205 feet of clearance above the water, the bridge is high enough to accommodate ever-larger container vessels entering the Pacific fleet. The new bridge also includes additional traffic lanes and a dedicated bicycle

path and pedestrian walkway, including scenic overlooks, and it is illuminated.

Bridge construction, beginning in 2013, provided an immediate and significant economic boost to Long Beach and the region, and the \$1.5 billion in spending has generated economic activity of more than \$2 billion in Southern California. During the seven-year life of the project, construction supported approximately 3,000 jobs.

The impact that the new bridge has on goods movement for the local, regional and national economy cannot be overstated. In addition, it became an instant iconic landmark for Southern California. Celebrating the completion of construction and sharing all of the key storylines about the people and innovative approaches to building the bridge were worthy of a massive opening ceremony.

The challenges were twofold, and each of them had a massive impact on celebration plans:

First, the COVID-19 pandemic eliminated all in-person events of 100 or more people. But the disease

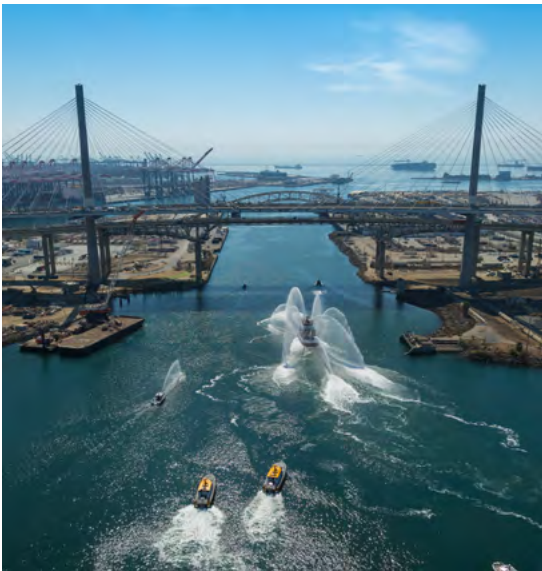
had an even more profound effect on the opening of the new bridge. In July 2020, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, who would eventually preside over the live opening ceremony, lost his parents to complications from COVID-19. That loss combined with the many other lives that were compromised or lost in Long Beach due to the ongoing pandemic threatened to cancel the opening altogether.

In late August 2020, the decision was made by the Port of Long Beach, with the blessing of the mayor's office, to proceed with the opening ceremony, which was tentatively planned for Oct. 2, only a handful of weeks later. This compressed timeframe of 5-6 weeks compelled the event planning and communications team to go into overdrive to ensure a successful opening.

Second, despite a planned opening to traffic on Oct. 5, the Bridge Project, a massive construction project, was subject to delays and missed timelines. For weeks leading up to late September, there was a very real threat that the bridge opening on Oct. 5 would be pushed back as much as three months, due to last-

mile construction issues that had safety implications for motorists. The team advanced its planning for an Oct. 2 ceremony, but also created contingency plans for media and the numerous vendors that were engaged to conduct the live portion of the broadcast in case a delay occurred. Completed following the grand opening, plans for a Dec. 14 ceremony to switch on the bridge lights were surrounded by similar uncertainty.

On Sept. 22, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners voted to go ahead with the opening of the Bridge Project to traffic on Oct. 5, satisfied that the construction team would complete the necessary construction milestones in time. That timing gave the event planning team only 10 days to finalize the details of the event, communicate the confirmed date to major stakeholders and properly set the stage for the opening with the media. It was a very aggressive schedule. The ceremony to officially turn on the bridge lighting followed suit.



2 Complementing the Overall Mission

One of the goals of the Port's updated Strategic Plan, released by the Port of Long Beach in April 2019, is to "develop and maintain state-of-the-art infrastructure that enhances productivity and efficiency in goods movement." The Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project is clearly a major element in meeting that goal.

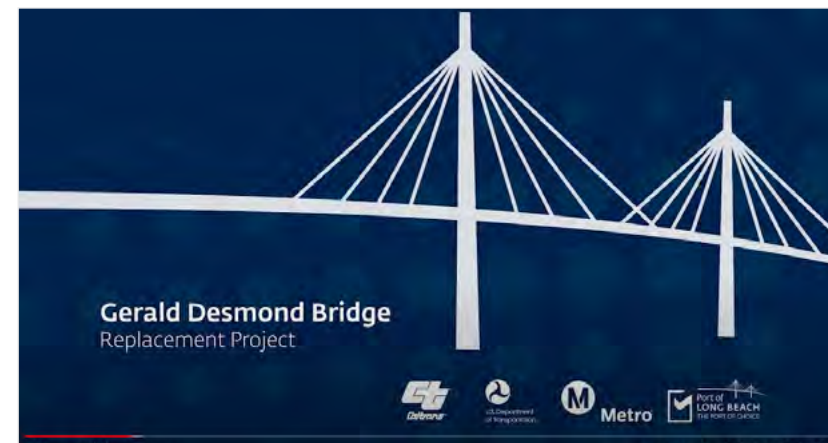
Another goal is to "broaden community access to Port-related opportunities and economic benefits." For an in-person opening ceremony on a bridge, involving the community – even thousands or tens of thousands of attendees – is achievable. In a COVID-19 landscape though, broadening community access takes on an entirely different meaning, and required creative thinking and flexibility.

Furthermore, there were various target markets to be considered. Besides the general public, a top priority was placed on recognizing the community of tenants and truckers that operate in

the port, remained patient throughout the construction process and represent the lifeblood of goods movement. Also, involving the SFI construction workers who built the new bridge had to be considered and problem-solved, given COVID-19 limitations.

