

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY

**BENICIA-MARTINEZ BRIDGE
GEORGE MILLER, JR. BRIDGE**

OPENED TO TRAFFIC

SEPTEMBER 15, 1962



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Interstate 680



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Interstate 680



The original Benicia-Martinez Bridge was opened to traffic on September 15, 1962 (George Miller, Jr. Bridge, deck truss span, 1.2 miles); the new span opened on August 25, 2007 (segmented concrete span, George Miller III Bridge, 1.7 miles). A Union Pacific railroad lift bridge sits between the two spans; it was built in 1929-1930. This photo was taken before the new span was completed. Photo taken 12/29/04.

Routing

Interstate 680 connects the cities of San Jose, Milpitas, Fremont, Pleasanton, San Ramon, Danville, Alamo, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, Concord, Martinez, and Benicia in the eastern suburbs of the San Francisco Bay Area. It is a heavily traveled route that is being expanded and widened in several locations. The section of freeway through San Jose and Milpitas is generally eight lanes, but it is only four to six lanes wide through Sunol (rural area between Fremont and Pleasanton). This section is being widened to accommodate commuters between the jobs in Silicon Valley and affordable housing in the Central Valley. The former cloverleaf at the junction of Interstates 580 and 680 is in the midst of a reconstruction, and the freeway between Pleasanton and Concord has recently been expanded. Preliminary

Site Navigation

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design is underway for work to be performed on the toll Martinez-Benicia Bridge over Suisun Bay. Interstate 680 ends at its junction with Interstate 80 near Cordelia.

History**Key Opening Dates of Interstate 680:**

- Interstate 280 and U.S. 101 to McKee Road – September 4, 1974
- McKee Road to Hostetter Road – December 15, 1974
- Hostetter Road to California 237 – September 5, 1974
- California 237 to California 262 – March 17, 1971
- California 262 to California 238 – January 28, 1971
- California 238 to California 84 – January 9, 1964 (widened December 14th, 1990)
- California 84 to Frager Road – November 8, 1967 (widened December 14th, 1990)
- Frager Road to Stoneridge Drive – November 8, 1967 (widened December 5th, 1989)
- Stoneridge Drive to Interstate 580 – December 16, 1965 (widened December 5th, 1989)
- California 84 to Interstate 580 – November 8, 1967
- Interstate 580 to city limits of Pleasanton and Dublin - December 16, 1965
- City limits of Pleasanton and Dublin to Alcosta Boulevard – December 16, 1965 (widened May 18, 1995)
- Alcosta Boulevard to Sycamore Valley Road – January 3, 1967 (widened May 18, 1995)
- Sycamore Valley Road to South Main Street – December 1, 1964 (widened May 18, 1995)
- South Main Street to Ygnacio Valley Road – Circa 1960 (widened March 5, 1999)
- Ygnacio Valley Road to Geary Road – Circa 1956 (widened March 5, 1999)
- Geary Road to Contra Costa Boulevard – Circa 1956 (widened November 12, 1998)
- Contra Costa Boulevard to Monument Boulevard – Circa 1963 (widened January 1, 1990)
- Monument Boulevard to California 242 – Circa 1963 (widened September 7, 1974)
- California 242 to Willow Pass Road – April 21, 1964 (widened September 7, 1974)
- Willow Pass Road to Mococo Overhead – Circa 1962 (widened October 2, 1991)
- Mococo Overhead to Contra Costa-Solano County Line – Circa 1962 (widened November 12, 1991)
- Benicia-Martinez (George Miller, Jr.) Bridge - September 15, 1962 (northbound span built on August 25, 2007)
- Contra Costa-Solano County Line to Interstate 780 – December 31, 1978 (widened November 12, 1991)
- Interstate 780 to N. Ramp for Interstate 780 – July 13, 1973
- N. Ramp for Interstate 780 to Cordelia Overhead – August 22, 1966
- Cordelia Overhead to Interstate 80 – Circa 1961 (widened August 22, 1966)

Many thanks to C.J. Moon for his assistance in providing this historical chronology.

Highway Guide

Interstate 680 is split into the following pages:

- Interstate 680 - Index
- Northbound:
 - Interstate 680 - Santa Clara County
 - Interstate 680 - Alameda County
 - Interstate 680 - Contra Costa County
 - Interstate 680 - Solano County
- Southbound:
 - Interstate 680 - Solano County
 - Interstate 680 - Contra Costa County
 - Interstate 680 - Alameda County

o Interstate 680 - Santa Clara County

Scenes Pertaining to Interstate 680



The above signage for Junction Interstate 680 is found along Crow Canyon Road (Exit 36), and these photoboxes also include several pictures of a trailblazer shield on northbound San Ramon Valley Boulevard. Note the control cities of Sacramento (northbound) and San Jose (southbound). Photos taken 12/27/01.



The above signage is found along Stone Valley Road in Alamo as it approaches Interstate 680. The Blue Star Memorial Highway marker is located in a landscaped area within the interchange complex. Photos taken 10/20/00.



This series of pictures (above and below) shows Interstate 680 trailblazer route markers and green guide signs posted in and around the North Main Street interchange in Walnut Creek. Photos taken 07/15/09.



This shield image is taken at the industrial park area at Exit 60 (Industrial Way/Bayshore Road). The reserve fleet is located on Suisun Bay, which is the wide portion of the delta that can be seen from the Benicia-Martinez Bridge looking east. Photo taken 12/29/04.



A freeway entrance shield for Interstate 680 is posted at Exit 60 (Industrial Way/Bayshore Road) in Benicia near the Valero oil refinery. Photo taken 12/29/04.



This view shows view from Bayshore Road looking at the Benicia-Martinez 1962 span during evening light. Photo taken 12/29/04.



Looking south toward the city of Martinez over the Carquinez Strait, this view of the original 1962 Benicia-Martinez Bridge and the railroad bridge can be seen from Bayshore Road in Benicia. Photo taken 12/29/04.




Page Updated November 18, 2011.

**BENICIA-MARTINEZ BRIDGE
CONGRESSMAN GEORGE
MILLER BRIDGE**

OPENED TO TRAFFIC

AUGUST 26, 2007

 SEARCH BATA SITE	
Bridge Facts	
Home	Benicia-Martinez Bridge
About BATA	<p>FACTS AT A GLANCE</p> <p>LOCATION: Interstate 680 between Solano and Contra Costa counties</p> <p>STRUCTURE: Deck truss</p> <p>LENGTH: 1.2 miles</p> <p>VERTICAL CLEARANCE: 138 feet</p> <p>CHANNEL SPAN: 528 feet</p> <p>OPENED: September 1962 (widened in 1991, parallel structure in 2007)</p> <p>COST:</p> <p>Original Structure - \$25 million</p> <p>2007 Parallel Structure- \$1.2 billion</p> <p>AUTO TOLL: \$5 CARPOOLS: \$2.50</p> <p>COLLECTION: One-way, northbound in Martinez</p> <p>TRAFFIC LANES: Three in southern direction, five in northern direction</p> <p>FY 2010-11 TOTAL TOLL-PAID VEHICLES: 17,987,421</p> <p>FY 2010-11 TOTAL TOLLS COLLECTED: \$95,353,601</p> <p>While it took a half-century of traffic growth to require a bridge to replace the ferries crossing the Carquinez Strait between Benicia and Martinez, it took only a couple of decades for ballooning traffic on Interstates 680 and 780 to overwhelm the Benicia-Martinez Bridge, also known as the George Miller, Jr. Bridge.</p> <p>To accommodate the growth BATA and Caltrans, as part of the RM 1 program, completed a second parallel span that carries five lanes of northbound traffic. The second span opened to traffic on August 25, 2007 and is named in honor of Congressman George Miller, who is the son of late State Assemblymember and state Senator George Miller, Jr. In addition, a new toll plaza was constructed and features Northern California's first open road tolling system, allowing FasTrak customers to travel through the toll plaza at freeway speeds.</p> <p>The original span was seismically retrofitted and then converted to carry four lanes of southbound traffic as well as a new bicycle and pedestrian pathway that opened on August 29, 2009.</p> <p>See also: New Benicia-Martinez Bridge</p> <p>See also: Seismic Retrofit Program</p> <p>See also: Caltrans' toll bridge page</p>
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Phone: 510.817.5700, Fax: 510.817.5848

This page was last modified Friday January 13, 2012

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NEWS RELEASE



Today's Date: July 29, 2009
District: 4 - Oakland
Contact: Bob Haus
Phone: (510) 286-5576
(510) 715-7212 Cell

New Lanes to Open on Southbound Benicia-Martinez Bridge

Benicia – All four lanes on the newly-reconfigured southbound Benicia-Martinez B will open by Saturday morning, August 1, 2009, Caltrans and the Bay Area Toll Authority announced today.

The new lanes will open in two stages. The southern half will open by Friday morning July 31, while the northern half will open Saturday morning, August 1.

This structure carried both lanes of traffic until August 2007, when the new bridge opened. The new bridge now carries northbound traffic. The existing bridge has been modified to carry four lanes of southbound traffic. In addition, the newly reconfigured bridge has wide shoulders and a pathway for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The 50 million dollar reconfiguration project was financed primarily through Region Measure One, the extra dollar motorists pay in bridge tolls. The new configuration greatly increase both convenience and safety for Bay Area drivers.

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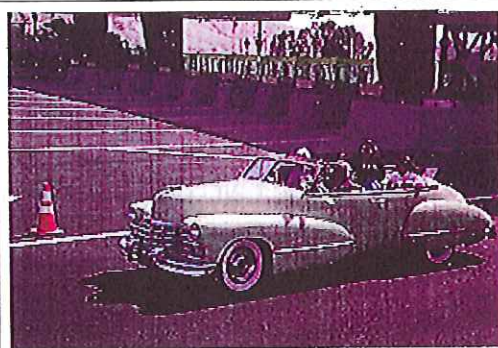
Photographs

New Benicia-Martinez Bridge Dedicated in Honor of Congressman George Miller

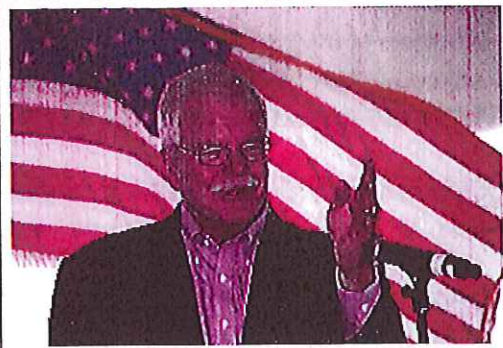
Hundreds of dignitaries and members of the public gathered in Martinez and Benicia on Saturday, August 25, 2007 to celebrate the completion of the second span of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge — and its dedication in honor of Congressman George Miller (D-Martinez).

See also:

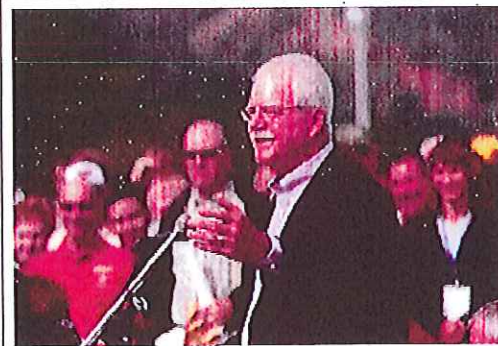
- [Press release: Celebrations for Completion of New Benicia-Martinez Bridge](#)
- [Benicia-Martinez Bridge construction photos](#)



Rep. George Miller makes the first crossing in a vintage car (Photo: Bill Hall)



Rep. George Miller (Photo: Bill Hall)




Rep. George Miller (Photo: Noah Berger)



State Senator Tom Torlakson (Photo: Noah Berger)



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Jobs & Contracts	<i>Northbound Span to Open for Traffic Sunday</i>	
Meetings & Events	CONTACT:	
Get Involved	John Goodwin, BATA - 510.817.5862 Lauren Wonder, Caltrans - 510.286.6120 BATA/MTC Public Information - 510.817.5757	
Services	OAKLAND, Calif., August 23, 2007... U.S. Rep. George Miller will be the featured speaker at public events to be held Saturday morning, Aug. 25, on each side of the Carquinez Strait to celebrate completion of the second Benicia-Martinez Bridge. The first event will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. at Martinez Waterfront Park in downtown Martinez, with a second event slated for 11:15 a.m. on a hilltop site off Park Road in Benicia that offers a spectacular view of the new bridge. The five-lane, 1.2-mile viaduct is scheduled to begin carrying northbound Interstate 680 traffic on Sunday, Aug. 26.	
Library	PHOTOS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Benicia-Martinez Bridge Dedicated in Honor of Congressman George Miller • New Benicia-Martinez Bridge Construction 	
Maps & Data	<p>"We're celebrating the successful completion of a job well done by thousands of dedicated workers," said Rep. Miller. "This bridge is more than just a much-needed highway capacity enhancement. It's a testament to years of hard work by the engineers and architects who designed the bridge, the iron workers, concrete workers, heavy equipment operators, electricians and many others who built the bridge, and to the legions of people who worked to solve the technical challenges that arose along the way."</p>	
Funding	<p>The New Benicia-Martinez Bridge is just east of and parallel to the Union Pacific Railroad bridge and the original 1962 freeway bridge (which is named for Rep. Miller's father, the late George Miller, Jr., who served in the state Assembly from 1947 to 1948, and in the state Senate from 1949 to 1969). A resolution to name the new span the Congressman George Miller Bridge was approved this week by the state Legislature. "This is a tribute to generations of outstanding public service by the Miller family," said Napa County Supervisor Bill Dodd, who chairs the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA). "Nowhere else in California, and perhaps nowhere in the world, are there two major bridges, side by side, named for a father and son."</p>	
Planning	<p>The original Benicia-Martinez freeway bridge, currently configured to carry three lanes of traffic in each direction, will be converted to accommodate four southbound traffic lanes plus a new bicycle and pedestrian pathway. Modifications to the existing structure are scheduled for completion in 2009.</p>	
Projects	<p>Funded primarily through the Regional Measure 1 toll program approved by voters</p>	
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in 1988 and administered by the BATA, the \$1.2 billion New Benicia-Martinez Bridge project encompassed construction of an all-new interchange between Interstates 680 and 780 in Benicia, reconstruction of the I-680/Marina Vista interchange in Martinez, and a new toll plaza on the Martinez side of the bridge. The new toll facility includes nine staffed booths. To the left of the toll booths are a dedicated high-occupancy vehicle lane and two open-road tolling lanes, which will allow vehicles equipped with FasTrak® toll tags to bypass the toll plaza altogether and safely proceed onto the bridge without slowing (see [lane configuration diagram](#)). Known as FasTrak Express, these lanes mark the Bay Area debut of open-road tolling.

"Open-road tolling is a huge step forward in toll plaza efficiency," noted Randy Rentschler, director of legislation and public affairs for MTC. "By eliminating the need to slow down and squeeze through the toll booths, the FasTrak Express lanes can handle more than 1,800 vehicles per hour. That's 50 percent more than a traditional FasTrak-only lane and over four times as many as a toll lane where drivers have to stop to pay cash."

