



Photo: PCI

## Hold It between the Ditches

William Nickas, *Editor-in-Chief*

**A**s I began to pen this editorial, I reflected back on recent conversations I've had with a number of consulting bridge engineers and state bridge engineers.

Past engineering and construction trends are changing and while small intermediate steps are comfortable for some, bold ideas, innovation, and speed of delivery are desirable by others.

*ASPIRE*<sup>TM</sup> has and will continue to address both... the tried and true methods and the latest innovations appearing in the marketplace for delivering quality transportation assets.

What is your business culture? What is the culture of the direct and indirect customers you serve? I'm reminded of the old adage... "is this a push or pull technology"? Will your customer push you to change or will you help pull the industry to improve and achieve more durable solutions that can be constructed faster and more economically.

**Past**—The creators of this publication have provided a unique, high quality platform to publish your professional contributions and outstanding work to a vast and diverse audience. Your efforts and energy do not go unnoticed. Innovations and creative techniques take time to refine and develop into applications embraced by the broader engineering community. Clear and concise communication and strong leadership allow these advancements and game changing creative solutions to enter and benefit transportation system owners and users. The concrete industry continuously supports efforts to improve and implement technological advancements and this publication is one tool to assist in telling your concrete story.

**Present**—A variety of accelerated construction solutions are gaining traction and we are observing innovative solutions in several states; all with the goal

of delivering assets in a timely and economical manner.

There is movement in the research arena suggesting that weight is the critical factor in accelerating bridge construction. Weight is just one factor but not the most important factor in determining a material solution. Longevity, sustainability, site and environmental conditions, and costs likely have a greater effect in determining the appropriate material solution. The turbulence created by the misinformation surrounding the idea that the lightweight structural solution is the best solution is more of a distraction than an accelerated bridge construction methodology.

Owners seek innovative solutions that not only meet the demands of today's users but are timely, sustainable, and supportable within current and projected operational and maintenance budgets.

This Fall 2012 issue of *ASPIRE* once again strives to showcase concrete bridge projects unique to our industry. The new section on ABC projects highlights delivery techniques or technology that can change the way you or someone else goes about developing a specific concrete bridge solution.

**Future**—As a second-generation engineer, I have picked up a few sayings and habits along the way that will, on occasion, show up in this column. Consider yourself forewarned! My father always told me to try and "Hold it between the ditches," meaning avoid distractions and stay focused on the important things in front of you. In the coming 2013 calendar year, the *ASPIRE* team will continue to highlight the attributes of bridge projects and how these examples best utilize concrete's **resiliency** and **robustness**. Keep sending the team your ideas and creative concrete solutions and remember:

Hold it between the ditches. 

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### Cover

Delta Ponds Pedestrian Bridge, Eugene, Ore., by OBEC, features an asymmetrical, three-span, sable-stayed section with fanned stays.  
Photo: OBEC.

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