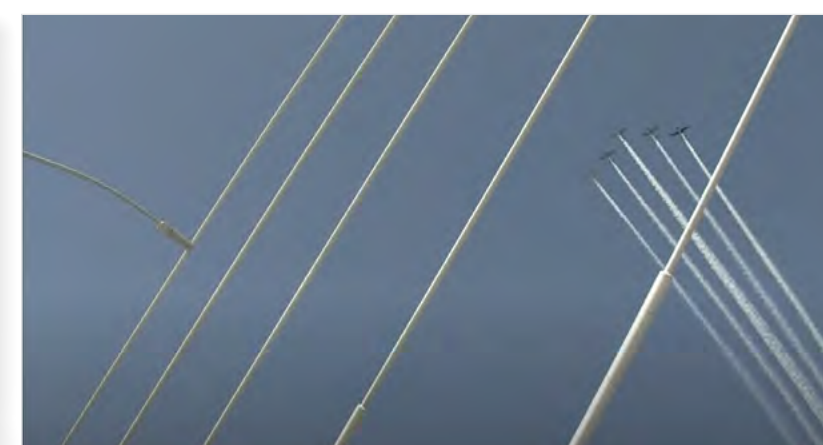
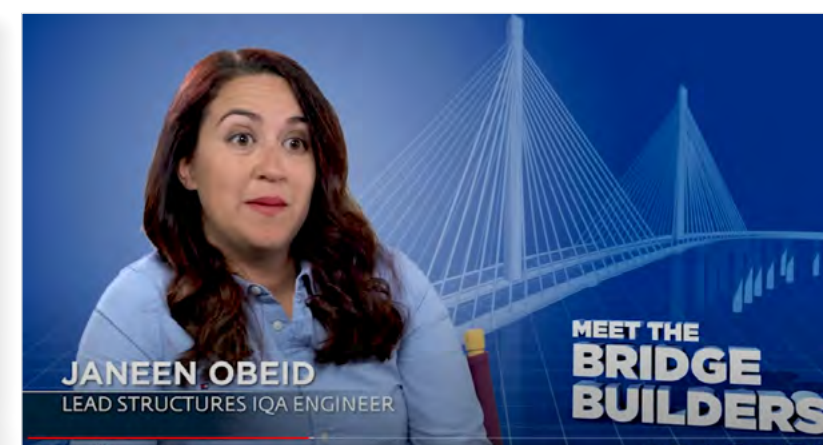
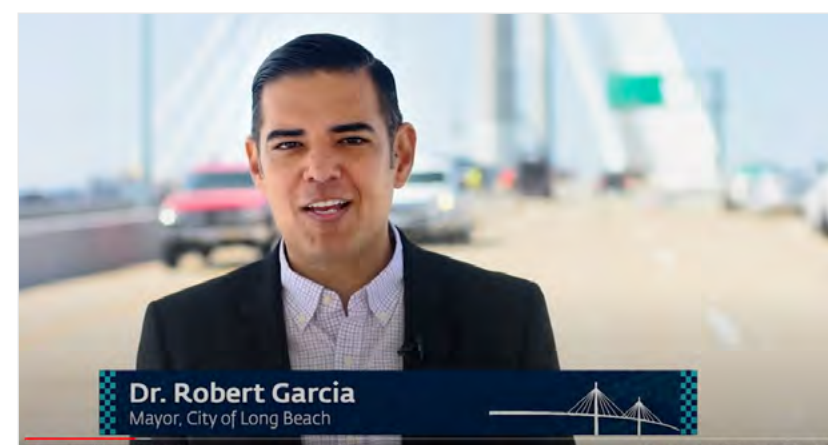
Westbound Communications, the Port's longtime public relations and marketing contractor for the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, led the event planning team for both the grand opening and lighting ceremonies in close collaboration with the Port's Communications & Community Relations team, as they did for the Bridge Project's 2013 groundbreaking and other construction landmark celebrations.





The 10/2/20 Grand Opening Event –

<https://youtu.be/kLMUUVa5eMg>





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3 Planning and Programming Components

The bridge opening ceremonies were long-anticipated events intended to highlight the Port’s multibillion-dollar investment in infrastructure to remain competitive as “The Green Port of the Future,” helping to ensure success for Port customers and best serve the Long Beach community.

Goals for the virtually enhanced ceremony

- Bringing together the greater Long Beach community, Port tenants, bridge partners and other stakeholders to further remind the region and international shipping community about the Port’s importance to the regional and national economy, and to international goods movement (i.e., A “Bridge to Everywhere”)
- Allowing the greater Long Beach and Southern California community to “watch” this event and reminding them of the effort that went into building this remarkable new bridge;
- Providing an opportunity for the Port, the industry and the City of Long Beach to celebrate a positive

occasion following months of disruptions caused by the pandemic, national protests and involvement in trade wars.

Objectives

- Drawing significant viewership for the grand opening events, equaling potential participation at all-live events of several thousand individuals;
- Achieving at least 100 media placements to garner significant coverage in both traditional and online news media, as well as social media, for the grand opening events;
- Producing successful grand opening events in short timeframes and within a budget of \$200,000 for the opening and lighting ceremonies;
- Incorporating as many Port stakeholders as possible in the celebration and crediting Bridge Project investors and supporters for their participation;
- Incorporating messaging that clearly states the importance of the new bridge;

- Showcasing the beauty of the Port as a whole through the use of dramatic video and photography.

The initial vision for the grand opening was a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony preceded by official speeches, then adding other highly visual “layers” that complemented and called attention to the many key aspects of Port operations and goods transportation.

However, COVID-19 restrictions represented major obstacles that had to be addressed. Given mandated limitations on public gatherings, the event could not accommodate a large and public opening ceremony with multiple facets (e.g., a walk across the bridge, a bicycle/foot race, or a VIP event).

That meant finding creative ways to bring together key parties – fewer than 100 individuals with proper physical distancing – that:

- Encouraged media attention;
- Offered an appropriate and dignified ceremony to highlight the importance of and reasons for building this bridge;
- Provided a reminder of the Port’s

commitment to a more robust and efficient international cargo facility, and;

- Ensured all key audiences were provided the proper stage to share their thoughts about this important infrastructure project.



Interior of broadcast truck for Grand Opening event

Target Audiences

The target audiences for the event included many stakeholders across the city and region, but the primary ones were the following:

- Members of the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners
- Port tenants and customers
- Area residents
- Local property owners
- Commercial vehicle operators
- Port employees, vendors and consultants
- Local, regional and state government agencies
- Downtown Long Beach business organizations
- Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
- City, county, state and federal elected and appointed officials
- School districts
- School district transportation agencies/charter companies
- Local business owners, employees and customers
- Neighborhood, community and business associations
- News media, including the Long Beach Press-Telegram, Long Beach Business Journal, the Gazettes, Los Angeles Times, Daily Breeze, Journal of Commerce, Los Angeles Business Journal, Long Beach Post and student newspapers, broadcast media, trade publications, social media outlets and national media as pertinent
- Area fire and law enforcement agencies
- Major utility companies and related businesses
- Railroads and related businesses
- The Aquarium of the Pacific, Queen Mary and other local tourist destinations and hospitality organizations, including the Long Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau
- ILWU leadership and membership
- Trade unions, IBEW, Pile Drivers union, LA-OC Building Trade Council
- National and international bridge enthusiast groups



A colorful ONE container crosses under the event archway during the Grand Opening

4 Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Used

The 10/2/20 Grand Opening Event – <https://youtu.be/kLMUUVaseMg>

To celebrate the opening of the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, Westbound and the Port’s communications team planned a grand opening event that was conducted on Friday, Oct. 2, 2020, before the bridge was opened to traffic on the morning of Monday, Oct. 5. The event included a one-hour prerecorded broadcast that featured 17 speakers offering well-wishes on the completion of the project as well as a 30-minute live broadcast that featured a simultaneous truck, car and boat parade punctuated by a flyover by five vintage Tiger Squadron aircraft.

The live event enabled Mayor Robert Garcia, Harbor Commission President Frank Colonna and Port Executive Director Mario Cordero to offer inspiring remarks to kick off a ceremonial first drive-over by more than 75 branded container trucks, vintage car club vehicles, and personal automobiles belonging to workers on the project. The other four members of the five-member Harbor Commission were able to participate in the event by riding on the Port’s parade float, which had been redesigned for the grand opening.

The live event, staged to adhere to masking and social distancing guidelines, was hosted by Port Deputy Executive Directors Dr. Noel Hacegaba

(Administration & Operations) and Rick Cameron (Planning & Development), who facilitated the opening remarks, followed by a call to “start your engines” by Mayor Garcia. After the parade began, the deputy directors provided scripted play-by-play commentary on the parade, the water flotilla passing under the bridge that featured nearly 20 watercraft, and the aerial flyover.

Invitations to the event were limited due to COVID-19 safety mandates from public health agencies. To accommodate other important city stakeholders, three special VIP tours were conducted for Long Beach City Council members and their staffs on Sept. 29 and 30. These tours offered behind-the-scenes access during the final stage of live construction on the bridge’s main span.

As would be expected, the event had a great many moving parts, due to the fact that the event team had to produce a one-hour taped broadcast show to enable all of the intended speakers to offer their comments and congratulations on the completion of the bridge, then follow the taped show with a 30-minute live event. The logistics included event production and logistics, live broadcast production, video production, media relations, marketing and collateral development, website and mobile app updates, and much more.



