

# Building Bridges

Center for International Trade & Transportation, California State University, Long Beach

## Dear Readers:

Our recent tenth Town Hall, or officially the "10th CITT State of the Trade and Transportation Industry Town Hall Meeting" was bittersweet. I share the pride voiced by my colleague Genevieve Giuliano, METRANS Director, at the crowded event, though none of us would have wished for the challenges that made it timely.

The news has been frightening as layoffs hit one industry after another and cargo volumes have dropped beyond anyone's expectations.

Looking back to our first Town Hall in 1999, I can hardly believe the difference! For most of those ten years, the challenge was accommodating more volume, and today we wonder how to attract more.

On the bright side, I hope this crisis has motivated us to work together to bring about change to keep the cargo coming. I hope we have facilitated collaboration. Our sincere thanks to all who have helped make the Town Halls our signature event.

Now more than ever, cooperation and collaboration are necessary to resolve the problems we face as an industry and as a nation.

**Marianne Venieris**  
Executive Director

## Tenth Town Hall Brings Crowds to Discuss Declining Jobs

On March 11, a near capacity crowd sat hushed as experts forecasted stagnant cargo growth that threatens local jobs. The occasion was "The Decade Ahead: Jobs, cargo, Competition, and You," CITT's tenth Town Hall. The on-campus event was held amid the worst recession in over 50 years.

"A crisis is a terrible thing to waste," said Marianne Venieris, CITT Executive Director, as she opened the annual event, "so let's go to work!"

Local ports must remain cost-competitive," he said, since "It can go elsewhere!"

Beginning in 2014, the newly widened Panama Canal is expected to change cargo routing from Asia. The lesson was vividly illustrated in the video produced CSULB's Advanced Media Production. The East and Gulf Coasts will process more Asian imports than ever, at the expense of West Coast ports such as Long Beach and Los Angeles.



**L to R: Moderator Joe Magaddino questions industry pnelists Dan Meylor, Dave Arsenault, Alan McCorkle, Scott Moore, and Patty Senecal.**



**Displaying a Town Hall commendation from the California State Senate, L to R: Genevieve Giuliano, METRANS Director, Jeet Joshee, Dean of CSULB's University College & Extension Services, Karen Gould, CSULB Provost; Marianne Venieris, CITT Executive Director, and Norman Fassler-Katz, Sr. Consultant to the State Senate Subcommittee on Transportation & Goods Movement.**

lines, trucking lines, importers, exporters, and the freight forwarders. There are lots of people involved in moving the goods."

Gary Ibusuki, another vessel planner who has been at every one of the 10 Town Hall, said, "I think they've all been great. I enjoyed hearing from other partners, like the customs brokers, the Coast Guard – those groups that we as union people don't usually hear from. I like to hear it straight from the horse's mouth," he quipped.

**Last Lesson.** One anonymous ILWU member summed up the feeling of many attendees in his evaluation: "We all need to work together... so we can get the work back to our ports in California."

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**The Future.** "The San Pedro Bay ports have really been hit," said economist Paul Bingham of IHS Global Insight. He predicts the first quarter of 2009 will prove the worst for cargo volume, but volume will be up by 2010. "I am not forecasting a return to the boom days of earlier in this decade," Bingham cautioned.

**Audience Reaction.** Hundreds of local ILWU members attended the event. "I really enjoyed it," said Miguel Martinez, a vessel planner who has attended every Town Hall. "It's given me the perspective of 'We're all in it together,'" he noted. "Not just the stevedore company, but the shipping

# Q&A

## With Domenick Miretti, 50+ Years on the Dock and Beyond



**Domenick Miretti, Ph.D.**

*Dr. Domenick Miretti has been a member of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union since 1951. Active in Local 63, Marine Clerks Association, he is the union's senior liaison to the ports of San Pedro Bay and he works regularly on the docks.*

*Miretti received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from CSULB, and his Ph.D. from UCLA. In addition to his union work, Miretti is a Professor of Earth Science and Director of the International Commerce and Career Center at East Los Angeles College.*

*He is also a member of CITT's Policy and Steering Committee and of the Advisory Board of the METRANS Transportation Center. Miretti has also served on numerous government-industry committees to improve the San Pedro Bay ports.*

**Q. What attracted you to work as a longshoreman?**

A. My father was a longshoreman. In those days, getting in was based on a sponsorship. You had to be a son or brother and also sponsored by a charter member. I was able to meet all those qualifications; and so, coming out of high school, I became a charter member. I became a Class B and shortly after, a Class A member. Also the money was attractive and the casual aspect of the work was attractive – you could choose to work or not to work. The waterfront was always exciting – ships coming in from all over the world – it's just a fascinating place to work! You could work at different terminals on a daily basis, so it wasn't like working steadily at one particular place.

