



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Building bridges across organizations

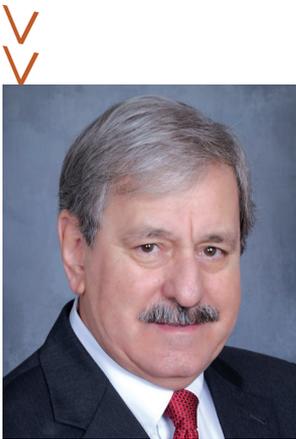
PCI, through its Research and Development Council, the Dennis R. Mertz Bridge Research Fellowship, the Daniel P. Jenny Research Fellowship, and other initiatives, has successfully been advancing the use of precast, prestressed concrete in bridge construction. It is worth mentioning, however, that the influence of PCI's 11 regional chapters and partners on the design, manufacture, and erection of precast, prestressed concrete bridge girders, caps, deck panels, and other elements cannot be understated. Our regional affiliates are an integral part of the success and expansion of precast, prestressed concrete in our nation's bridges. Some of these affiliate groups grew out of marketing necessity, and some began as conduits for the exchange of ideas in search of solutions in conjunction with states' departments of transportation (DOTs).

The Precast Concrete Manufacturer's Association (PCMA), PCI's regional affiliate representing Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico, traces its roots back to the Texas Highway Department in 1957. Throughout its entire history, PCMA members have collaborated with, supplied to, and benefitted from DOT-funded college and university research on the use of precast, prestressed concrete in bridges. The same can be said of the other regional affiliates.

For example, Dennis Fink of Northeast Prestress Products LLC, past PCI chair and a member of both PCI Northeast and PCI Mid-Atlantic, says that many advancements have emerged through academia and state DOTs as a direct result of these chapters' contributions to research projects throughout the Northeast. PCI West and the California Department of Transportation have a similar relationship and support research and the expanding use of our industry's products. And, of course, the Florida Prestressed Concrete Association and the Florida Department of Transportation have worked hand in hand for years to advance the use of precast, prestressed concrete in bridge construction.

One question often asked is how the research is used to move the industry forward. One example of this is a project currently underway in Texas. The Concrete Bridge Engineering Institute (CBEI) is creating a center for concrete-bridge-related research, education, and training at the University of Texas at Austin within the Cockrell School of Engineering. Currently, the CBEI coalition includes the Federal Highway Administration, 14 state DOTs, and 9 industry institutes and associations, including PCI. Among the opportunities for the bridge construction community is the CBEI mock bridge. This is a complete three-span precast, prestressed concrete bridge that includes caps, girders, and deck panels. Precast concrete columns are under discussion. The plans call for cutouts and accessibility allowing engineers, bridge inspectors, and others to utilize the mock bridge for education and training. PCMA members met with CBEI officials to discuss the project and, I'm proud to say, within an hour established the project framework and had PCMA members commit to manufacture and deliver the required precast, prestressed concrete bridge components at no cost to the project. This is an excellent example of DOTs, academia, PCI, and a regional partner working together to make this extraordinary laboratory a reality. We look forward to the mock bridge completion.

This combination of involvement and cooperation between interested parties continues to move our industry forward. But it's never time to rest on our laurels; we've got more work to do. **D**



Carlos D. Cerna
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