From left: Harbor Commissioner Sharon L. Weissman, Harbor Commissioner Bonnie Lowenthal, Mayor Robert Garcia, Harbor Commission Vice President Steven Neal, Harbor Commission President Frank Colonna, Port Executive Director Mario Cordero

The Team

Westbound Communications, the Port’s long-time public relations and marketing contractor for the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project beginning with the 2013 Bridge Project groundbreaking ceremony, led the event planning team in close collaboration with the Port’s Communications & Community Relations team. Other Port contractors included:

- **Audrey Kerr Events** – Event Planning
- **Media 360** – Video Production and Editing
- **Development Counselors International (DCI)** – Media Consultant
- **Matt Fukushima and Bernadette McKeever** – Photography
- **LBTV** – Official TV station of the City of Long Beach – Additional Video Support
- All Port of Long Beach divisions provided valuable staff as required, especially Security and Harbor Patrol.

The Budget

Line items for the grand opening event budget included: Event Management, Transportation/ Parking, AV Needs, Photography/Videography, Catering, Commemorative Gifts, Security, Truck Parade-related expenses, Graphics, Permits and Insurance.

Port staff invested hundreds of hours in the Grand Opening event, and overall out-of-pocket expenses beyond regularly-budgeted Port expenses came in at \$193,200.

Video Production

Westbound, with the help of the Port of Long Beach’s Communications and Government Relations teams, coordinated the pre-production, production and post-production of videos of 17 spokespeople that included federal, state, county and city elected officials; transportation and infrastructure agencies, such as LA Metro and Caltrans; and City and Port executives. This effort involved scriptwriting and creation of specific, differentiated talking points for each of the 17 speakers.

Westbound produced 10 of the 17 video shoots and arranged with staff members of elected officials and agency executives to produce

their own videos. This effort involved writing specification sheets that outlined all the details associated with the type of video that was required.



Setting up for the live event, Oct. 2, 2020

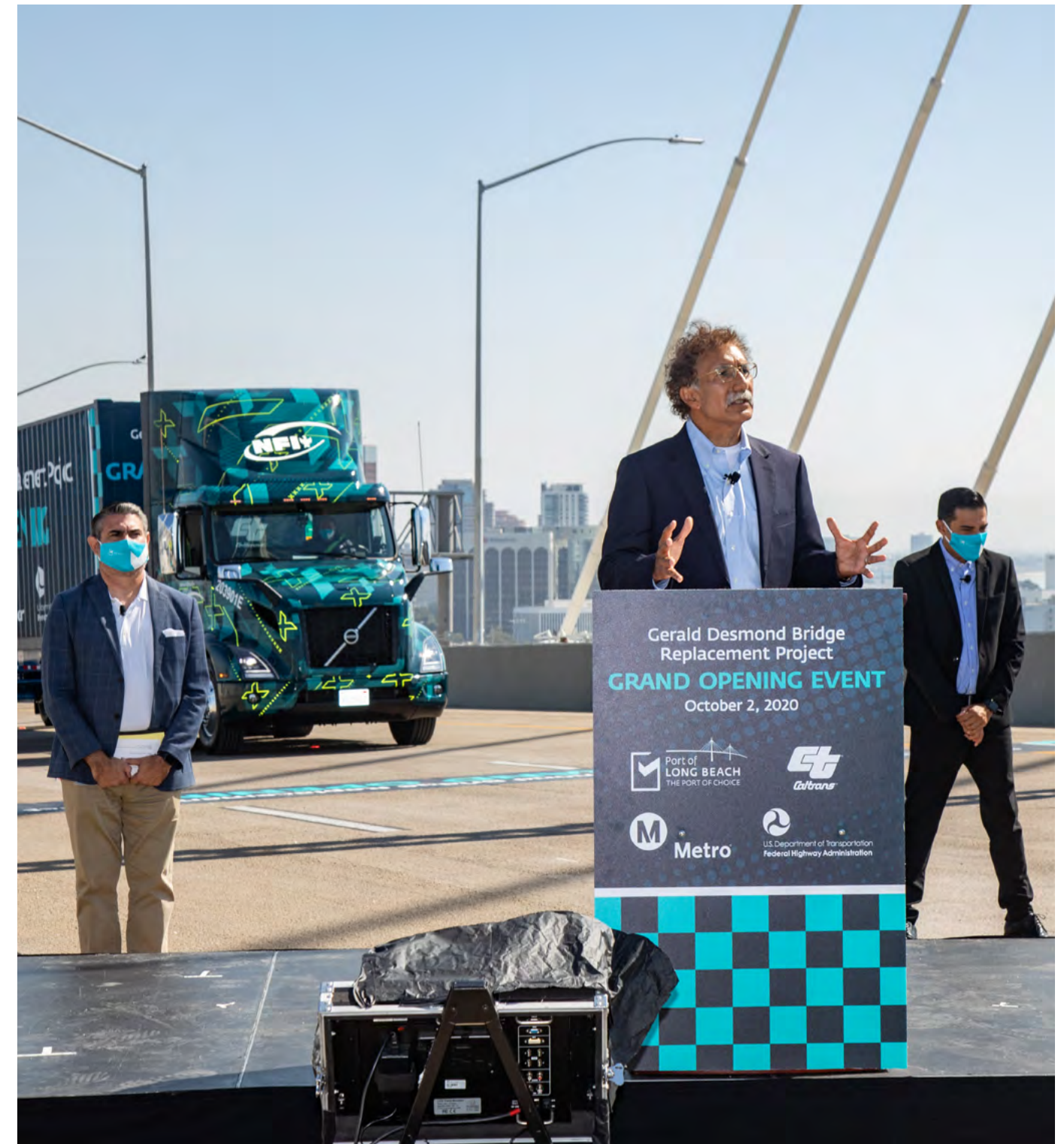
The 17 speakers (in this order)

- **Dr. Robert Garcia** – Mayor, City of Long Beach
- **Eleni Kounalakis** – California Lieutenant Governor
- **David Kim** – California Secretary of Transportation
- **Eric Garcetti** – Mayor, City of Los Angeles, and Board Chairman, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)
- **Toks Omishakin** – Director, California Transportation Authority (Caltrans)
- **Phil Washington** – CEO, LA Metro
- **Janice Hahn**, Los Angeles County Supervisor, 4th District
- **Alan Lowenthal** – United States Representative, 47th District
- **Lena Gonzalez** – California State Senator, 33rd District
- **Patrick O'Donnell** – California Assembly Member, 70th District
- **Ron Miller** – Executive Secretary, Los Angeles/Orange County Building & Construction Trades Council
- **Ramon Ponce de Leon** – President, International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) local 13
- **John Bulinski** – Director, Caltrans District 7

- **Vince Mammano** – Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration Division
- **Frank Colonna** – President, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners
- **Mario Cordero** – Executive Director, Port of Long Beach
- **Hilary Norton** – Chair, California Transportation Commission

These 17 videos were the basis of the one-hour broadcast that began the event and were augmented by taped commentary from the emcees of the 30-minute live event and documentary-style footage about the construction of the new bridge. That footage featured members of the construction team discussing how the bridge was built and archival footage of the work being done, dating back to the groundbreaking in 2013.

The video production of the documentary-style footage began 18 months prior to the opening of the bridge and the footage was eventually turned into nine Meet the Bridge Builders short videos that were launched in April 2021.



Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero, flanked by Port Deputy Executive Director Rick Cameron, left, and Mayor Robert Garcia

Live Broadcast Production

For the 30-minute live portion of the event, Westbound worked with the Port of Long Beach’s Communications team to secure the two hosts for the event, Deputy Managing Directors Dr. Noel Hacegaba and Rick Cameron, then scripted and rehearsed their on-air comments. Since their narration of the truck and car caravan, boat parade, and plane flyover would resemble a Rose Parade-like style, Westbound researched each one of the tenants and transportation companies represented in the caravan to enable both men to have scripted comments as well as the ability to ad lib based on their knowledge of Port operations and the players involved.

Due to the remote location of the bridge, the high amount of static noise coming from a nearby power plant and all the steel in the bridge structure, the event-planning team arranged for a broadcast truck to be present on the bridge, versus handling the transmission through other forms of radio or wireless communications. For the remote television broadcast, a director inside the truck called the broadcast as it was televised over the local Long Beach cable station as well as to all of the local broadcast stations for their pickup.

A major technical problem inside the broadcast truck shortly before the event’s start prevented the broadcast from being livestreamed directly to

the Port and Bridge Project websites and social media platforms. Despite this, backup messaging was deployed before the start of the event to all these platforms to direct viewers to the working livestream.



Live Event Planning and Logistics

Detailed project management task grids tracked more than 200 tasks and deliverables over the eight months of planning and implementation for the event. This task grid associated an agency owner, individual owner, deadline for delivery, interdependencies, and current status for each task.

The event occurred on the main span of the new bridge and involved a coordinated 25-truck caravan that gathered offsite at the Long Beach Convention Center, then was led by Harbor Patrol, the Port's law enforcement arm, to the new bridge, driving through downtown Long Beach. They were joined by approximately 30 classic cars; a boat parade with more than 20 interagency sea vessels; and flyovers of five Tiger Squadron vintage planes.

The lead truck in the caravan had a branded wrap around its entire container that featured the four funding partners for the Bridge Project. That branded truck was the ceremonial "first drive" over the new bridge. Sourcing, securing and wrapping the container took weeks of coordination with one of the transportation companies, with the Port of Long Beach ultimately purchasing it. The wrapping process took two full days.

To reinforce the Port of Long Beach's Green Port initiative, every one of the 25 trucks in the caravan was a zero-emissions vehicle. The event-planning team spent more than three months working with the local Harbor Trucking Association to coordinate with Port tenants and transportation companies to secure these zero-emissions vehicles, secure branded containers for each of the participating tenants, pick up those containers, park the trucks overnight in preparation for an early start the next day, then stage them at the Long Beach Convention Center on the morning of the event.

Included in the truck caravan was the Port of Long Beach's parade float that featured four of the five Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioners as participants in the parade. Behind the truck caravan, more than 30 vintage automobiles joined the ceremonial first drive, along with another 25 cars driven by members of the Bridge Project construction management team.

Arranging the boat parade required three months of coordination with the Coast Guard; Jacobsen Pilots (the pilot service that sees ships in and out of the Port); the Port of Long Beach Security Division; and Harbor Patrol. This interagency team invited their respective stakeholders to participate in the event. The event-planning team worked with Jacobsen Pilots on the careful timing

of the boat parade to reach the bridge at the same time as the truck caravan passed above on the road deck and the planes flew over the bridge.

Vintage military planes were chosen for the event to harken to the Port's history as a former U.S. Navy base. The event-planning team remained in real-time communication with the lead pilot by phone to synchronize the timing of the flyover with the movement of the truck caravan over and boat parade under the new bridge. The squadron made one pass over the bridge headed north, turned around, then flew over a second time going southbound.

What took moments to occur required months of preparation, but everything went flawlessly, and the event-planning team secured the iconic photo of the flyover, drive-over, boat-under photograph for media and archival history of the bridge opening ceremony.

Planning all of the moving parts of the 30-minute live portion of the event required deep project management, reflected in an overall project task tracker and the production schedule.

For the actual live event, a limited audience of fewer than 100 individuals was allowed onto the new bridge in accordance with COVID-19 public health guidelines at the time. Participants and crew were masked and placed in accordance

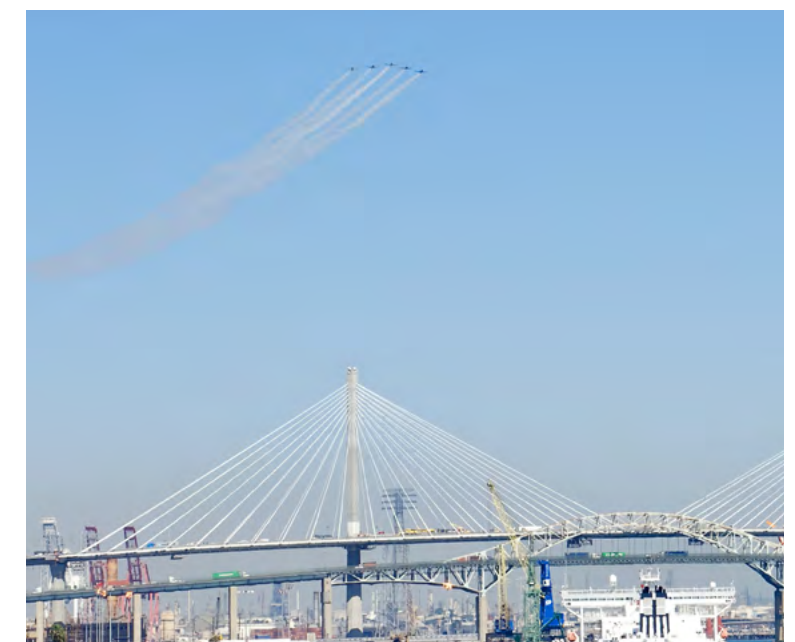
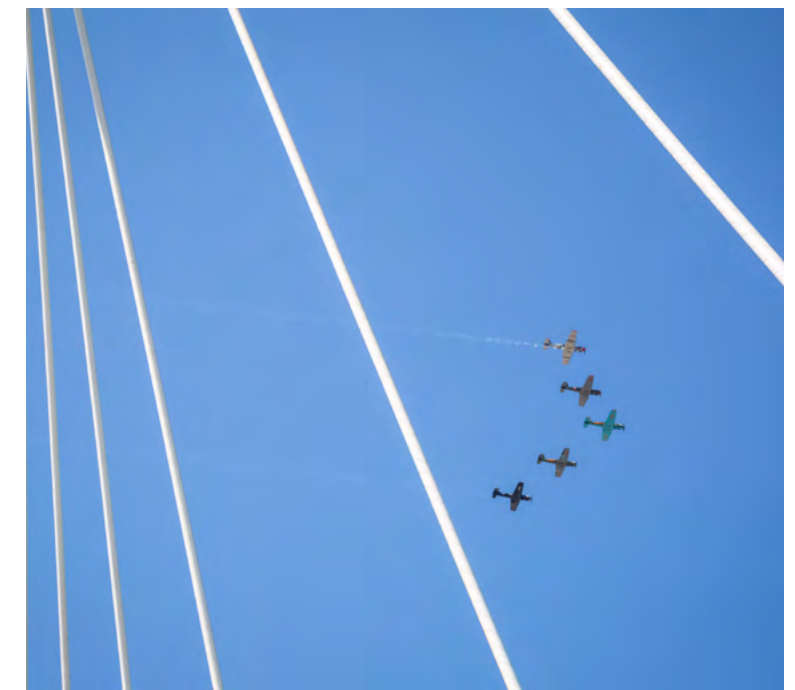
with social distancing guidelines. Approximately 80 members of the construction crew watched the event from the northbound lanes of the new bridge, separated from the southbound lanes and the parade by a large center median. Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia presided over the event, along with Long Beach Harbor Commission President Frank Colonna and Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero. Borrowing a page from the Long Beach Grand Prix, the mayor waved a flag, a traditional signal to start a race.