The FasTrak Express lanes, like the FasTrak system in place at all Bay Area toll lanes, use overhead antennae to read the toll tag and a computer system to automatically deduct tolls from motorists' prepaid accounts. Cameras will record the license plate numbers of vehicles not equipped with FasTrak and a violation notice will be mailed to drivers who fail to pay the toll. To view an online simulation of the new FasTrak Express lanes, go to http://bata.mtc.ca.gov/projects/new_benicia.htm

A gallery of photographs of the new bridge is available at www.mtc.ca.gov/news/photos/benicia.htm.

"This unique segmental bridge will bring congestion relief to the 100,000 motorists who use it every day, and that will have a positive impact on transportation throughout the Bay Area," said Caltrans Director Will Kempton.

Caltrans owns, operates and maintains the state highway system, including seven Bay Area toll bridges. BATA, which is directed by the same policy to Key board as MTC, administers toll revenues from the region's state-owned toll bridges. MTC is the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

###

Note to Editors: For further information, see Fact Sheet below.

FACT SHEET: CONGRESSMAN GEORGE MILLER BRIDGE

The New Benicia-Martinez Bridge, also known as the Congressman George Miller Bridge, will carry all northbound Interstate 680 traffic across the Carquinez Strait, with five 12-foot lanes and two full 10-foot shoulders. Included in the work is a new toll plaza at the south end that features one dedicated carpool lane, two "open road tolling" FasTrak™ lanes and nine cash/ FasTrak™ lanes. In addition, Booth #3 will accept carpools during commute periods.

Location: Carquinez Strait linking Contra Costa and Solano counties

Roadway: Northbound Interstate 680 from Martinez to Benicia

Bridge Type: Balanced Cantilever Segmental (cast-in-place)

Length: 7,435 feet (main span); 8,790 feet (including approaches)

Width: 83.5 feet, with five 12-foot lanes and two full 10-foot shoulders

Height : 141 feet over the Carquinez Strait shipping channel

Project Cost: \$1.2 billion, includes new I-680/I-780 interchange, reconstruction of I-680/ Marina Vista interchange in Martinez, and a new toll plaza on the Martinez side.

Funding Sources: Regional Measure 1 toll funds, approved by Bay Area voters in 1988; Regional Measure 2 toll funds, approved by Bay Area voters in 2004; State Highway Operations & Protection Program (SHOPP); Proposition 192 monies.

Construction Dates: November 2001 – August 25, 2007

Seismic Safety: A "Lifeline" structure designed to remain in service following a maximum credible earthquake. The Interstate 680 corridor has been designated as a primary route for transporting emergency supplies into the Bay Area after a major quake.

Deep-Water Foundations: 99 eight-foot diameter piles with seven-foot diameter rock sockets drilled to a depth of 254 feet. Footings weighing 1,700 tons each were precast at Mare Island in Vallejo and installed over the driven pile casings with the use of a custom-built catamaran crane barge.

Bridge Piers: 17 piers, 12 of which are in the water.

Concrete: Bridge superstructure is built with high-performance lightweight concrete, pre-cooled with ice and liquid nitrogen, and then post-cooled with water running through PVC cooling pipes. Compressive strength of the concrete is greater than 10,000 pounds per square inch. The main bridge span includes 190,000 cubic yards of concrete.

Bridge Segments: 344 cast-in-place segments and nine span-closure pours, plus two mid-span expansion hinges. Each bridge segment is about 16 feet long. The nine span-closure pours are 10 feet long. Due to a parabolic soffit, structure depth ranges from 37.5 feet to 14.9 feet. Span lengths range from 275 feet to 657 feet.

Conversion of Original Bridge: Six-lane 1962 bridge (also known as George Miller, Jr., Bridge) will be converted to accommodate four southbound lanes plus a bicycle/pedestrian pathway. Modification of original span is scheduled for completion in 2009.

###

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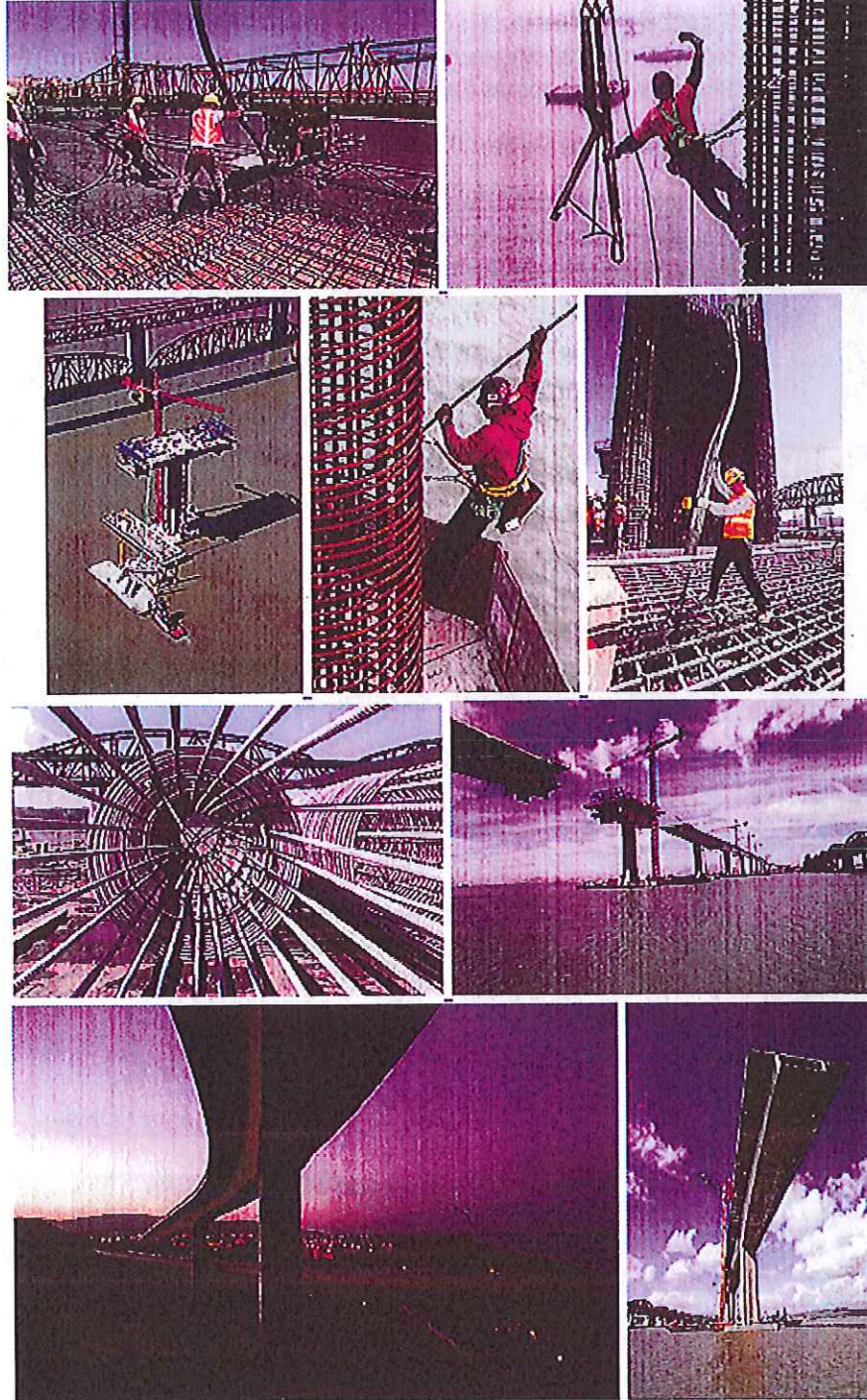
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Photographs

New Benicia-Martinez Bridge Construction Photos

(Click to enlarge in new window)
Photos: Caltrans (except as noted)



Bottom left photo: © Karl Nielsen

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BENICIA BRIDGE RENOVATION TO FINISH IN AUGUST...WITH A BIKE LANE!

Via the Contra Costa Times:

Benicia Bridge renovation to finish early

By Denis Cuff
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 05/26/2009 01:17:31 PM PDT

Updated: 05/26/2009 05:41:26 PM PDT

A \$43.5 million renovation of the Benicia Bridge is on target to be finished in August — four months ahead of schedule — to provide less congestion and smoother travel on Interstate 680 across the Carquinez Strait, Caltrans says.

The upgrade of the 1.2-mile bridge connecting Contra Costa and Solano counties includes a fourth lane for southbound car and truck traffic, a new bike/pedestrian lane, and wide new shoulders as a safety buffer.

A second merging lane will be added for drivers entering the bridge from I-780. Traffic back ups there during the morning commute.

"There won't be any backup (from I-780) with our new four-lane configuration for the bridge," said Mo Pazooki, Caltrans project manager. "We're coming in ahead of schedule and within budget on a project that will help traffic flows."

He said good weather and a speedy contractor is making for early completion.

The renovation began in January 2008 and was scheduled for completion in December 2009. Now it appears the project will be done sometime in August, with the fourth traffic lane opening first and the bike lane soon after, Caltrans officials said. No official opening date has been set.

The Benicia Bridge used to carry traffic in both northbound and southbound directions when it was built in 1962 to replace the last major ferry for autos in the Bay Area. The old bridge was converted to southbound-only traffic in August 2007, when a \$1.2 billion span was opened with five lanes for northbound traffic.

To enable contractors to renovate the old bridge while it still carries traffic, half of the bridge width was shut down and renovated while the other half carried three lanes of traffic.

In August, the entire bridge width will open with four southbound traffic lanes, plus two merging lanes from both I-680 and I-780.

The morning backup occurs as I-780 motorists squeeze onto the bridge in one lane close to a

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concrete barrier. "Some people tell us they're scared to drive there merge there," Pazooki said.

The new 8-foot-wide shoulders on the bridge will ease safety concerns, and provide space to access cars that break down or get in accidents. The bridge has no shoulder now.

In another improvement just south of the bridge, contractors are rebuilding a freeway section above a marsh to eliminate big roadway dips. Those road depressions fill with runoff and flood in winter.

Cellular concrete, which is light but strong, is being used to replace the road there, which developed the dips over years as heavy asphalt used to resurface the lanes made the freeway sink into mud, said Caltrans spokesman Allyn Amsk.

During a tour of the bridge work last week, Caltrans engineers showed the partially complete bike lane, where rails were being installed.

"When you're out here, you have nice views of the of the water, the (Navy ghost fleet) ships, and the hills along the Carquinez Strait," said Cassandra Lograsso, Caltrans' resident engineer, as she stood on the bridge.

Also in view were the smokestacks, metal piping and towers at the Shell oil refinery and other waterfront industries.

The softer side of the Carquinez Strait — the bluffs, the water, the marshes — have long been a favorite subject for oil and water color painters. It is because of these views walkers and riders may be attracted to the new bike lane across the 1.2-mile bridge.

"Opening the bike and pedestrian lane is a big deal for regional trails," said Bern Smith, the East Bay trails coordinator for the Bay Area Ridge Council.

He said the bridge renovation will close one of the remaining gaps in a 50-mile regional trail route through the Carquinez Strait hills, over the Carquinez Bridge and along the shoreline of Solano County.

Smith said there used to be a land connection between Martinez and Benicia some half a million years ago when the Central Valley was a huge inland lake before the giant rivers of California had an outlet to the sea through the Carquinez Strait.

"The way I look at it," he said, "This will be the first time in half a million years that you can walk from Martinez to Benicia."

Reach Denis Cuff at 925-943-8267 or dcuff@bayareanewsgroup.com. Read the Capricious Commuter at www.ibabuzz.com/transportation.

Benicia Bridge renovation
Cost: \$43.5 million
Expected completion: August
Major elements: fourth lane for southbound traffic, new bicycling/walking lane across the bridge, second merging lane from I-780 onto bridge, elimination of large flood-prone dips on I-680 south of the bridge
Project contractor: Joint venture of Top Grade Construction and American Civil Constructors

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Tags: Benicia-Martinez Bridge, bike lane, biking
Filed Under: News

May 27, 2009
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Closing gaps in the Iron Horse Trail: One day cyclists and pedestrians will be able to travel from Solano County,...

Tweets

Honda's first (and only?) Fit EV rolls into California <http://t.co/OLpE3YOK>

Lots of articles of bicycles in this weeks episode of our Week in Review. Honda Fit EV, and Bart real-time departures! <http://t.co/10EV3Hub>

What it's like to ride Denmark's Bicycle Superhighway [video] <http://t.co/hqrWajAu>

Bikes are coming to rush hour BART on Fridays. Be a bike ambassador and help smooth the transition <http://t.co/PKRPDQRM>

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Golden Gate Bridge Turns 75!

Free Webinar June 7, 2012 on Teleworking through the Spare the Air Employer

in Martinez?

Reply



Charles Burch · 155 weeks ago

0

Yes, the bike lane starts at about the termination of the Martinez side of the Bike/Walking path and goes directly to the station parking/drop-off lot. Railroad tracks need to be crossed a couple of times. The first set is at the intersection and is well designed. The second set, the road is buckled and at a 45 degree angle. The bike lane looks very nice. Pruning of plants needs to be done in a few areas though and it would not hurt to contact the City of Martinez since one portion around a blind bend forces bicyclists into the roadway.

Reply



Corinne · 152 weeks ago

0

A video has just been posted on the website showing how to traverse the Benicia Bridge from Benicia to Martinez Amtrak Station. <http://www.511contracosta.org/grand-opening-of-the-benicia-martinez-bridge-bikeped-path/>

Reply



Charles Burch · 152 weeks ago

0

It is good to see that the plants overgrowing the bike path were pruned. I contacted City of Martinez Public Works Division about it.

I have biked across the Benicia Bridge a few times already to see how it was and posted my comments on BikeForums.net.

Tomorrow Saturday August 29 is the Official Grand Opening.

This will be my first day of bicycle commuting since 1986.

Reply

▼ 1 reply · active 116 weeks ago



Corinne (511CC Staff) · 152 weeks ago

0

Congratulations on your return to the bicycle commute. Please keep us posted on how the commute goes, we'd love to share your story on the 511CC website. See you on the bridge!

Reply



Colleen · 148 weeks ago

0

Can you walk your dog on the new pedestrian path that crosses the bridge?

Reply

▼ 2 replies · active 116 weeks ago



Corinne (511CC Staff) · 148 weeks ago

0

I believe so. I'll check with Caltrans and if their response differs I'll post it here. Leashes and cleaning up after your pets are necessary, especially on that path.

Reply



Corinne (511CC Staff) · 148 weeks ago

0

Dogs are not allowed on the Benicia Bridge pedestrian/bike path.

Reply




Colleen · 148 weeks ago

0

Thanks for checking on that for me. I tried to read everything posted about the bridge opening but could not find anything about walking dogs. It is too bad but I understand. It is hard to have both bicycles and dogs on the same narrow path. Thanks again


5-17

Sort by: [Date](#) [Rating](#) [Last Activity](#)Program  Charles Burch · 162 weeks ago0  


I intend to start biking to work from Vallejo (Glen Cove Rd) to Martinez (HYW4/HWY680) when the Benicia Bridge bike lane is complete in August.

I want to drive as near as possible to bridge and park my car on the Benicia side then ride across to work.

Where is the best place to park near the bridge on the Benicia side?

[Reply](#) · 1 reply · active less than 1 minute ago Corinne (511CC Staff · 161 weeks ago0  


There is street parking relatively close to the bridge access in the upper Arsenal area but there are no off-street parking lots other than those associated with the local businesses; check for posted parking restrictions if any. There is also a park and ride lot off of I-780 at E 2nd St at the intersection with 780 (adjacent to the playing field at the school). It's a small lot but there's some street parking as an overflow. If you were to use this lot you could cycle through the pedestrian tunnel under I-780 and then down to Military. It would take 10 minutes to cycle to the bridge.