**Q. How has the work changed from the time you first started on the docks?**

A. It has changed from primarily break-bulk, that is, goods handled piece by piece, but over the years mechanization took over. The impact of containerization meant that machines were doing most of the work. Now you cannot feel, taste, or see the cargo—it is locked up in a box. In the old days, it was a physical process and had to be done by hand. What else has changed is the relationship between the union and employer. Shortly after the 1934 strike and the following contracts, the relationship was much more confrontational than now. Now both parties are more willing to sit down together.

**Q. What prompted you to finish college and go on for your Ph.D.?**

A. I longshored for 10 years and then decided to go back to school. We had been shoveling bauxite, which is aluminum ore, one night and I asked, "What's this? What's it made from?" I felt I needed to learn and understand these things. So the union had a school opportunity for younger members, and I took it. We had the first work opportunity on the weekends. Very frankly, it upset a lot of people that we had first work opportunity. That's the reason why I've been the union's liaison for 24 years – I felt I needed to give something back.

After completing my Bachelor's and Master's at CSULB, I wanted to go on. I've always seen the Ph.D. as the ultimate goal in teaching, and I wanted to advance myself as much as I could, and be as proficient in my teaching as I could and further my research work, so I finished the Ph.D. program.

**Q. How do you teach college AND work as a longshoreman today?**

A. I've been able to adjust my teaching load. I teach 15 hours a week. That gives me a chance to work weekends, vacations, and during the summer. It's a pleasure doing both.

**Q. What advice would you give to young people thinking about becoming longshore workers?**

A. I would tell them they need to prepare for an extended period of casual longshore work—it takes a long time. I would also tell them to take classes to help them better understand their work, the union, and the community. Also to give back as much as they can, not only to the union, but to their industry and community. They also need to become computer literate, because rope-slings and four-wheelers (carts used for cargo) are obsolete and no longer viable longshore tools.

**Q. What are the opportunities you see ahead for the industry?**

A. I see longshore hoping to capture work associated with computers. Our work used to be with boxes, then containers, and later paper and pencil. Now the work is floating around in cyberspace. Now there's a computer in a crane. Longshore are reading the screens. There are challenges in how the union addresses these issues.

Another opportunity is for the union to be involved with other stakeholders on a cooperative basis. One of the challenges is that technology has breached port security. In the old days, a marine clerk looked inside every box; the seal was inspected, and we looked to see that the seal number matched the paperwork and no tampering had been done. We hope we can help inspect containers and get some of this work back.

**Q. If you could wave a magic wand, what changes would you like to see in the industry today?**

A. I would like to see more collaboration. A good example is the last Town Hall about discretionary cargo. We all need to work together, capture that cargo, make our ports extremely competitive, so the ports of San Pedro Bay are the choice of all shippers. I frankly say, let's ship American. Be patriotic. That puts the responsibility on all of us. If I had a magic wand, *continued next pg.*

# CITT to Offer Training Program for Marine Terminal Operations

A new CITT training program for marine terminal operations aims to prepare job candidates with a wide range of essential skills, according to Angeli Logan, CITT's Director of Trade and Transportation Programs. She expects the program for front line managers to be offered this Fall and be in full operation by Spring 2010.

**Formal vs. On-the-Job-Training.** Currently, new frontline managers learn on the job, she continued. "New hires have to learn and be familiar with a variety of skills, from managing the gate and yard, to vessel operations, maintenance and repair, and customer service. They must also know and understand labor contracts, labor relations and conflict resolutions, just to name a few items taught."

Logan says that on-the-job training (OJT) is vital, but OJT has its limitations and can be very expensive for the organization. "We believe that CITT can assist in creating a pool of skilled individuals for marine terminal operators (MTOs) to recruit from; but also we have expertise in preparing employees with essential "soft skills" that will make a difference at the docks. The objective is to reduce turnover by preparing frontline managers with multiple skills that are invaluable for a productive and effective work environment."

**CITT Program.** The marine terminal operation training program will be taught partly by industry experts in the field and by professionals who specialize in interpersonal skills and employee attribute assessment. The course is targeted at working adults with interest in the industry and also new hires. It is structured in independent modules allowing customized training in all aspects of terminal operations. Included are general knowledge of the industry and specific skills in container terminals, break bulk, roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro), and cruise terminals. The modules also will address the role of government agencies that

impact the jobs on the dock, including Customs and Border Protection, Immigration, and the Coast Guard. Learning will extend beyond the classroom and students go on field trips to the various types of terminals.