As the trucks and cars drove over the new bridge, members of more than 20 print and broadcast media outlets captured visuals and performed interviews with the mayor, Harbor Commission president, and executive director.





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Arranging the boat parade required three months of coordination with the Coast Guard, Jacobsen Pilots, the Port of Long Beach Security Division and Harbor Patrol



Media Relations

A project of this significance was bound to draw news media attention. To ensure this, Westbound worked closely with the Port Communications team, Media Manager Lee Peterson and Port media consultant Development Counsellors International to: develop key messages, a series of announcements and news releases across many platforms; pitch the news media and manage multiple interviews with Port officials; prepare officials for these interviews; gather and deliver supporting assets such as photography and video; arrange multiple media tours on the bridge with Port officials; and more. One news release focused on encouraging the public to view the virtual ceremony via livestream. The next release issued on the day of the event captured the significance of this bridge to the Port and the nation, the construction process and the structure's advanced seismic designs. This release helped frame much of the resulting coverage.

In particular, Westbound used this opportunity to finally convince the Los Angeles Times to write a feature on the Bridge Project. This front-page story, published on the day of the opening ceremonies, was the culmination of persistence and an ongoing dialogue with the reporter that had begun almost five years earlier.

The bridge opening story became an international one. About a month before the opening ceremony, Westbound began working with the Associated Press, Reuters and other media outlets to convey the national and regional significance of the bridge's completion. This advance work – combined with a national distribution of the opening news release and compilation video – led to a national AP story that appeared in multiple news outlets across the U.S., as well as national use of a local TV news station's coverage.

News coverage of the project's pending completion began appearing a week before the opening, after the Communications team performed a media preview day that granted exclusive access to the new bridge prior to its opening along with interviews from Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero and other prominent business leaders speaking on the benefits of the new bridge to the city's economy. Coverage appeared on all six major Los Angeles broadcast outlets.

For the day of the opening ceremony, Westbound made arrangements with Los Angeles-area TV news stations to broadcast live reports in their early morning newscasts from the bridge, featuring Executive Director Mario Cordero. Additional stations and other news outlets attended the opening ceremonies (with some

TV stations sending their helicopters to capture the festivities), resulting in significant coverage. A handful of news reporters, including the Associated Press, wrote their stories based on watching the live broadcast.

On Sunday, Oct. 4, the Long Beach Press-Telegram and its sister newspapers continued their focus on the bridge's opening with another

package of stories and a full-page graphic on the building of the bridge. The Los Angeles Business Journal also carried this project as their lead story in that week's issue.

On the Monday (Oct. 5) following the grand opening, Westbound alerted local news media to the actual opening of the bridge to traffic, and this resulted in more positive coverage.



Media members capture Mayor Robert Garcia starting the "first drive"

The Bridge Lighting Event
<https://youtu.be/Spwghwoseiw>

Overview

The new bridge at the Port of Long Beach features an iconic design with two 515-foot-high towers supporting 80 cables attached directly to the bridge deck. During the day, the bridge is visible for many miles across Southern California. The addition of 192 energy-efficient LED (light-emitting diode) lights across the main span means that the new bridge is also visible at night.

The cables are lit by 120 lights, and each tower has 36 lights to bathe its full length in multiple colors. The bridge lighting system, created and installed by Lumenpulse, can accommodate a few dozen multicolored lighting scenarios, or preset combinations that reflect Port logo colors, commemorate holidays throughout the year, events, and anticipated special occasions such as sports championships, the upcoming Olympics, and more. The Port can program the lights years in advance, and the schedule for 2021 is already complete.

The new bridge has two types of nighttime lighting: street-level lights for the roadway to enable safe driving after dark, and the

architectural lights discussed here to illuminate the bridge structure for decorative purposes. The street lights were operational when the bridge opened to traffic on Oct. 5. Installation for the architectural lights, which was more complex due to continuing construction, was completed and tested in late November over three nights leading up to the official Bridge Lighting ceremony scheduled for the evening of Dec. 14.

The Team

Although a significantly smaller event than the Oct. 2 Grand Opening, the same team participated.

The Budget

The budget for the Bridge Lighting event was minimal, as the only expenses were advisories to alert the public and media to viewing opportunities, videos of the three speakers and the lights switching on, photography and setup for media to record the Bridge Lighting. Port staff invested 60 hours in the Bridge Lighting event, and out-of-pocket expenses, beyond regularly budgeted Port expenses, totaled about \$5,000.

Event Planning, Production and Logistics

Due to California’s stay-at-home order from the surge in COVID-19 cases, bridge lights were

turned on automatically without an in-person ceremony. Because people were being asked to limit their travel while the order was in place, officials encouraged residents to enjoy the bridge lights remotely that first night – or any time after the opening event – via the three webcams pointed at the bridge available for viewing at the newbridge.com website or LBBridge app, or on LBTV (lbtv3.com), the city’s cable station. The event was scheduled for Monday, Dec. 14, at 5:30 p.m. to capture sunset shots of the new bridge before the lights came on. Following an introductory voiceover, three pre-recorded speakers provided introductory comments:

- **Dr. Robert Garcia** – Mayor of Long Beach
- **Frank Colonna** – President, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners
- **Mario Cordero** – Executive Director Port of Long Beach

Media Relations

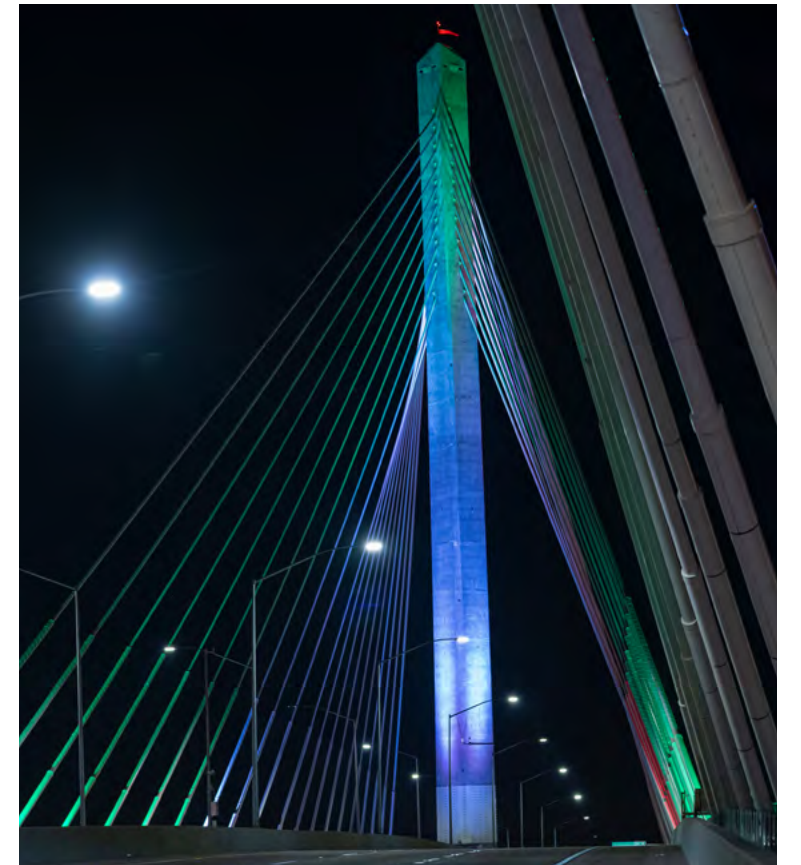
A news release was distributed on Dec. 10 prior to the Bridge Lighting, sharing information about the upcoming event and how to view it remotely, and a follow-up release was distributed to all media the day after the event on Dec. 15, recapping the event and providing a link to the virtual event.

