

Greg Force

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

# Building bridges with concrete

As I read the recent edition of PCI's *Aspire*, I couldn't help but marvel at the innovation that continues to be demonstrated in concrete bridge construction. Consider the following excerpts from several of the articles: "bulb-tee precast, prestressed concrete beams with custom variable-depth precast, prestressed concrete fascia beams on curved alignments," "10-span, continuous, composite, prestressed concrete bulb-tee design without expansion joints," and "with ABC (accelerated bridge construction), crews were able to build the 159.5 ft. long bridge (including approach slabs) in six months less time than with traditional methods and for millions of dollars less than the cost of the typical rebuild."

Innovation has long been the strong suit of our industry, and it appears to be thriving in the bridge construction market as solutions are developed that meet the demands for economy, speed, aesthetics, durability, sustainability, and overall risk reduction. Development of new member cross sections, such as the NEXT beam, the pi girder, and curved spliced U beams, and advancements in materials, such as reactive powder (ultra-high-performance) and self-consolidating concretes, are prime examples of expanding the envelope in response to new opportunities. With its preliminary design guidelines and examples, the recently published third edition of the *PCI Bridge Design Manual* has to be considered one of the most user-friendly and informative handbooks available to designers and is completely accessible electronically.

Innovation is sparked by collaboration. The developments I have outlined are largely the result of producers, professors, transportation professionals, and material suppliers working in concert in response to an evident shortcoming or problem in need of a better solution. The advancements in the use of precast, prestressed concrete as a construction material in the United States over the past half century, not only for bridges, but also for buildings, have largely been due to similar efforts by a dedicated group of outstanding individuals who have given their own time (and often their resources) to bring us to where we are today. This is really a demonstration of PCI at its finest and a testament to what the institute is all about.

Also in the recent edition of *Aspire*, there is a tribute to John Dick, who so capably worked with the PCI membership for many years, most recently with the transportation side of the industry. William Nickas, editor-in-chief of *Aspire* and director of transportation services, acknowledges John's legacy and expresses his own desire to continue to advance the use of concrete for transportation structures. This sums up the challenge for all of us involved with the industry today. It matters that we acknowledge the legacy of the past by dedicating ourselves to that level of involvement necessary for continued progress. By doing so, we will be doing our part to build that *concrete* bridge to the future! **■**



Greg Force | 2012 PCI Chairman  
Tindall Corp. | Spartanburg, S.C.