[Reply](#) Charles Burch · 156 weeks ago0  


WOW!!!

Drove across the bridge from Benicia to Martinez this morning. The 2 lanes will make for a safer and smoother drive.

They are installing the outer guard rails for the bike/walking path this morning. It looks like it could get completed very soon!

[Reply](#) · 1 reply · active 116 weeks ago Corinne (511CC Staff · 156 weeks ago0  

Bicycle commuters get ready! Sounds like Caltrans is making headway on Martinez/Benicia Bike/Ped lane.


[Reply](#) Dan · 155 weeks ago0  

The Benicia Bridge pedestrian lane will be an achievement, but it just dumps you at the Shell Refinery.

An eco-friendly commuter trail is needed through Waterbird Regional Reserve connecting the Benicia Bridge with Arthur Road and further to the Iron Horse and Contra Costa Canal trail via Pacheco Rd.

This will be safer because of the lack of a bike lane on Pacheco Rd. and bypassing the nasty refinery.

Nobody uses the Waterbird Park and it was only built because the refinery spilled 365,000 gallons of crude into picturesque Carquinez Straits in 1988. John Muir must have rolled in his grave.

[Reply](#) Elizabeth · 155 weeks ago0  

This sounds great (especially because Benicia has dumped all of their public transportation)! Does anyone know if there is a bike-friendly way to ride to/from the bridge to/from the Amtrak station


Reply

 Charles Burch · 147 weeks ago

0  

Some people regularly walk their dogs on the path. If no one complains and there are no incidents, I do not think they will post a sign or enforce it.


Reply

 LaylasunZahell · 147 weeks ago

0  

Last but not least, when you hire someone to write your blind date uncensored articles/ads, make sure you are always getting original quality content.


Reply

 jedhorne · 145 weeks ago

0  

Turns out Caltrans is allowing dogs on the bridge. See the photo of the sign for it. <http://www.511contracosta.org/wp-content/upload.....>

Reply

 jedhorne · 145 weeks ago

0  

Colleen. It turns out dogs are allowed by Caltrans on the Benicia Bridge. Look at the sign Caltrans is going to install (if not already installed)> <http://www.511contracosta.org/wp-content/upload.....>

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TOLL PLAZA

Futuristic looking New Toll Plaza in Construction

Commuters leaving the East Bay via the Benicia—Martinez Bridge can now see the new Benicia—Martinez Toll Plaza. Work started last spring and the completion date will be sometime next summer but will not be used until the new bridge opens. In recent years the bridge traffic has increased considerably. The new toll plaza will incorporate better traffic management and ease congestion by moving toll collection to the south end of the bridge away from the 680/780 split. This \$19 million project is the biggest that Caltrans has ever done on a building. The original toll plaza built in 1962 cannot meet present day standards for toll collection efficiency.

The new toll plaza will be on the Contra Costa County side of the bridge, just north of the Marina Vista/I-680 interchange. Tolls will still be collected in the northbound direction. A total of 17 electronic booths will be built, with two of the lanes reserved for carpools. There will be five lanes of northbound traffic with one slow-vehicle lane. All lanes will have FasTrak. The original bridge will be modified to accommodate four lanes of Interstate 680 traffic southbound, plus a two-way bicycle/pedestrian lane.

This dynamic and futuristic toll plaza will also incorporate the latest toll collection technology with modern tollbooths. The toll plaza is designed to ease congestion, enhance safety, and improve the aesthetic quality of the bridge. Included in the toll plaza building will be a set of bays for tow trucks, electrical emergency engine generators, a public lobby, lunchroom and lockers for the toll collectors. There will also be a courtyard where visitors can gaze at Mount Diablo's beautiful bold profile and the curves of the Carquinez Strait.

The design team headed by Dave Stow, Senior Architect, had input from the City of Martinez Design Review Board on structure and landscape concept. The toll plaza will have an aesthetically pleasing look to it with its curves and inward slope, inspired by the topographical outline of the Carquinez Strait and the surrounding Martinez area. Dave Stow and the design team noticed how the "river gently meets the edges of the land, developing curvilinear areas with carved out coves." They integrated this theme into the overall concept. Frank Thomas, architectural designer, says that the design team came up with the canopy design by the way "clouds hang on the side of a mountain." Stow added "the canopy is designed to appear to float by placing single column cantilevered concrete, dense at the rear of the structure. The area lighting is designed so that approaching motorists will be alerted that they are passing through a toll facility."

Along with the toll plaza is a new administration building. The building is a two-story structure appearing as a single-story structure because the lower floor is notched into the hillside. The design team also took inspiration from the large vessels they saw moving on

the Carquinez Strait. They especially, liked the sterns and the way they are "gently rounded and battered from the top toward the water, From this, the design team conceived forms that flowed "in a curvilinear fashion" replicating the sterns of the vessel and the meandering highway 680 corridor itself." The exterior is covered with aluminum panels, of green metallic and copper metallic. They are designed to have a "chromatic display of color" flowing with the dramatic shift of the natural landscape matching the golden-brown wheat colors of the summer and fall months and the soft, deep green of the winter and spring months.

There are some interesting engineering techniques that went into the toll plaza and administration building. A utility tunnel running under the tollbooths will give access to all tollbooths and have an elevator with wheel chair access. There will be an observation deck with traffic system, traffic lane control lights, control room communications, and security video cameras. To create open and spacious rooms that are still earthquake safe, the designers used Moment Resistant Frames providing integrity of the structure and protection of the walls against seismic forces. Heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems will pump fresh air into the toll collector's booths. "Quality of the air is monitored in each booth for CO levels. Air flows are automatically increased to pressurize the booth sufficiently to prevent contaminated air from entering the workplace," said Stow. With improved lighting, advanced engineering, new signs, and specially designed crash cushions Caltrans' staff will be working in the safest possible environment.

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Benicia Martinez Bridge Toll Plaza: Photos

Add photos

« Prev 7 of 7 Next »



Photo added by Veronica R.

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Additional Info

Uploaded July 1, 2011



From Ivy R.



From Bee D.



From Ivy R.



From Jenny R.



From Veronica R.



From Veronica R.



From Veronica R.

1 to 7 of 7



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TRANSACTIONS NEWSLETTER ONLINE

February/March 2007

Project Update:

New Benicia-Martinez Span Nears Completion



Crews are now putting the finishing touches on the second span of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge in preparation for its opening later this year. The span will carry five lanes of northbound traffic from Contra Costa County to Solano County, doubling the capacity of Interstate 680 over the Carquinez Strait. The existing bridge will be converted to four lanes of southbound traffic with a two-way bicycle/pedestrian lane — another link in the regional Bay Trail.

The futuristic toll plaza of the new Benicia-Martinez Bridge is designed for open-road tolling, allowing motorists with FasTrak toll tags to pass through the far left lanes at highway speeds. (Photo: John Huseby, Caltrans)

The new bridge makes a graceful curve across the Strait, east of both the existing span and the Union Pacific railroad bridge. The \$1.2-billion project includes a new toll plaza plus reconstruction of the Interstate 680 interchanges at Interstate 780 in Benicia and Marina Vista/Waterfront Road in Martinez.

The opening of the bridge and toll plaza will mark the Bay Area debut of open-road tolling, which will allow vehicles equipped with FasTrak® electronic toll tags to bypass the toll booths and cross the span without slowing down.

The deck of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge was cast in place in 15-foot-wide segments, creating the illusion that the new bridge materialized slowly out of thin air. Each of the bridge's 17 columns sprouted balanced deck segments that grew toward their neighboring column until all 344 segments were cast. The last step, completed in December 2006, involved connecting these branches to create a sleek, continuous deck.

MTC oversees the project in its role as the Bay Area Toll Authority.
— Karin Betts

Contents

- [New Bay Bridge East Span Milestone: Skyway Deck Complete](#)

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Benicia Martinez Bridge Toll Plaza

★★★★ 26 reviews

Category: Transportation

78 Mococo Rd
Martinez, CA 94553

(925) 957-2000



26 reviews for Benicia Martinez Bridge Toll Plaza

26 reviews in English



Heather K.
Half Moon Bay,
CA

★★★★ 7/18/2012 3 Check-ins Here

Four stars for the SUPERFAST FasTrak. The one where you just stay in your lane and zip through without having to use your transponder. Now that shit is rad. Even though it's taking my money. O_o

Cool panoramic views from the peak of the bridge.



Michael M.
Benicia, CA

★★★★ 8/10/2012 3 Check-ins Here

This place has the most perfect fast trak lane. It has the fastest drive out of any of the bridges in the area. The only problem is the bridge has really low walls and the wind is horrible especially in the winter. If you have a bigger car, stay towards the middle lanes so you don't fishtail too bad.



Darren M.
Sacramento, CA

★★★★ 11/28/2011 7 Check-ins Here

If you have Fasttrack stay left.

If you don't try the "wide" lanes on the FAR right.



Jason G.
Sacramento, CA

★★★★ 3/3/2012 24 Check-ins Here

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★★★★ 32 reviews
"Fastrak is amazing and totally worth it."



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★★★★ 7 reviews
Antioch, CA



Carquinez Bridge - Al Zampa Memoria Bridge Vista...
★★★★ 36 reviews
"I live in Vallejo and commute to Richmond everyday to work."



Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza
★★★★ 28 reviews
"...evenings, middle of the night, fog or brightest and hottest..."



Richmond - San Rafael Bridge
★★★★ 16 reviews
"I love all bridges, they are exciting infrastructure."

I don't like the higher toll but that's not the bridge's or toll plaza's fault. This particular toll plaza is always pretty efficient, especially with the Fasstrak or carpool.



Patricia V.
Mountain View,
CA

★★★★★ 12/5/2011

\$5 toll is a big hit to the pocket book of course, but since this is part of the Benicia Martinez Bridge I must give the toll plaza the same rating that I gave the bridge.

Fast Trac lanes
Cash lanes - have your money ready and don't hold up the line.



Megan G.
Sacramento, CA

★★★★ 3/24/2012 4 Check-ins Here

I use this bidge a lot. The toll is really expensive. FIVE DOLLARS...REALLY? There are many lanes so you don't get stuck waiting forever. There is a lane for fast track and for carpool and they're both on the left side. All the other lanes on the right is for cash (some are cash only and others also allow you to use your fast track or carpool.)



Rachel W.
Walnut Creek,
CA

★★★ 1/10/2012 17 Check-ins Here

Not sure how to review a Toll Plaza...this one is really quick compared to getting into the city, but MAN 5 bucks?! I remember when it was a dollar!



Marlon O.
Benicia, CA

★★★★★ 6/7/2011

Best F'n bridge ever!!! Commute use to be all to the BAD here during Northbound rush hour. Engineers finally got it right! Never any traffic here! My favorite toll booth dude always jolly and dancin' up in the booth. Dont know your name but long hair dude w/ the pony tail be crackin' me up sometimes!!!

Dont try and beat the Fasstrak lane either. I've split the lanes and tried going thru at 100+ and it still grabs a plate number, LOL!



Dominique M.
Beverly Hills, CA

★★★

5-26

12/30/2011  1 Check-in Here

I have been going over this bridge since I was a kid and always enjoyed the views, but hated the wait of getting past the toll booth, Fast track is the way to go people!



Sophia W.
Pleasant Hill,
CA

 1/15/2012  39 Check-ins Here


A fast track is so very worth not stopping and waiting in the cash lines. Cops like to hang out with their radar guns as you speed through though. So watch out.



Roy M.
San Francisco,
CA



 2/10/2012

Nice, but it's never on any of my google maps directions. Gets me every time. Fie on you google maps, fie on you... \$5 toll northbound... Need to get a Fasttrack...

 Listed in: My Opinions



Brianna S.
Tuxedo Park,
NY

 1/27/2011  8 Check-ins Here

Before this bridge was terrible.. Now it's wide and quick to get through. If you're still not using Fastrak then you're missing out. It's not cheaper it's the same price, just A LOT MORE CONVENIENT. So do me a favor all of you NON Fastrak users and keep to the right lanes so I don't have to blast my horn at you, thanks.

Also, Carpool going into Concord is TWO people, but Carpool coming through the tolls is THREE people. So don't make a mistake ;)



Bumble B.
San Francisco,
CA

 2/8/2012

I've been though this toll plaza several times and ,since I have fast track, zip on though!



Cara Y.
Oakland, CA

 7/30/2009

The way a toll plaza *should* be designed, and a great reason to possess a FasTrak unit.

I can't wait for the rest of the bridges in the area to get with the program.



Ivy R.
Martinez, CA

☆☆☆ 7/27/2009 2 photos 24 Check-ins Here

I am so glad that they remodeled the toll plaza. You just fly by now. The on ramp from Martinez to here goes directly into a toll lane which is really nice.

My company had a hand in some of the construction of the new plaza and just the fact that it makes my life easier is all the better and makes me proud to have been involved.

Listed in: [Martinez & Beyond](#)



A.C.
Vallejo, CA

☆☆☆☆ 6/8/2011

Can someone tell me why anyone wouldn't have fastrack?? I LOVE zipping thru that lane at full speed.

Of course I hate the \$5 to go into work but I remember the old toll bridge. It was painfully slow & it seemed like everyone with the IQ of a sponge was struggling back & forth in the lanes trying to determine which one they needed. I mean c'mon!! There were signs about 5 miles back for that elusive hint!!

But I digress, great bridge, wide shoulders, well lit, very few accidents these days and all in all it has made my commute to Walnut Creek sooooo much better.



Siobhan F.
Sunnyvale, CA

☆☆☆☆ 2/28/2011 2 Check-ins Here

What a lovely bridge. It's extremely wide and I've never hit traffic on it. (Then again I also travel at odd times)

5\$ toll though is a bust.



Alen K.
Oakland, CA

☆☆☆☆ 9/3/2010 52 Check-ins Here

What I don't understand is how this toll plaza leaves only two booths opened at night, even during a holiday weekend when Friday night everyone is lining up to leave the Bay Area to cross this bridge.

What I find amusing is that these people don't get fastrak. This is the only bridge in the

5-28

Bay Area that doesn't need you to slow down. So fastrak makes alot of sense.

If you don't have fastrak, be prepare to wait, and don't ride the left lanes leading to the toll plaza, you are in my way for fastrak!!!!



Sarah M.
Berkeley, CA

11/1/2011

I had a bona fide emergency, needed assistance from the toll booth guy, and he wouldn't help me. I asked for a manager, and they were basically laughing at me whilst I was explaining my issue. They were completely rude and unhelpful. They could be an example of what it means to be "good enough for government", but they're not even "good enough" for that.



Serra S.
Martinez, CA

2/17/2011 24 Check-ins Here

I just love flying through with a Fast Trak, no lines!!



Paulamiertha A.
Suisun City, CA

6/26/2011 12 Check-ins Here

After the upgrade, the bridge is way more spacious! Once you hit the toll plaza area, the left side is for us FasTrak users to just fly on through. =)



Zenon T.
Sacramento, CA

10/12/2010 2 Check-ins Here

Save some time...Get a Fastrack



Jah I.
Vallejo, CA

4/25/2011 3 Check-ins Here

You can walk or ride a bike from Benicia to Martinez that's hella sic! But that 5\$ toll is straight bull shit



Amy C.
Newark, CA

2

1/9/2011 1 Check-in Here

Crossed this bridge to go to Sacramento yesterday. It's okay. Nothing cool about it. really.