No public access was allowed at the site, but an advisory was distributed to the news media inviting them to come to a prime viewing location at the Port of Long Beach to view and film or photograph the lights being officially turned on for the first time. A map with directions to the Pier S site was attached, and COVID-19 safety precautions were required. There was no opportunity for on-site interviews, but the taped messages from Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, Harbor Commission President Frank Colonna and Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero were provided to attending media.

Thanks to the lighting event, the debut of the new bridge’s lighting was covered widely by print, online and broadcast media.

Los Angeles-based television channels KCBS 2, KABC 7, and KTTV 11 carried the lighting event in their evening newscasts.



























The lighting was also covered by the American Journal of Transportation, Long Beach Post, Long Beach Press-Telegram and Grunion Gazette.



Thanks to the lighting event, the debut of the new bridge's lighting was covered widely by print, online and broadcast media

Sequence of Lights and Schedule

Colors	Event, Theme	Duration	2021 Dates
	New Year's Day	1 night	Jan. 1
	Default Setting (Port colors)	16 nights	Jan. 2
	MLK Jr. Day	1 night	Jan. 18
	Default Setting (Port colors)	13 nights	Jan. 19
	Black History Month	13 nights	Feb. 1
	Valentine's Day	1 night	Feb. 14
	President's Day	RI night	Feb. 15
	Black History Month Cont.	13 nights	Feb. 16
	Default Setting (Port colors)	16 nights	Mar. 1
	St. Patrick's Day	1 night	Mar. 17
	Default Setting (Port colors)	13 nights	Mar. 18
	Cesar Chavez Day	1 night	Mar. 31
	Default Setting (Port colors)	3 nights	Apr. 1
	Easter	1 night	Apr. 4
	Default Setting (Port colors)	17 nights	Apr. 5
	Earth Day	1 night	Apr. 22
	Default Setting (Port colors)	24 nights	Apr. 23
	LB Pride Week (May 16-22)	7 nights	May 16
	Default Setting (Port colors)	8 nights	May 23
	Memorial Day	1 night	May 31
	LGBT Pride Month	10 nights	June 1
	POLB Birthday	1 night	June 11
	LGBT Pride Month Cont.	7 nights	June 12
	Juneteenth	1 night	June 19
	LGBT Pride Month Cont.	10 nights	June 21
	Default Setting (Port colors)	1 night	July 1

Colors	Event, Theme	Duration	2021 Dates
	Independence Day	3 nights	July 2
	Default Setting (Port colors)	58 nights	July 5
	Women's Suffrage/Equality Day	1 night	Aug. 26
	Default Setting (Port colors)	5 nights	Aug. 27
	Alzheimer's Awareness Month	5 nights	Sept. 1
	Labor Day	1 night	Sept. 6
	Rosh Hashana	1 night	Sept. 7
	Alzheimer's Awareness Month Cont.	3 nights	Sept. 8
	Patriot Day (9/11)	1 night	Sept. 11
	Alzheimer's Awareness Month Cont.	4 nights	Sept. 12
	Yom Kippur	1 night	Sept. 16
	Alzheimer's Awareness Month Cont.	14 nights	Sept. 17
	Breast Cancer Awareness Month	30 nights	Oct. 1
	Halloween	1 night	Oct. 31
	Diá del los Muertos	1 night	Nov. 1
	Election Day	1 night	Nov. 2
	Default Setting (Port colors)	8 nights	Nov. 3
	Veterans Day	1 night	Nov. 11
	Default Setting (Port colors)	13 nights	Nov. 12
	Thanksgiving (Nov. 25-26)	3 nights	Nov. 25
	Hanukkah (Nov. 28-Dec. 6)	9 nights	Nov. 28
	Default Setting (Port colors)	17 nights	Dec. 7
	Christmas	2 nights	Dec. 24
	Kwanzaa	1 night	Dec. 26
	Christmas / Holidays Continued	4 nights	Dec. 27
	New Year's Eve	1 night	Dec. 31



2021 Bridge Lighting Schedule. Lighting fact sheet <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13g3-Xv4176pDDR7Mu3FOYbj5gCxf-zdF/view?usp=sharing>

Future Events

Overview

Future events will continue to focus attention on the new bridge including ceremonies to celebrate:

- Naming of the new bridge by the California Legislature;
- Opening and dedication of the Mark Bixby Memorial Bicycle and Pedestrian Path and observation decks atop the nearly 2-mile-long bridge, including a safe pathway to reach the 12-foot-wide Class 1 path.
- Demolition of the original Gerald Desmond Bridge that lies alongside the new bridge.



Mark Bixby Memorial Bicycle and Pedestrian Path rendering

5 Communications Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

The bridge opening ceremonies succeeded beyond expectations. The results were as follows:

- To date, nearly 16,000 individuals have viewed the Grand Opening event video (combined on the Bridge Project and Port YouTube channels), well ahead of live events that usually welcome 1,000 or fewer and post-event views that normally reach in the low thousands;
- Through Oct. 15, 2020, for the Oct. 2 Grand Opening event, there were more than 130 online, print and broadcast media placements with a combined readership of more than 242 million and viewership of more than 18.9 million. The Dec. 14, 2020 Bridge lighting debut was covered by seven news outlets;
- Both the Grand Opening and the Bridge Lighting events were produced on time within short timeframes and within the overall budget of \$200,000;
- All pertinent Port stakeholders were incorporated in the Grand Opening Celebration and credited with their involvement in the

Bridge Project;

- Presentations by the 17 speakers and Port personnel acting as emcees at the Grand Opening and the three speakers at the Bridge Lighting incorporated the messaging set forth by the team;
- The beauty of the Port as a whole was showcased through the use of dramatic video and photography, both archived and new.



Communications and Community Relations team celebrate following the event

Social Media

Bridge Opening

Port of Long Beach platforms

Campaign ran from Sept. 27 - Oct. 8

11 Instagram Posts

- Likes: 5,917
- Comments: 118
- Reach: 80,400
- Impressions: 88,204

36 Instagram Stories

Impressions: 39,356

11 Facebook Posts (2 videos, 9 photos)

- Reactions: 1,485
- Comments: 141
- Reach: 145,482
- Engagement Rate: 98%
- Shares: 729
- Video Views: 17,256

19 Tweets

- Likes: 580
- Retweets: 134

12 LinkedIn Posts

- Clicks: 8,654
- Comments: 40
- Engagement Rate: 1.2%
- Impressions: 72,504
- Reactions: 2,129
- Shares: 112

Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement

Project platforms

Campaign ran from Sept. 24-Oct. 8

22 Instagram Posts

- Likes: 4,633
- Comments: 136
- Reach: 50,416
- Impressions: 45,196

42 Instagram Stories

- Impressions: 40,537

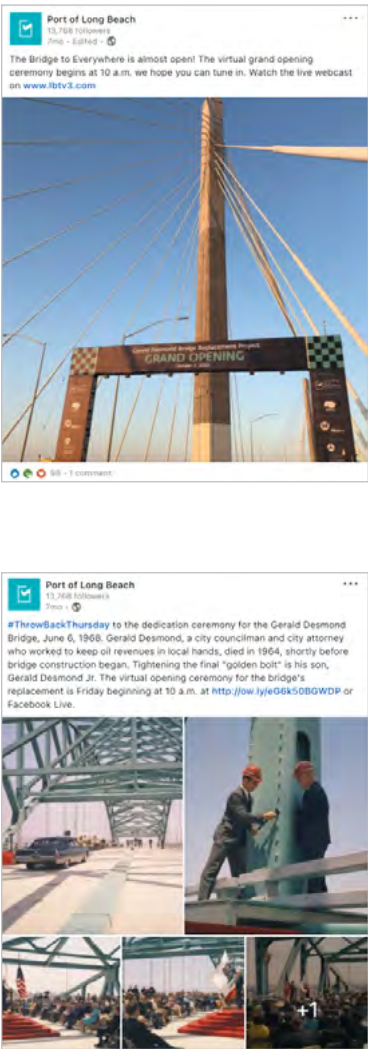
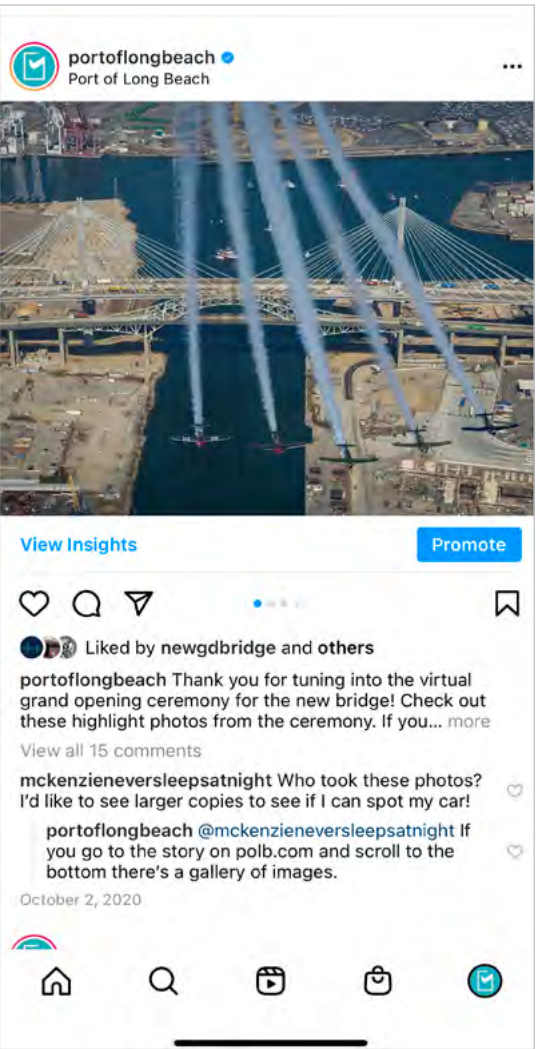
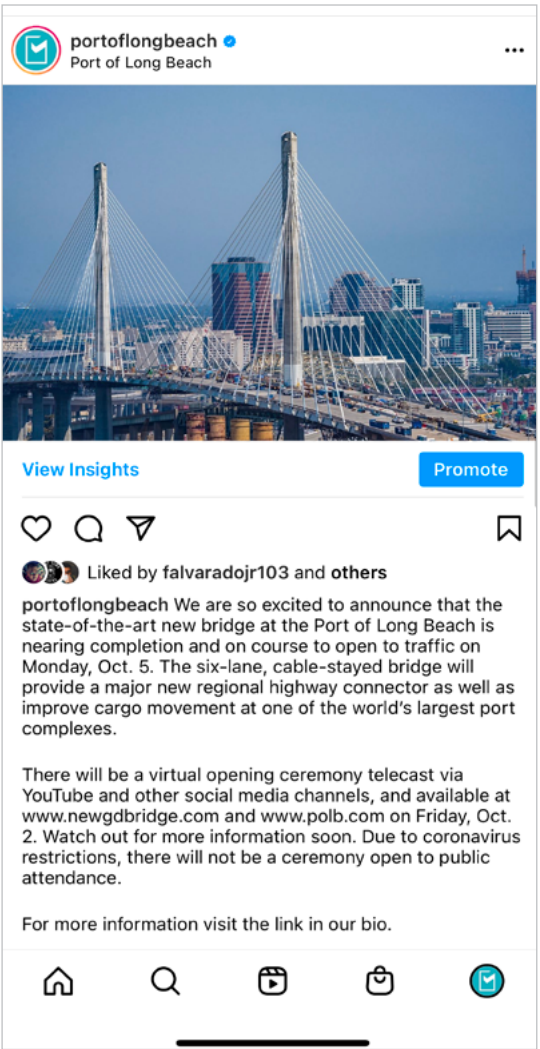
23 Facebook Posts (2 videos, 9 photos)

- Reactions: 6,260
- Comments: 1,089
- Reach: 174,005
- Shares: 1,082

28 Tweets

- Likes: 400
- Retweets: 163
- Impressions: 71,090

(No LinkedIn)



Social Media
Bridge Lighting

Port of Long Beach platforms

Campaign ran from Dec. 10-15

3 Instagram Posts

- Likes: 876
- Comments: 27
- Reach: 13,254
- Shares: 184

24 Instagram Stories

- Impressions: 10,240

4 Facebook Posts (1 video, 3 photos)

- Reactions: 360
- Comments: 20
- Reach: 16,388
- Engagement Rate: 2.9 %
- Shares: 90
- Video Views: 2,724

19 Tweets

- Likes: 33
- Retweets: 10
- Impressions: 10,273

1 LinkedIn Post

- Clicks: 97
- Comments: 1
- Engagement Rate: 5.2%
- Impressions: 4,278
- Reactions: 133
- Shares: 5

Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project platforms

Campaign ran from Dec. 10-15

7 Instagram Posts

- Likes: 2,094
- Comments: 47
- Reach: 13,017

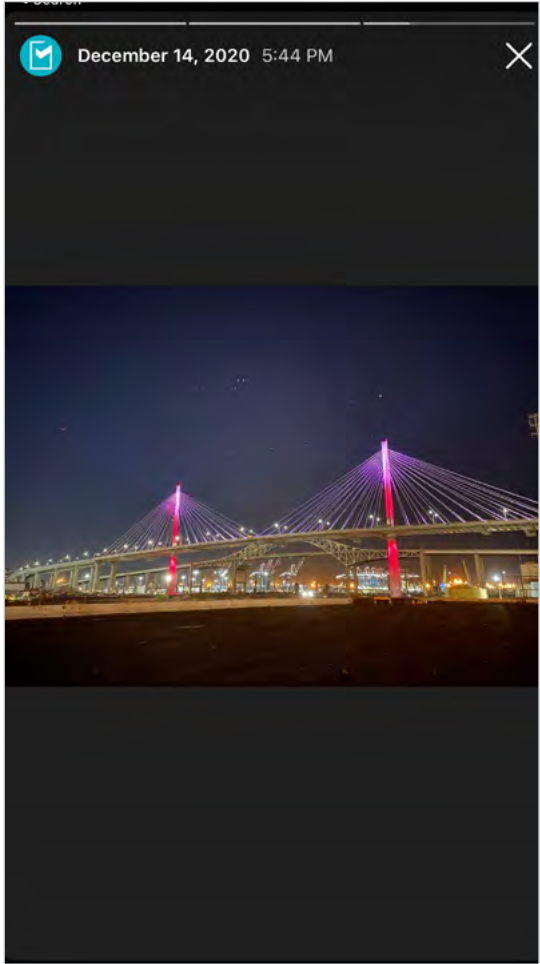
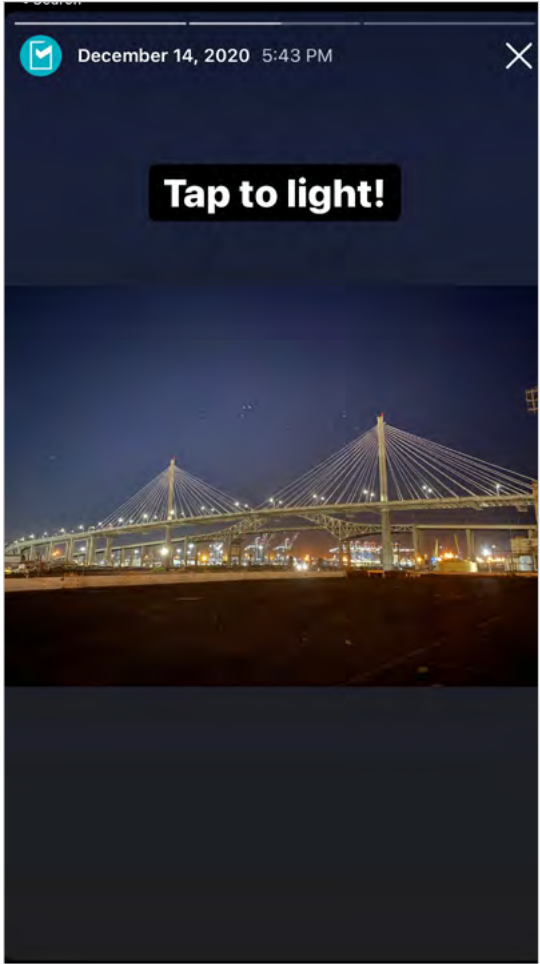
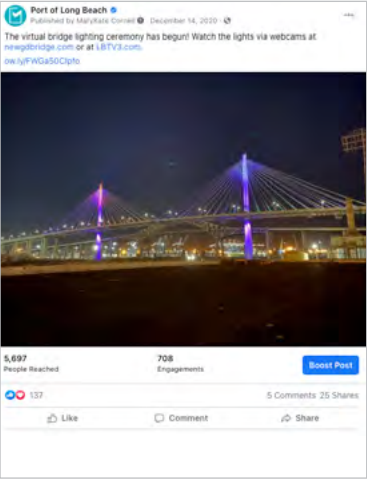
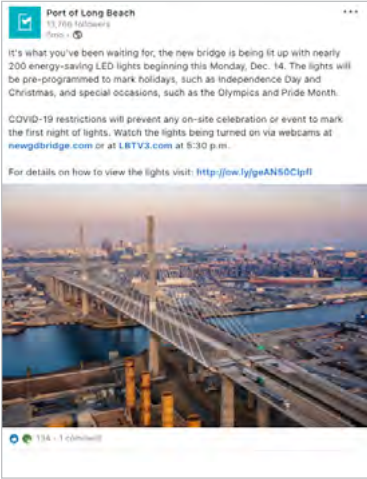
8 Facebook Posts

- Reactions: 1,878
- Comments: 221
- Reach: 34,226
- Shares: 266

28 Tweets

- Likes: 153
- Retweets: 37
- Impressions: 35,449

(No LinkedIn)



Comments – Grand Opening

"This is a historic day for our city and for the nation. We know that this project is a phenomenal marvel of architecture and infrastructure. It connects our Port and the world to each other. All of the commerce that we depend on will go over this bridge – connecting Long Beach to the rest of the country."

-Dr. Robert Garcia, Mayor, City of Long Beach

"The Port of Long Beach is all about providing a modern, thriving port complex that means good-paying jobs for thousands of people in Long Beach and Southern California."

-Frank Colonna, President, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners

"This new bridge is another major milestone in the Port's ongoing commitment to remain the most advanced and most competitive port in the world. It is much more than a convenient roadway; it is a critical link in the global movement of cargo. It is a bridge to everywhere. We had a lot to celebrate today and, in spite of all the challenge of COVID-19 restrictions, the event team really pulled off this Grand Opening ceremony. Congratulations."

-Mario Cordero, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach

"Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we've all had to get really good really fast at producing virtual events. The Grand Opening of the new bridge was an event that truly deserved a huge celebration with lots of cheering people in attendance to celebrate this huge accomplishment. I couldn't be more proud of the virtual event produced by my Communications and Community Relations team – both staff and contractors. So many people had a hand at building this iconic bridge that helps to define the Southern California coastline, and my team managed to include every one of them. Wow. Hats off."

-Kerry Gerot, Director of Communications & Community Relations, Port of Long Beach

Comments – Grand Opening

“The Grand Opening for the new Bridge was probably one of the most complicated projects I’ve ever coordinated. In addition to COVID-19 restrictions and a slippery construction completion timeline, it had thousands of moving parts, and, through lots of hard work, everything came together. It was such a privilege to work with the Port team and all the contractors who must each be credited with the overall success.”

-Daniel Rhodes, Senior Vice President, Westbound Communications, Inc.

“From a long time Long Beach resident, a huge congratulations and thanks for the Bridge project, done with excellent communication with our community, allowing transit to Terminal Island and the South Bay with minimal disruption. Best wishes.”

-Oscar Gallo, Long Beach resident

Comments – Bridge Lighting

"We all know the Port of Long Beach is incredibly important to our local and national economy. It connects us to our neighbors in Los Angeles and across the country, and we couldn't be more excited that this iconic new bridge is going to light up every single night, and be very visible folks coming in and out of our great city."

-Dr. Robert Garcia, Mayor, City of Long Beach

"Probably one of the most controversial elements of the Bridge Lighting project was selecting the things to celebrate and the color selection. Everybody had a hand in being sure nothing was missed as the sequence of lights and schedule were firmed up. I don't think we missed a thing!"

-Daniel Rhodes, Senior Vice President, Westbound Communications, Inc.

"I believe our well-lit bridge will serve as a beacon to ships from around the world that come to the Port of Long Beach. And it will be a constant reminder of special days. We have 27 different color combinations to be used at various times of the year – either to mark holidays, special awareness moments or even to celebrate our World Series-winning Los Angeles Dodgers!"

-Mario Cordero, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach

Links

Port of Long Beach Website
www.polb.com

Bridge Project Website
www.newgdbridge.com

Grand Opening

October 2 Grand Opening Video
<https://youtu.be/kLMUUVa5eMg>

Grand Opening Media Summary
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bbw9PWOdc9utC4o9xXVsOjdg2QOpnex/view?usp=sharing>

Other Grand Opening-related documents/
photos/videos, etc.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZbwQt7R1TCs_bx7EH2FjK1dixSk_1XX2o/view

Bridge Lighting

December 14 Bridge Lighting Video
<https://youtu.be/Spw9hwoseiw>

Sequence of Lights and Schedule
15 views for opening event and full 2021
schedule
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rfgpM6PaPwL5BMxF_bQjgmsl8-DxSdl/view?usp=sharing

Lighting fact sheet
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13g3-Xv4176pDDR7Mu3FOYbj5gCxf-zdF/view?usp=sharing>

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