**Advisory Board.** CITT believes that key to a successful program is to work in partnership with the industry. To this end, an MTO Advisory Board has been established. Board members include:

- Jerry Aspland, California Maritime Academy;
- Mike Caswell and Chris Caswell, Pasha Stevedoring & Terminals;
- John DiBernardo, SSA Marine;
- Phil Feldhus, Carolyn Martin and Brenda Martin, International Transportation Service, Inc.;
- Jeremy Ford, APM Terminals;
- Kimberly Hooks, APL EMS Global Gateway Central;
- Michi Logan and Phil Lucier, Eagle Marine Services, Ltd.;
- Bill Madden, Long Beach Container Terminal;
- John Melendez, Metropolitan Stevedore Company;
- Steve Ruggiero, Port of Long Beach.



To obtain further information, phone Angeli Logan at (562) 985-2872.

**Angeli Logan**  
Director of Trade and Transportation Programs, CITT

## Domenick Miretti Q&A, cont.

I'd create an industry-wide goal: all strive to grow and prosper together, not one at the expense of the other.

### Q. What motivated you to join CITT's Policy & Steering Committee?

A. Marianne Venieris extended the invitation to join. I had an ulterior motive to educate union rank and file. I saw the Town Hall meetings as a collaborative forum that I'd dreamed of for a long time.

### Q. How have you benefited from being on CITT's Policy & Steering Committee?

It helped us develop a global perspective of the industry. Now, we see not just the box we're handling on the docks,

but where it comes from, how it's moved, etc. What else it has done is broaden our understanding of the role each party plays in the goods movement process.

I appreciate the role of other stakeholders in the process. When you sit across the table and call someone by name, it's better than shouting across a picket line. I've tried to communicate that the union is willing to help make the community a better place. If people can say, "Hey, those people are really interested in making a better environment, a better place to live in, then I've helped.

The fact that the ILWU has always been there speaks to their continued interest, their willingness to reach out to make it a better industry, and to work for the community at large.

# BuildingBridges

Editor: **M.E. Barton, Ph.D.**



## Center for International Trade & Transportation

California State University, Long Beach  
University College and Extension Services  
1000 Studebaker Road, Suite 3  
Long Beach, CA 90815

Phone: 562.985.2872

Fax: 562.985.2873

Email: [citt@uces.csulb.org](mailto:citt@uces.csulb.org)



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## News Briefs

**Clean Trucks Program Ruling Released.** Independent truckers have won the latest round in the conflict over the Clean Trucks Program put forth by the Port of Los Angeles and Port of Long Beach. Judge Christina Snyder's recent ruling blocked L.A.'s provision for drivers to be employees of concessionaires and Long Beach's requirement that firms inform drivers about health insurance. Both ports plan to go ahead with provisions not blocked. Said Port Executive Director Richard D. Steinke, "We are still banning older trucks and collecting the Clean Truck Fee to fund replacement trucks. That allows us to achieve our goal of cleaning the air and protecting the health of our community."

## Port of Long Beach Announces Reduced Fees.

Commissioners of the Port of Long Beach on April 20 approved a series of moves to remain cost competitive. They include postponement of the Infrastructure Cargo Fee, incentives to boost intermodal cargo, and modifications to their Clean Trucks fees to encourage privately financed replacement of trucks.

## Middle Harbor Approval Will Bring Many New Jobs.

The Port of Long Beach approved the massive Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project on April 13, paving the way for the \$750 million project to break ground as early as this year. Combining two existing terminals, the new construction will double the cargo capacity of that area and is expected to reduce pollution by as much as half. Nearly 60 people commented on the Environmental Impact Review prior to the Harbor Commission's approval, which is expected to foster thousands of jobs. The Long Beach City Council was scheduled to consider appeals on the project's environmental clearance on May 12.

## Planners Learn About Changing Landscape of Goods Movement



**Tom O'Brien**  
Director of Research, CITT

Transportation planners gathered mid-April in Long Beach to study the latest developments in finance and infrastructure of goods movement.

The three-day seminar, developed and facilitated by CITT's Director of Research Thomas O'Brien, gave Caltrans and several partner transportation agencies an opportunity to examine how the last decade's rapid growth in trade volumes has left a legacy of challenge.

These challenges in infrastructure, environment, and safety are heightened in today's struggling economy, according to Marianne Venieris, CITT Executive Director.

**Classroom and Site Visits.** Mornings were devoted to classroom lecture and discussion, while afternoons included exercises and visits to critical goods movement sites.

On Day One, the participants toured the Colton Crossing east of Los Angeles, where the UP and BNSF railroads intersect. On Day Three they toured the Maersk Terminal at the Port of Los Angeles.

**Seminar Results.** Richard Nordahl, Chief of the Office of Goods Movement for Caltrans, said, "The course was very good. It provided students a good orientation of both the policy and practicality of goods movement supply chain."

"Results of the course should assist the attendees—federal, state, and local—with the understanding to better address goods movement issues in their work in planning, design, and implementation of projects."