Jarred A.
Rocklin, CA

7/2/2010

5 dollars to cross this itty bitty bridge?

Who do you think you are? The Golden Gate?



Razza M.
Sacramento, CA

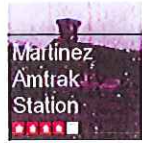
6/3/2011 5 Check-ins Here

more \$\$\$\$\$ for the state

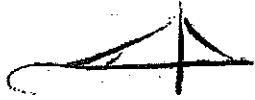
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Bob Haus, Caltrans 510.28
Ursula Vogler, BATA 510.81
MTC/BATA Public Information 510.81

Pedestrian/Bicycle Path Grand Opening on the George Miller, Jr. Bridge

Pedestrian/Bicycle Path set to open on Saturday

OAKLAND, Calif., August 29, 2009 – The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)/Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) and Caltrans will host a ribbon-cutting and opening ceremony on Saturday, August 29 on both ends of the George Miller, Jr. Memorial Bridge. The ribbon-cutting begins at 8:30 a.m. at the foot of the bridge in Martinez and will include a first walk/ride across the bridge. The second portion of the event, an opening ceremony, is slated for 10 a.m. at Vista Point in Benicia. The opening ceremony will be followed by a bicycle rodeo, beginning at 10:45 a.m., at the nearby Amports lot in Benicia. The rodeo is sponsored by the City of Benicia.

“The opening of the pedestrian/bicycle path is an exciting milestone that signifies completion of the final improvements to both spans of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge,” explained Bijan Sartipi, Director of Caltrans District 4 and an MTC/BATA Commissioner. “We are thrilled that we now have safe and easy travel across the Carquinez Strait for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.”

The Benicia-Martinez Bridge connects Contra Costa and Solano counties across the Carquinez Strait. It is comprised of two separate spans, named for father and son (the late Senator George Miller Jr. and current Congressman George Miller III), making the bridge a unique landmark. The 2007 addition, the Congressman George Miller III Bridge, carries five lanes of northbound Interstate 680 traffic from Martinez to Benicia and includes the Bay Area’s debut of open-road tolling technology. The original George Miller, Jr. Memorial Bridge, built in 1962 to carry traffic in both directions, carries four lanes of southbound Interstate 680 traffic with full shoulders and the new pedestrian/bicycle path.

“This is a milestone project that has been in the works a long time and we are all very excited.”

Pedestrian Bike Lane Grand Opening on the George Miller, Jr. Memorial Bridge

Area Governments. "We are happy that we are making strides to close both the Bay and Ridge T gaps."

Funded primarily through the Regional Measure 1 toll program approved by voters in 19 administered by BATA, the \$50 million Benicia-Martinez Bridge project encompassed reconfig the bridge and adding the new path. The completion of the construction on the pedestrian/bicycl indicates the final phase of construction on both bridges.

Caltrans owns, operates and maintains the state highway system, including seven of the Bay Area toll bridges. BATA, which is directed by the same policy board as MTC, administers to revenues from the region's state-owned toll bridges. MTC is the transportation planning, financing coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

###

GEORGE MILLER, JR. BRIDGE
PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE LANE FACT SHEET

The new Benicia-Martinez pedestrian/bicycle lane on the Senator George Miller, Jr. Memorial Bridge will close a gap in the San Francisco Bay and Ridge Trails. This lane also serves as a link in the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail, which is a 50-mile trail that crosses both the Benicia-Martinez Bridge and Al Zampa Bridge spans over the Carquinez Strait. Bicyclists and pedestrians using the new path will be treated to stunning views of the Suisun Bay, as well as the Carquinez Bridge and the Mothball Fleet.

Official Name: George Miller, Jr. Memorial Bridge

Original Structure Opened: September 16, 1962

Location: Carquinez Strait linking Contra Costa and Solano counties

Roadway: Southbound Interstate 680 from Benicia to Martinez

Configuration: Originally, three northbound lanes and three southbound lanes. Now, four southbound lanes and one pedestrian/bicycle lane.

Length of Pedestrian/Bicycle Path: 11,800 feet or 2.2 miles

Width of Pedestrian/Bicycle Path: 12-feet, divided into two bidirectional lanes

Vertical Clearance of the Bridge: 138 feet

Type of Construction: Deck Truss

Project Cost: \$50 million to retrofit the bridge and add the pedestrian/bicycle path

Construction Funding: Regional Measure 1 funds: 76.64%

Federal funds: 21.32%

State funds: 2.04%

Seismic Safety: A "Lifeline" structure designed to remain in service following a maximum credible earthquake. The Interstate 680 corridor has been designated as a primary route for transporting emergency supplies into the Bay Area after a major earthquake.

Martinez Bridge Bike Path Ribbon Cutting 8-29-09

Caltrans Photography Catalog Set #8966d

Photographer John Huseby

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Martinez to improve access to bridge bike-pedestrian path

By Lisa P. White Contra Costa Times

Posted: 05/20/2012 07:16:07 AM PDT Updated: 05/20/2012 07:16:12 AM PDT

Heading east along Marina Vista from downtown bound for the Benicia-Martinez bridge path, pedestrians reach the point where the sidewalk ends.

At that point, people must traverse about 150 feet of loose gravel to reach the intersection at Mococo Road, then cross railroad tracks to get to the beginning of the bike-pedestrian path.

Using \$300,000 in bridge tolls from Caltrans, Martinez plans to improve pedestrian and cyclist access along the stretch of Marina Vista from Shell Avenue to Mococo Road by putting in a sidewalk, driveways and curb ramps; removing an abandoned railroad spur track, relocating or removing power poles and rail signals, restriping the bike lane and making other upgrades.

"We just know that right near that intersection primarily there are some impediments to pedestrians and bicyclists," said city engineer Tim Tucker.

"We're just trying to make it easier to walk from the downtown or Shell (Oil) area to that intersection and across the street," he added.

The bicycle-pedestrian path is part of the renovation of the Benicia-Martinez bridge, which also added a fourth lane for southbound vehicle traffic and wider shoulders on the roadway. The work on the bridge began in January 2008 and the bike-pedestrian lane opened in August 2009. The path is a segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Issued permits for the bike-pedestrian path construction which called for Caltrans to build a nearly 12-foot-wide extension from the end of the path off the Carquinez Strait overcrossing at Mococo Road over the railroad tracks to Marina Vista, where there is an existing bike lane. But the narrow roadway, underground oil and gas pipelines and other constraints made it impossible for Caltrans to build the recommended Class I path. As an alternative, the transportation agency put in 5-foot-wide bike lanes on both sides of Mococo Road.

The commission asked Caltrans to explore the possibility of constructing a Class I bike path on the existing freeway overpass that would extend down a new

Click photo to enlarge



Vehicles head west on Marina Vista Ave. between Mococo road and Shell Ave. in Martinez, Calif.,...



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The commission asked Caltrans to explore the possibility of constructing a Class I bike path on the existing freeway overpass that would extend down a new

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offramp the agency planned to build. However, the cost proved prohibitive.

"So for this 120 to 160 feet we decided that it really wouldn't be cost-effective to spend \$10 million," said Mo Pazooki, Caltrans project manager.

Instead, the commission asked Caltrans to give Martinez \$300,000 to make the improvements on Marina Vista to improve public access to the bridge path. Nearly three years after the path opened, Caltrans has finally satisfied its obligation to provide public access to the bridge.

"Staff, on behalf of the commission, finds that the public benefit provided by additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities on city streets near the bridge will adequately compensate for the reduction of pathway quality at Mococo Road," the amended permit reads.

Lisa P. White covers Martinez and Pleasant Hill. Contact her at 925-943-8011. Follow her at [Twitter.com/lisa_p_white](https://twitter.com/lisa_p_white).

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OAKLAND 3BD/2BA DUPLEX AUCTION
 Lou Frank
WILLOW GLEN 3BD/3BA HOME FOR SALE \$875,000
CHOWCHILLA AREA:
3/2.5 Beautiful Home \$459,900
VERMONT DAIRY FARM GORGEOUS REMODELED 3BD/2.5BA HOME.
NEW Shaver Lake View Cabing in development
 All Listings

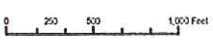
Ads by Yahoo
www.NexTag.com/Bike

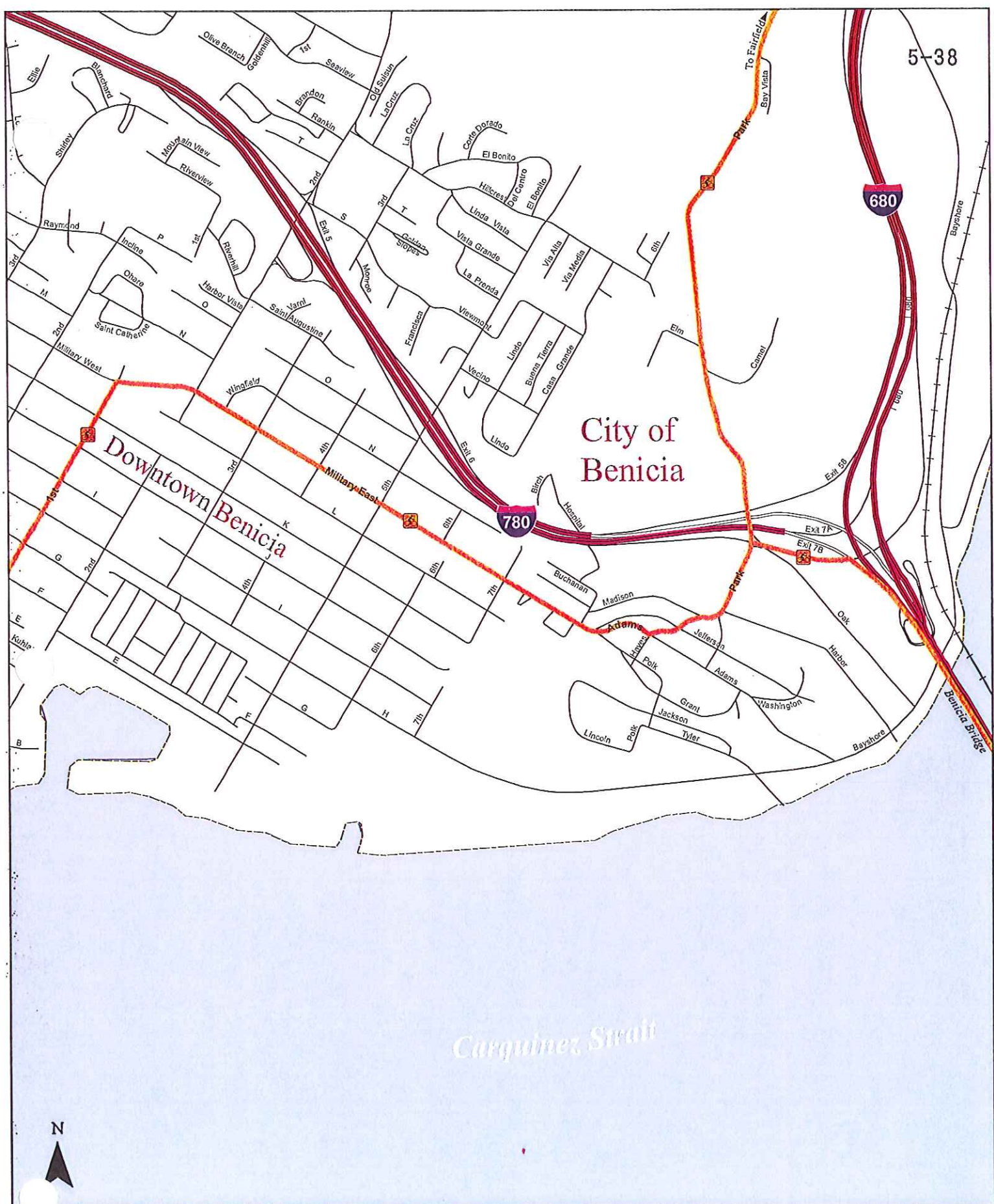


City of
Martinez

-  Bike Route
-  One Way Street
-  Rail

Martinez Approach to the Benicia-Martinez Bike Path





Benicia Approach to the Benicia-Martinez Bike Path

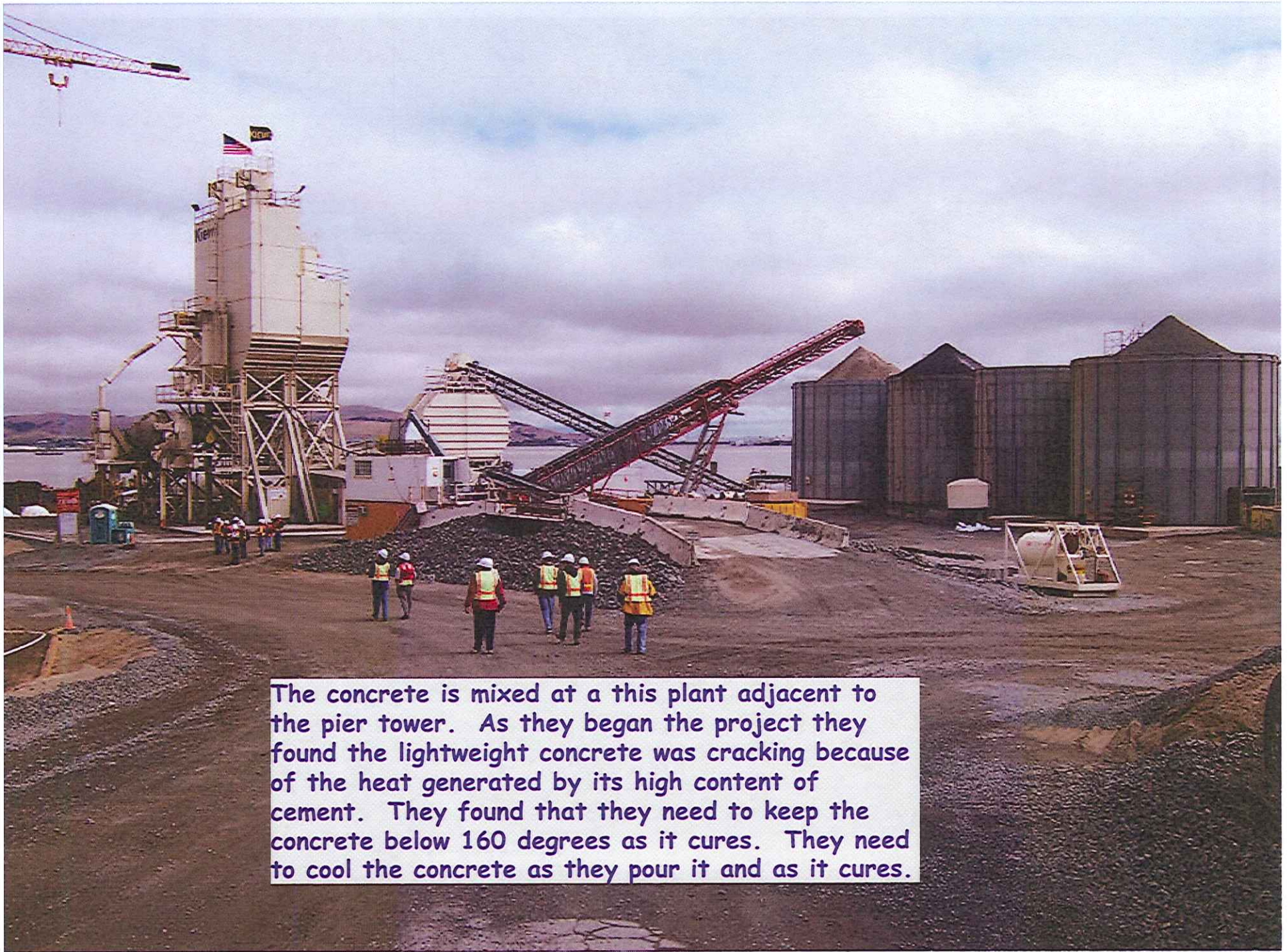


BENICIA-MARTINEZ BRIDGE

**TRANSPAC CONSTRUCTION TOUR
JUNE 2005**

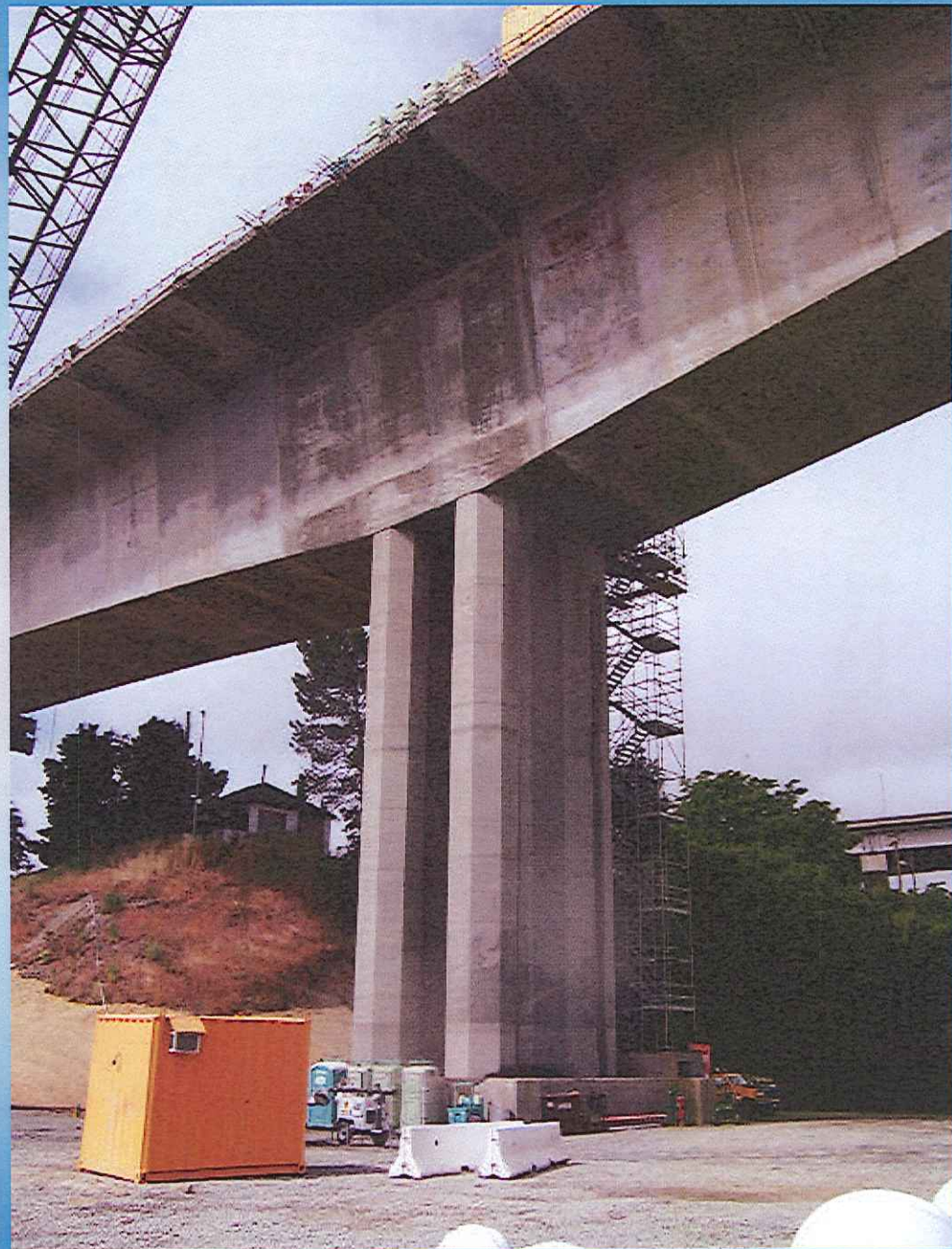
The concrete is put in these trucks, which then are driven to a liquid nitrogen station where the concrete is injected with nitrogen to freeze it.





The concrete is mixed at a this plant adjacent to the pier tower. As they began the project they found the lightweight concrete was cracking because of the heat generated by its high content of cement. They found that they need to keep the concrete below 160 degrees as it cures. They need to cool the concrete as they pour it and as it cures.

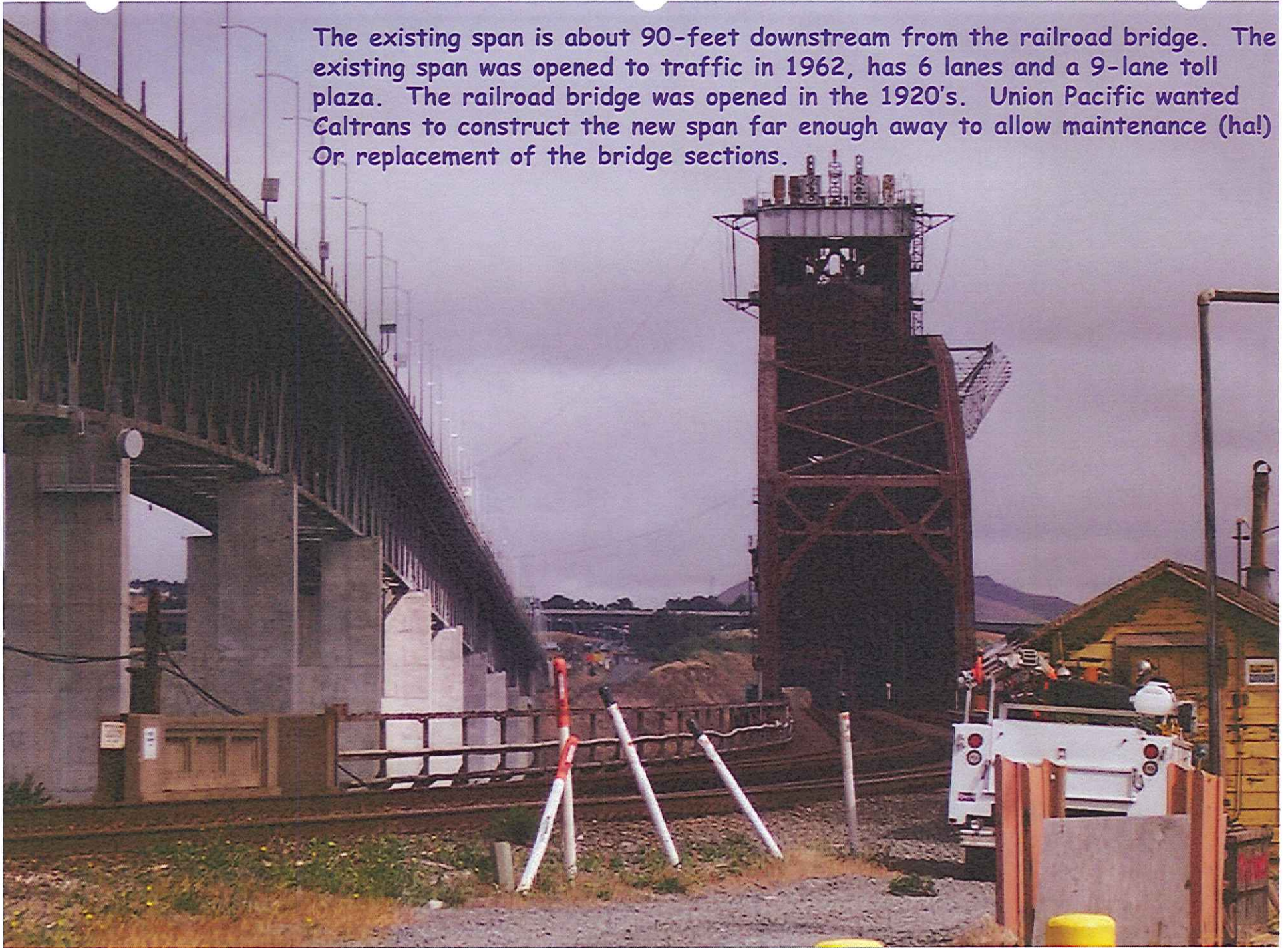
This is the pier tower we will climb up and then into the box girder superstructure. The location of this pier tower hugs the hillside in order to avoid piercing the cap on the site of the former mountain copper company, which holds some nasty stuff. The primary materials for the bridge are concrete with steel reinforcement bars. The cantilevered sections of the box girder superstructure were poured with special lightweight concrete, which is why their color is lighter than the box girder section directly on top of the pier tower. The box girder is poured in 16-foot sections. The initial pour on the pier tower has the north side of the box girder extending only 8-feet, while the south side extends the full 16 feet. The subsequent 16-foot sections are poured alternating between the north and south ends. At any point in the process, one side will be only 8-feet longer than the other, which puts less stress on the pier tower during the construction process.





The tour begins at this bridge pier located on the Martinez side.

The existing span is about 90-feet downstream from the railroad bridge. The existing span was opened to traffic in 1962, has 6 lanes and a 9-lane toll plaza. The railroad bridge was opened in the 1920's. Union Pacific wanted Caltrans to construct the new span far enough away to allow maintenance (ha!) Or replacement of the bridge sections.





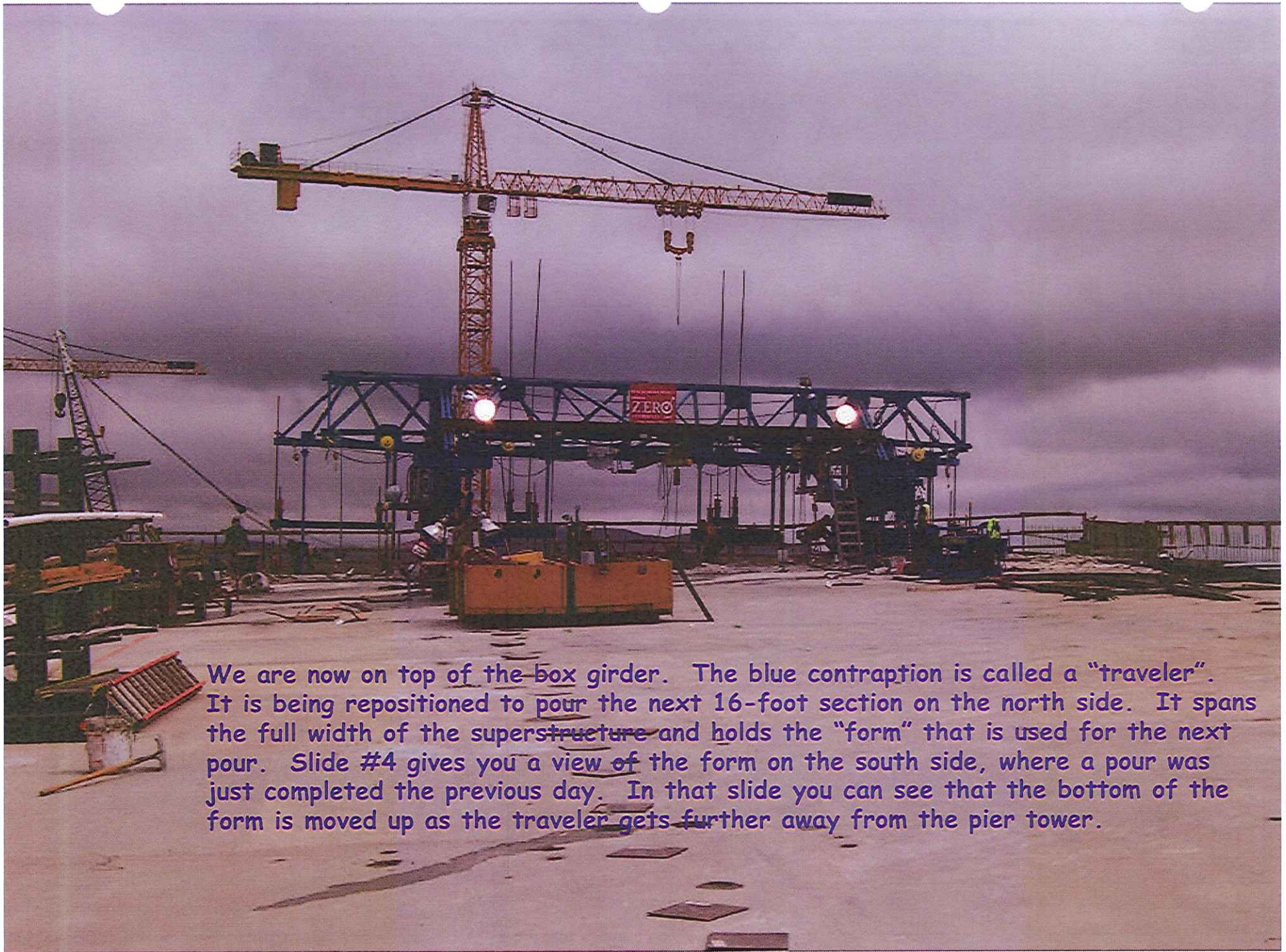
The new span is being built 490 feet upstream from the existing railroad bridge. The new span will be 8,800 feet long, about 80 feet wide and will reach 185 feet above the water. It will use a concrete-box girder design. The roadbed will accommodate 4 traffic lanes, a slow-vehicle lane plus two 10-foot shoulders. The new bridge will be structurally designed to support a 4-car light rail train set along the west edge of the roadbed, which can ultimately be reconfigured to accommodate light rail tracks separated from the traffic lanes by a concrete barrier. The new span will carry northbound I-680 traffic. The existing span will be reconfigured to carry I-680 southbound traffic plus a separated path for bicyclists and pedestrians. The toll plaza will be relocated to the Martinez side of the new span. It will have up to 20 toll booths.



This is the liquid nitrogen station. The nitrogen is injected into the concrete by these long prods above the truck bays. The concrete is then pumped up the pier tower to the superstructure work site.

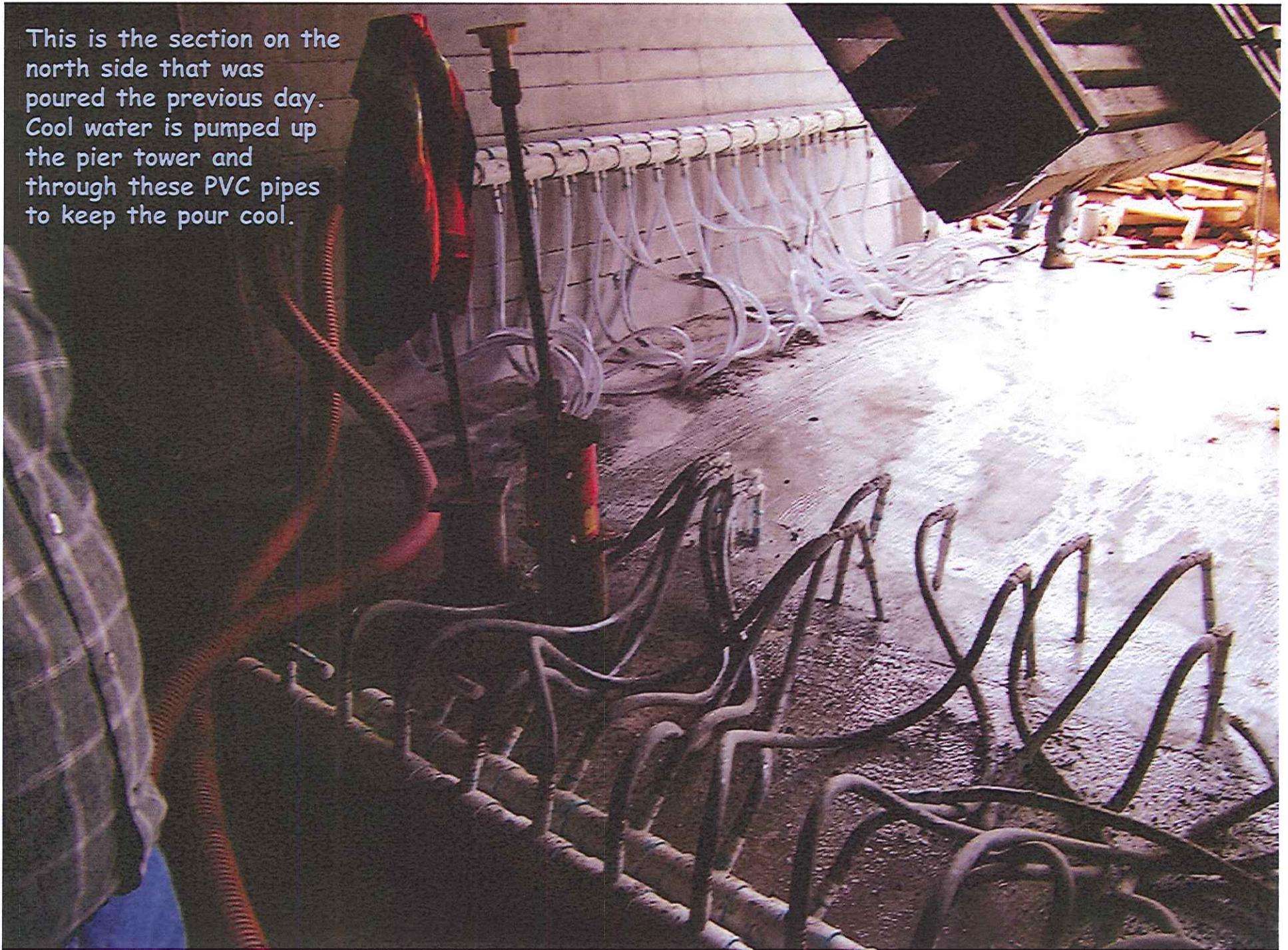
Now we go up the pier tower.

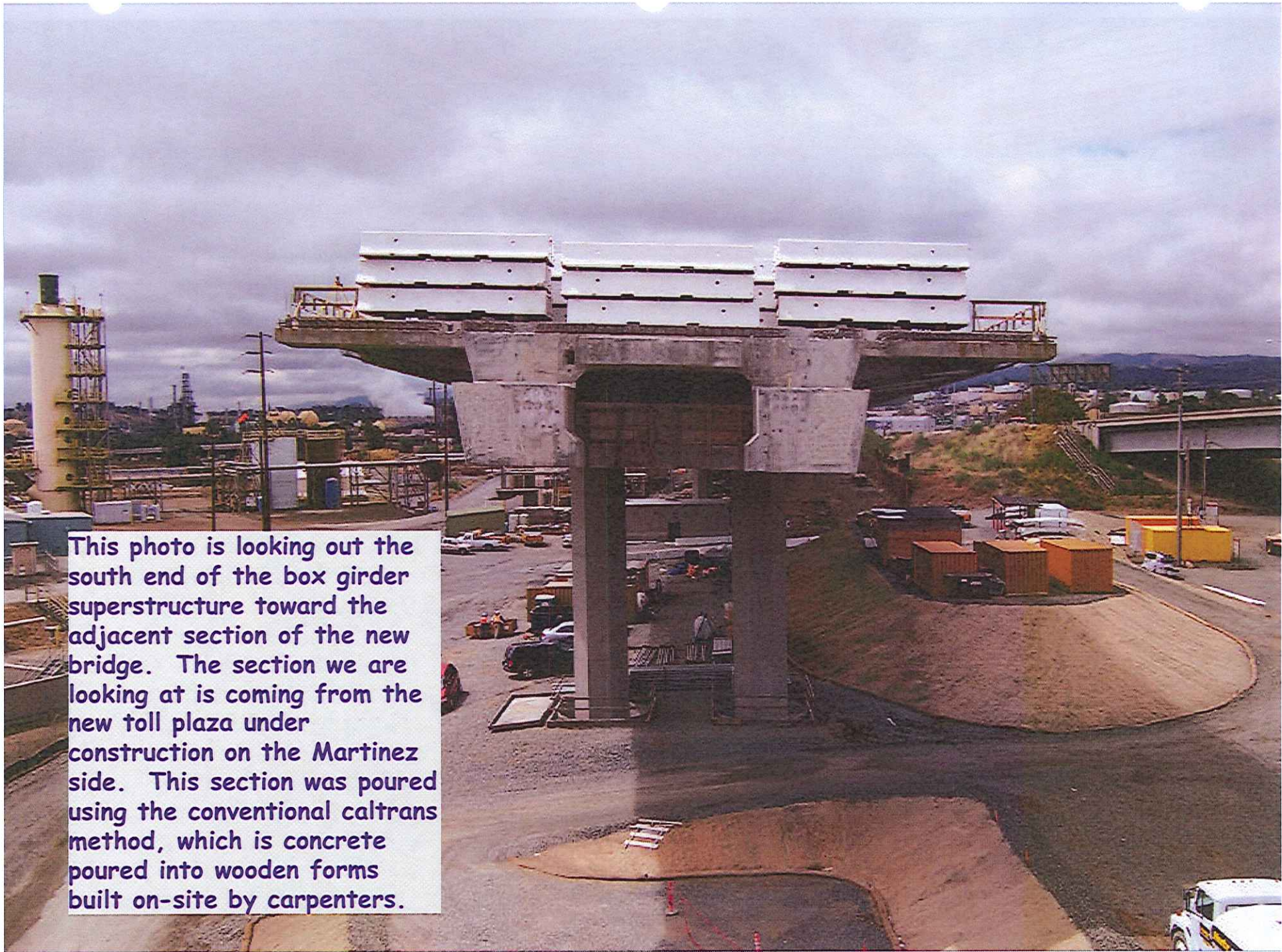




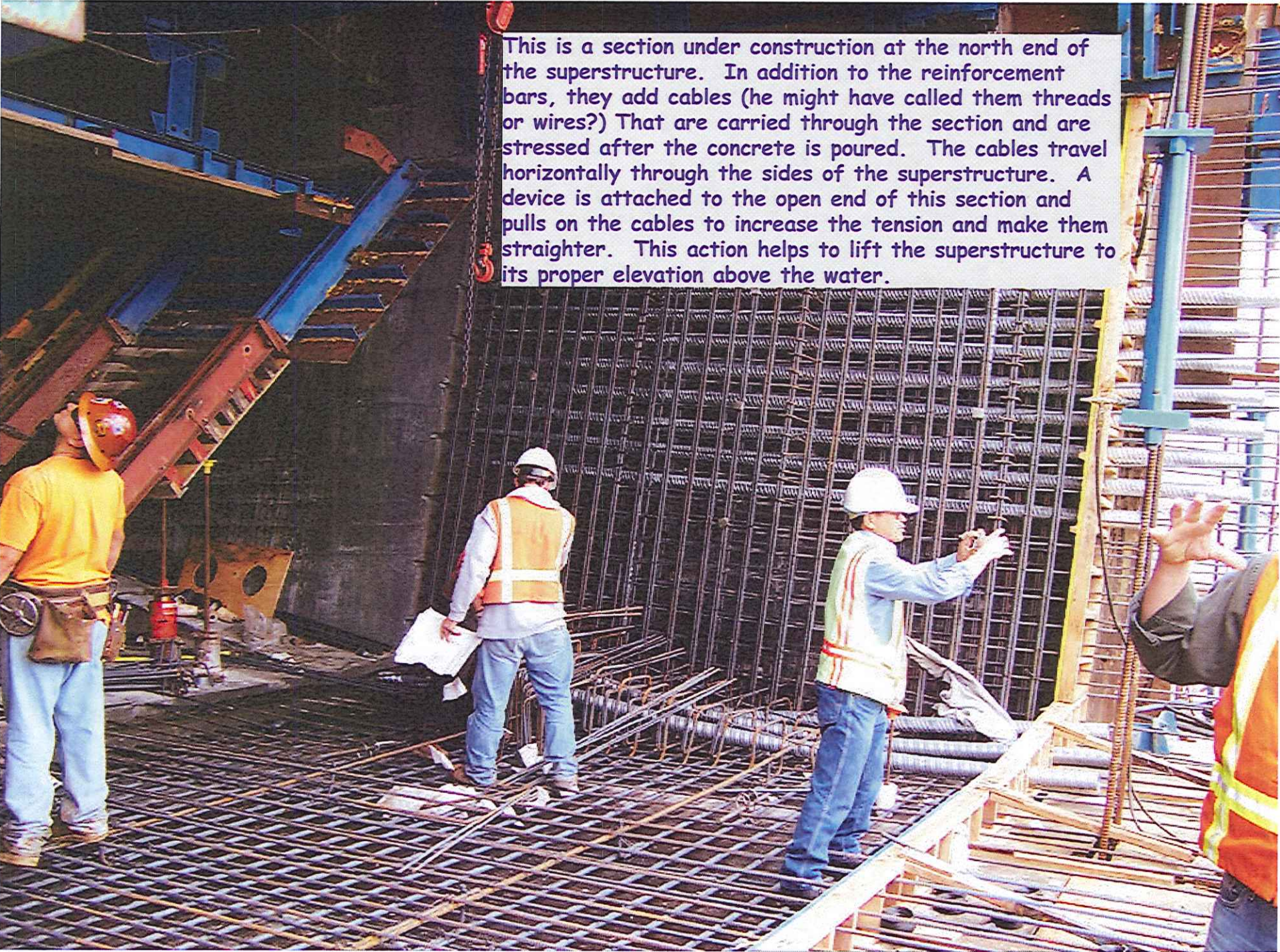
We are now on top of the box girder. The blue contraption is called a "traveler". It is being repositioned to pour the next 16-foot section on the north side. It spans the full width of the superstructure and holds the "form" that is used for the next pour. Slide #4 gives you a view of the form on the south side, where a pour was just completed the previous day. In that slide you can see that the bottom of the form is moved up as the traveler gets further away from the pier tower.

This is the section on the north side that was poured the previous day. Cool water is pumped up the pier tower and through these PVC pipes to keep the pour cool.

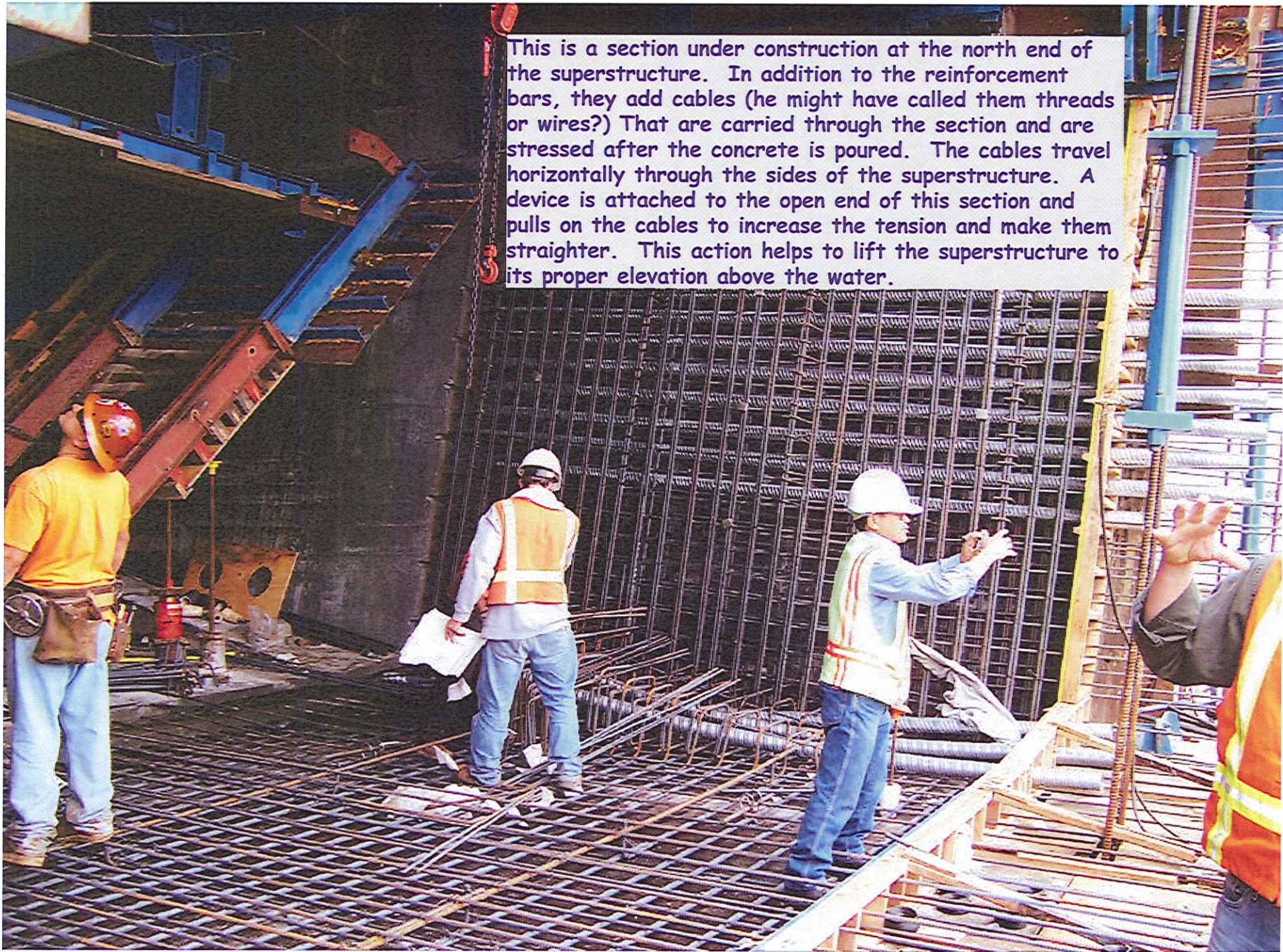




This photo is looking out the south end of the box girder superstructure toward the adjacent section of the new bridge. The section we are looking at is coming from the new toll plaza under construction on the Martinez side. This section was poured using the conventional caltrans method, which is concrete poured into wooden forms built on-site by carpenters.

A photograph of a construction site for a bridge. In the foreground, a grid of steel reinforcement bars (rebar) is laid out on a wooden formwork. Three workers are visible: one on the left in a yellow shirt and red helmet, one in the center in a white shirt and orange vest, and one on the right in a light blue shirt and white helmet. The background shows a large, dark structure under construction, with blue steel beams and a complex network of rebar and cables. A text box is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

This is a section under construction at the north end of the superstructure. In addition to the reinforcement bars, they add cables (he might have called them threads or wires?) That are carried through the section and are stressed after the concrete is poured. The cables travel horizontally through the sides of the superstructure. A device is attached to the open end of this section and pulls on the cables to increase the tension and make them straighter. This action helps to lift the superstructure to its proper elevation above the water.





Another picture of the reinforcement bars. The purpose of the cables is to help provide lift to the superstructure, so they don't bother putting cables on the bottom of the superstructure.

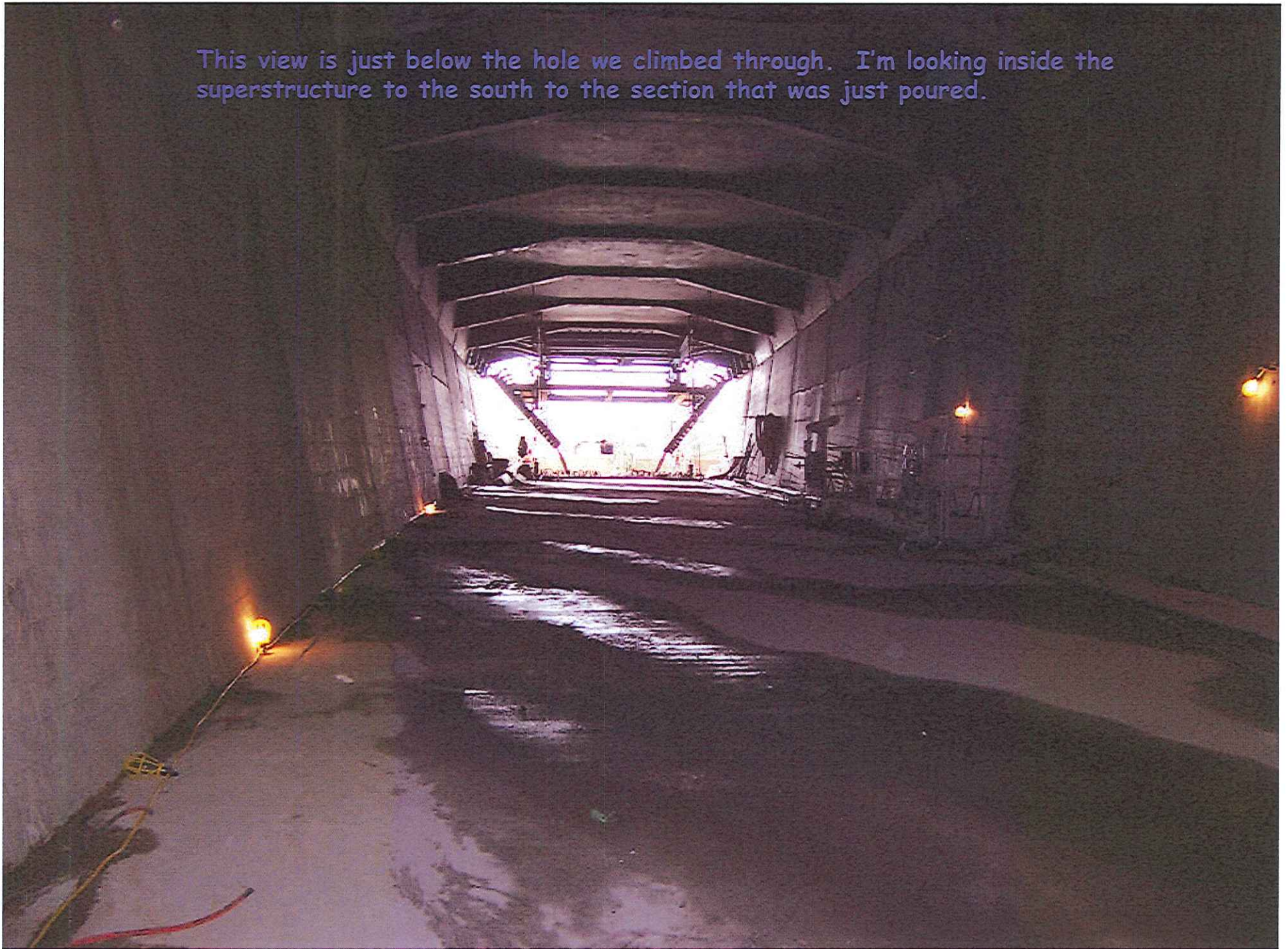


These sleeves are installed on the top of the superstructure (the surface we will be driving on). The traveler sleeves are used to hold down the traveler when it is positioned on the section to hold the forms for the next pour. The light rail sleeves are put along the transit alignment, which is actually along the west wing (or overhang) of the bridge. The sleeves will allow bolts to go through the road bed to hold down the rails. The bolts can be fastened underneath the wing with a washer and nut - at some time in the future.

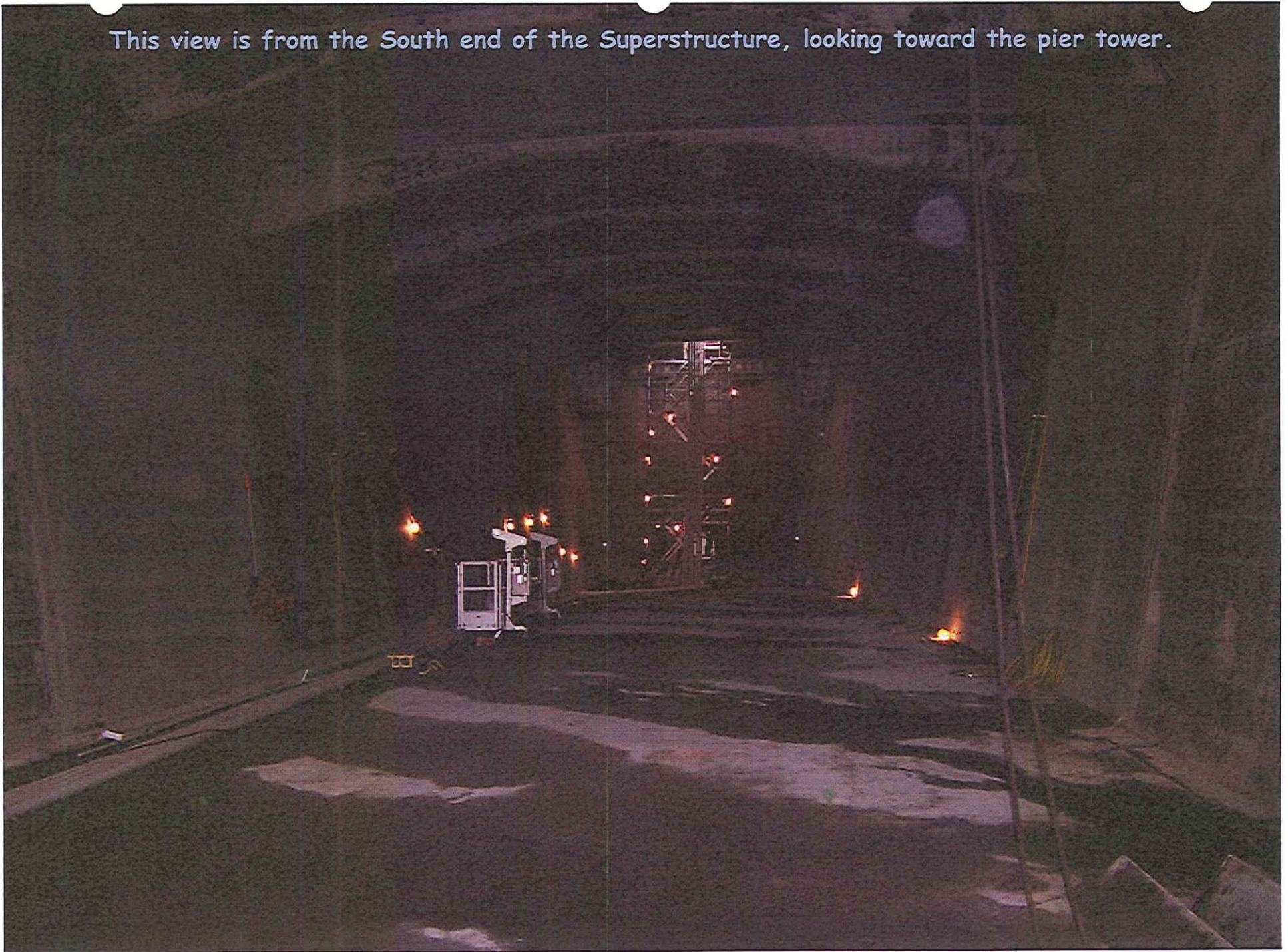
You may have wondered how we got into the bridge. We climbed up to the superstructure, which is essentially a big box. Then we climbed down through the hole you see here at the top of the photo. The box is nearly 50 feet high right above the pier tower, then it narrows to about 16 feet high. The pipes you see carry water to the sections that are being poured, to cool the concrete.



This view is just below the hole we climbed through. I'm looking inside the superstructure to the south to the section that was just poured.

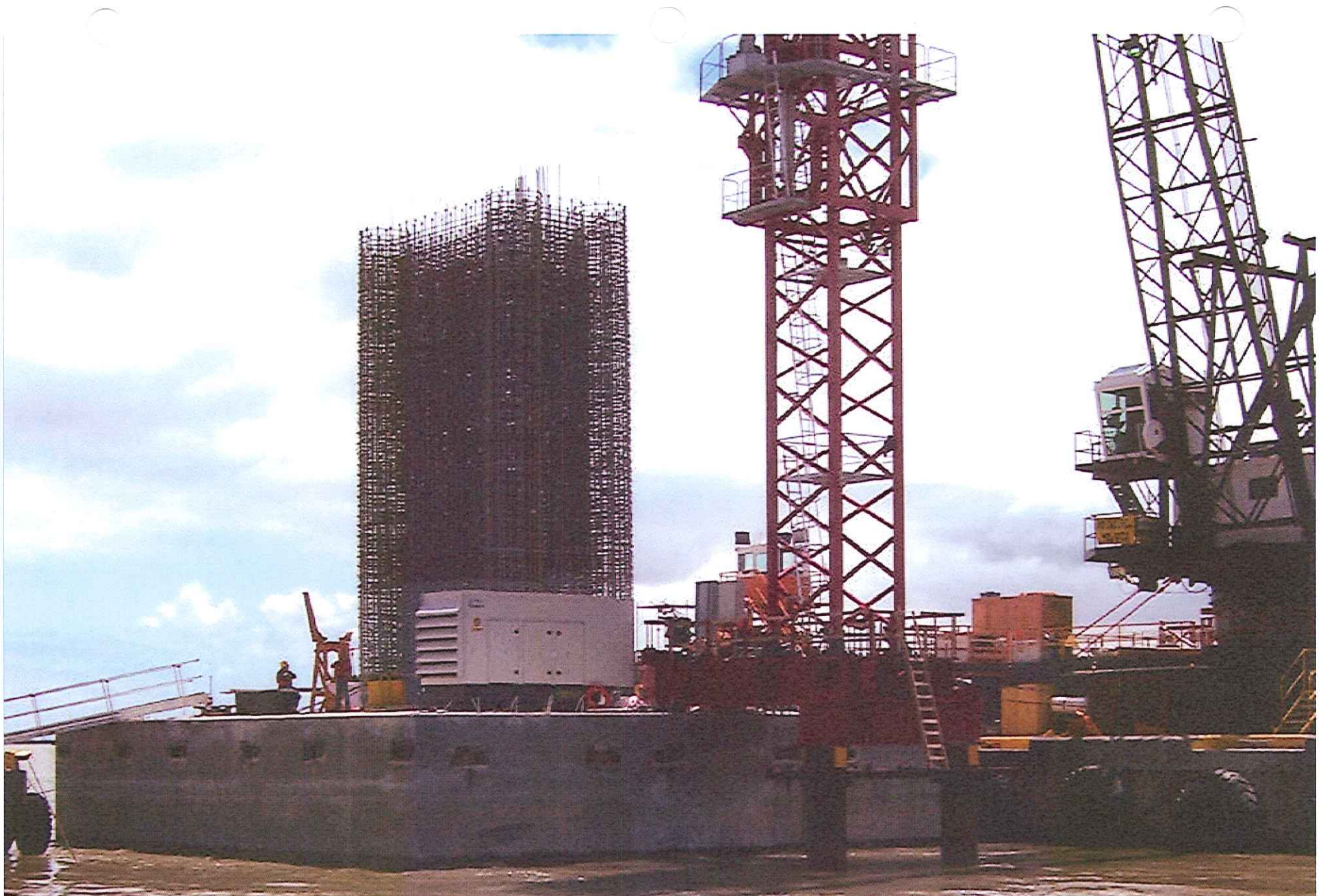


This view is from the South end of the Superstructure, looking toward the pier tower.



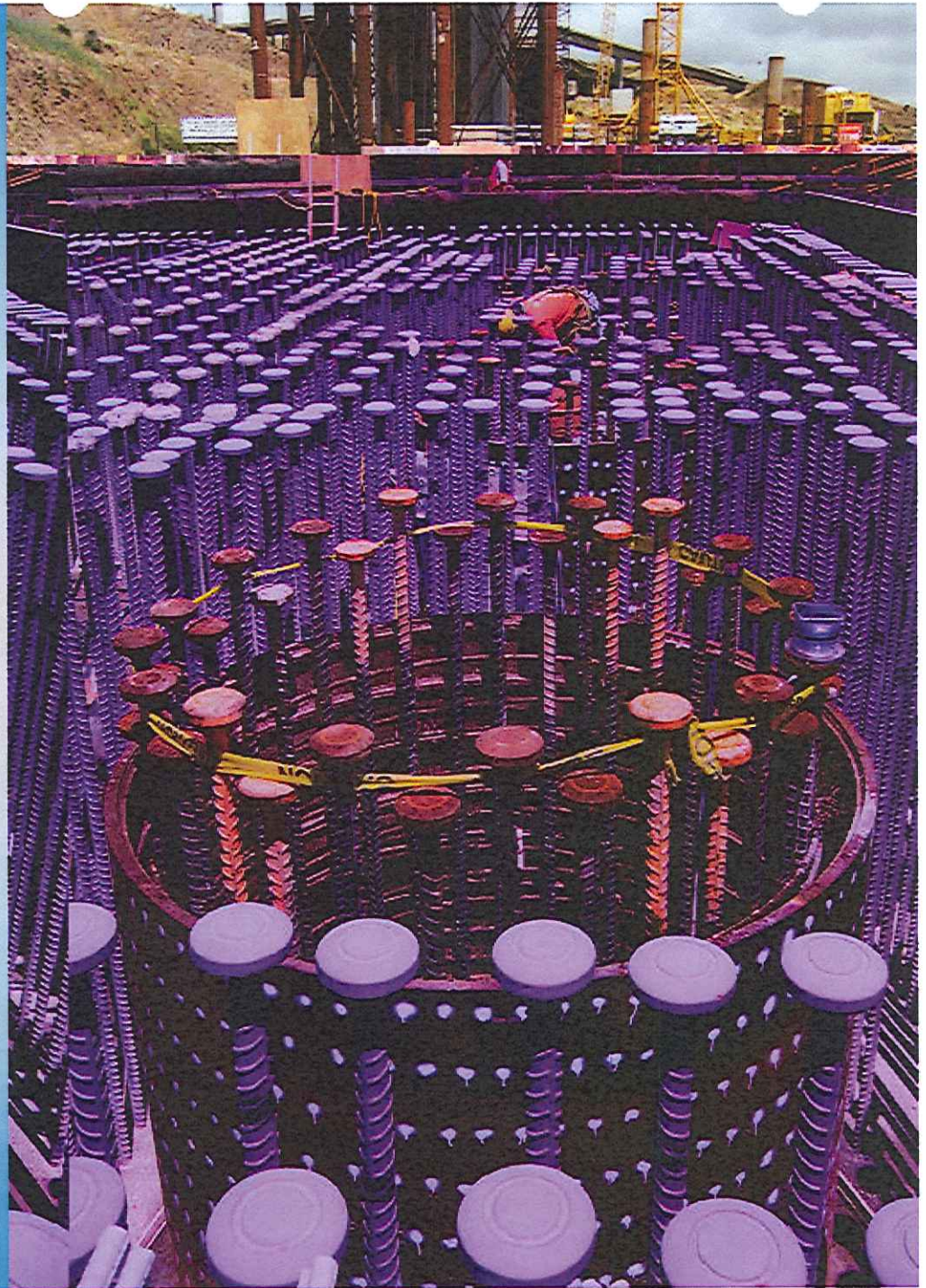


This view is looking out the north end of the superstructure toward the next pier tower under construction. This is the first pier tower to be located in the water on the Martinez size. It was low tide so its almost not in the water.

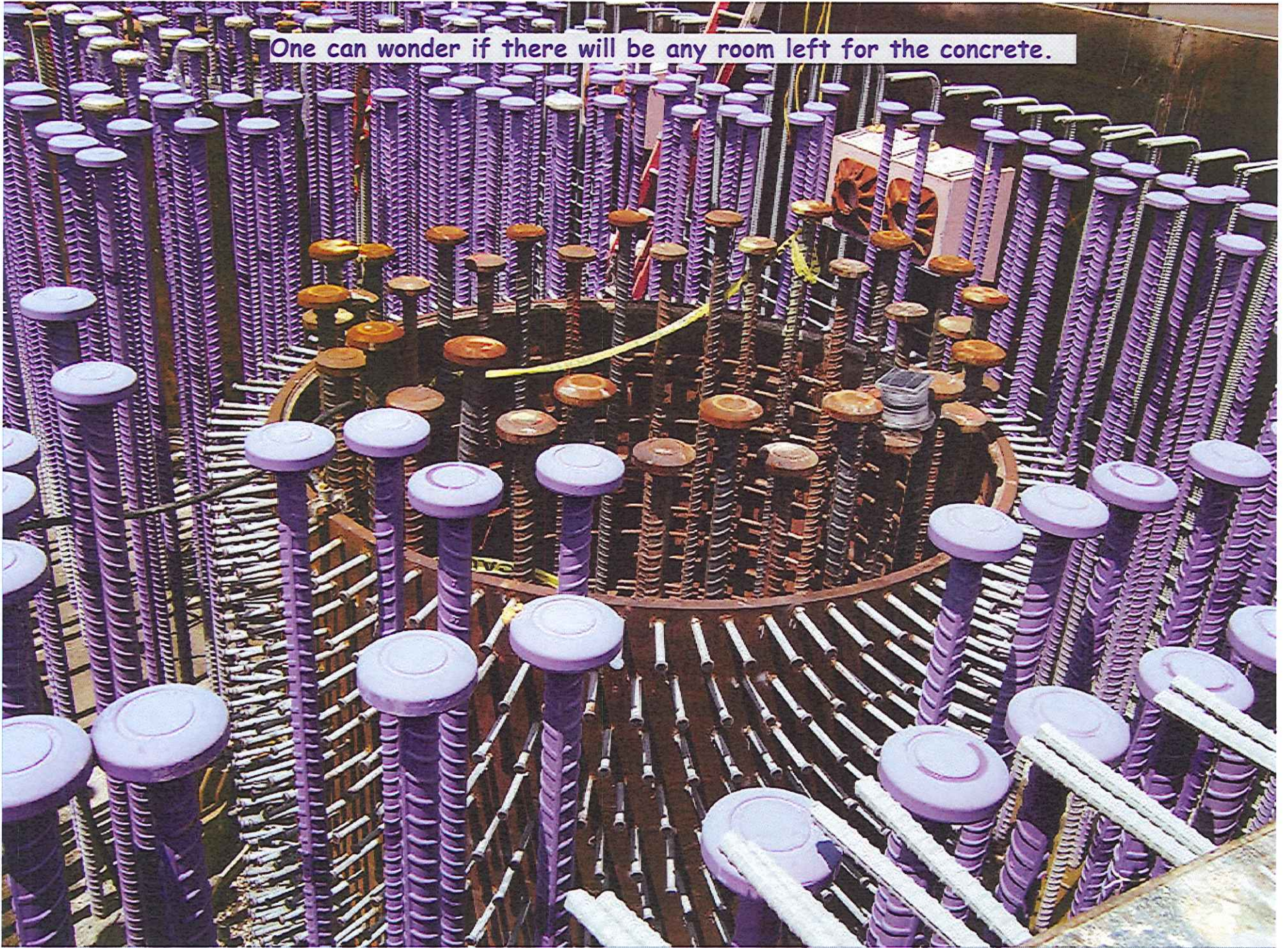


We are out on the water now. Here is pier tower under construction with the reinforcement bar exposed. Below the pier tower is a concrete cap which is poured over the caissons that support the pier tower. A protective fender system will be constructed around each cap.

This is a view of a cap that is under construction. The cap is the footing for the pier tower. The 8-foot diameter tube you are looking at is one of nine caissons that provide the support for this footing. Each caisson is driven 100' into the bedrock below the bottom of the river with a large pile hammer. Driving these caissons into the river several years ago is what caused the tremendous fish kills, which shut down construction for some time. The vibration from driving the caissons into the rock was killing the fish. The solution was to lower another wider tube around each caisson. This tube would cover the section of the caisson that was exposed to the water and provided an air chamber that was filled with a substance that helped to deaden the vibration and shock waves from the pile driving. The caissons rest on a socket that is drilled into the rock below the caisson. They had problems with soil caving in before they could pour concrete down these caissons and into the socket. Given the number of piers and the number of caissons needed for the bridge, these problems were largely responsible for the cost of this bridge reaching \$1 billion. When it was initially proposed in 1991, the "escalated" cost of the bridge was estimated at \$292 million, with construction to begin in 1995.



One can wonder if there will be any room left for the concrete.





These are caissons for a pier that are waiting to be capped with a footing.



This is construction that is underway on the north side of the bridge in Benicia. Here the construction technique is the typical caltrans concrete viaduct made with forms built on site by carpenters. Here the bridge will connect to ramps for I-680 and I-780. This is a separate construction contract with C.C. Meyers. The box culvert bridge is being built by Keiwit.

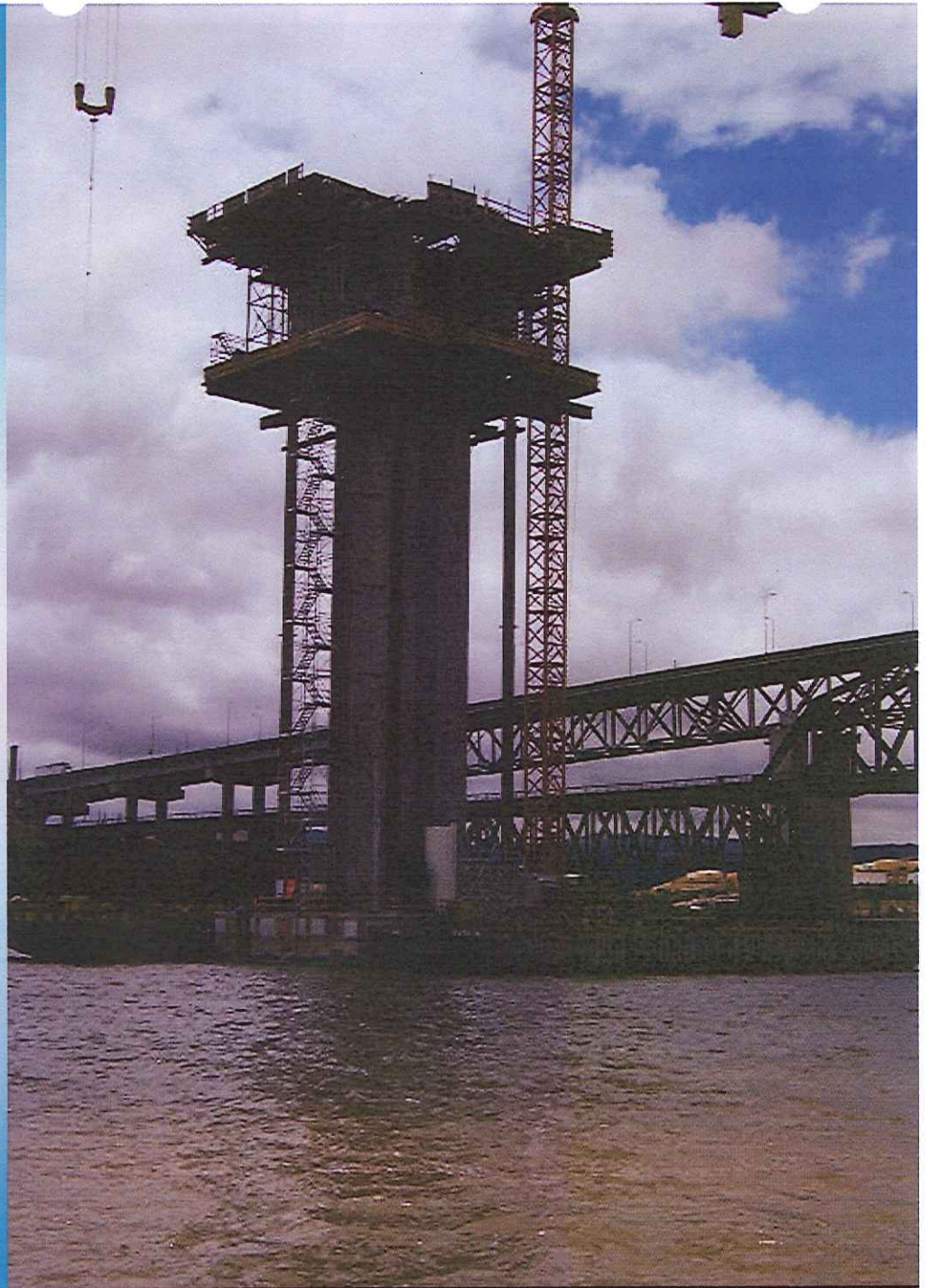


This caltrans construction technique requires a lot of false work to support the forms.



Piers in various stages of construction.

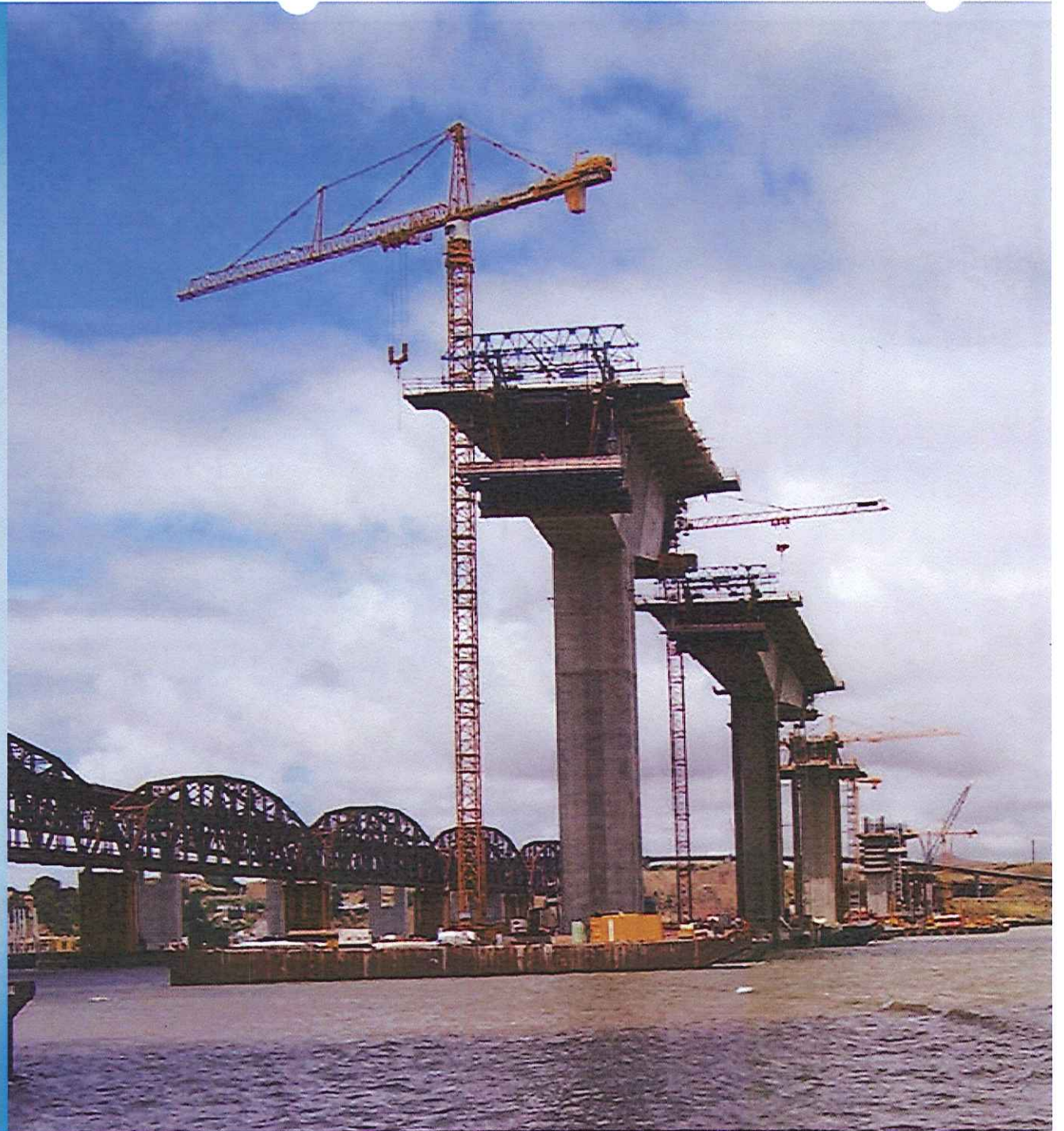
This pier tower doesn't have the "travelers" assembled yet.





This pier tower has "travelers".

Note how far the "wings"
extend from the box culvert
superstructure.





Back on dry land - THE END!