

PERSPECTIVE

ASPIRE™

10th Anniversary and Counting



by Dr. Henry G. Russell

This year marks the tenth year that *ASPIRE*™ has been produced. The inaugural issue was published in Winter 2007 after more than a year of assembling staff, sponsors, advertisers, writers, mailing lists, and articles. This *Perspective* traces the journey of *ASPIRE* from an unknown magazine to today's publication with 21,500 subscribers.

The Mission

The mission was to provide the first publication devoted exclusively to delivering both inspirational and practical information about concrete bridge design and construction. The name of *ASPIRE* was selected because of its dictionary meaning of "a strong desire for high achievement" and to "strive toward an end."

ASPIRE was and still is a collaborative effort of the concrete bridge industry with support of the industry's associations. As such, the magazine strives to present the achievements of the industry whether in segmental concrete construction; precast, prestressed concrete construction; or cast-in-place concrete construction. We also set out to recognize the owners be they federal, state, county, authority, or municipality.

The Response

As we embarked on the journey, we had no idea what the response would be or how long the journey would last. This was 2007 and the recession was on the horizon. It only took a few issues and we had our readers' responses:

'The inaugural issue was outstanding.'

'Congratulations on a great first issue of ASPIRE.'

'I am very impressed with your new magazine.'

'I have found the articles informative, offering new ideas to implement.'

'Congratulations on a great inaugural year and your vision that has been realized.'

For the first few issues, we used freelance writers to prepare some of the articles because nobody had heard of *ASPIRE* and potential authors were reluctant to contribute articles. However, as word spread, that changed and, today, the majority of our articles are written by bridge engineers directly involved in the projects.

The Changes

Over the years, we have made gradual changes in content to improve our effectiveness.

In Winter 2008, we introduced two new series to provide a wider array of features. *Safety and Serviceability* was added in the light of some bridge accidents. *Concrete Connections* provided web addresses for more information on featured topics, research reports, and other resources.

One aspect of the concrete bridge market that we did not initially recognize was that many old concrete bridges were being restored to prolong their service life using modern technology; and the series called *Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation of Concrete Bridges* was introduced in Winter 2009. The name was later changed to *Concrete Bridge Preservation* to provide a broader scope.

In Winter 2011, we introduced *Creative Concrete Construction* articles. These articles generally have a length of one page and provide an avenue to describe creative techniques and methods used on a particular project.

In Summer 2012, we added a new feature called *Accelerated Bridge Construction* to address this evolving approach to bridge construction. This separate series was concluded in Fall 2014. Bridges that use accelerated

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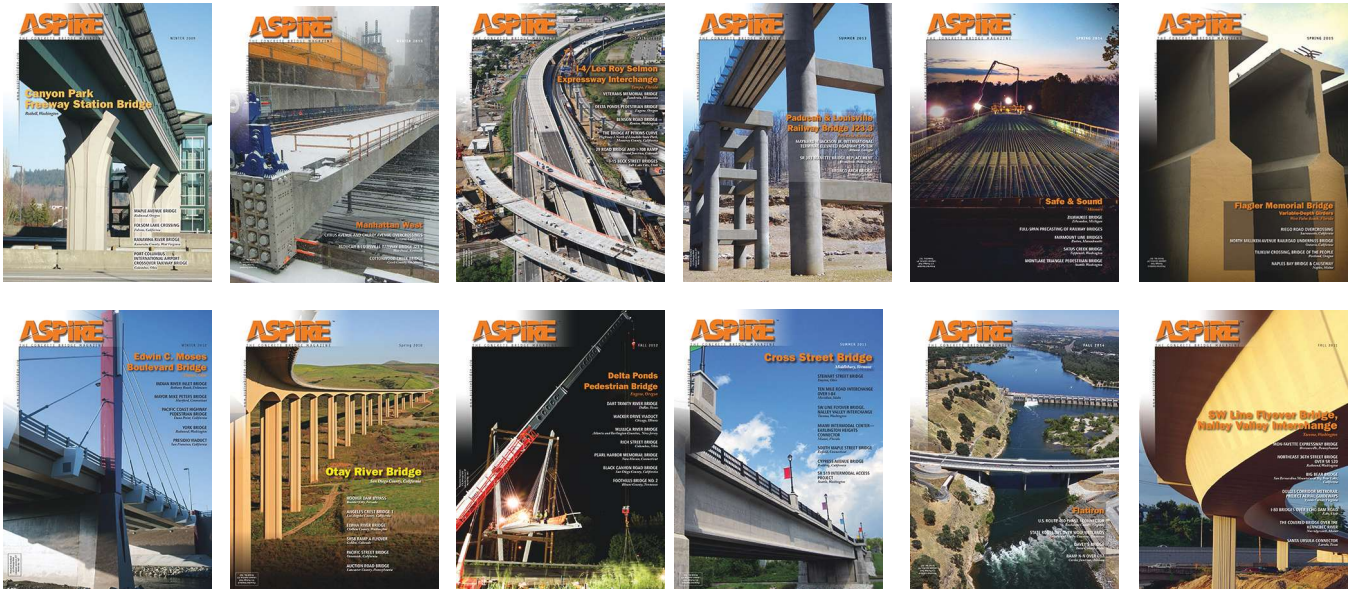
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bridge construction are now included in the project profile articles.

Initially, our *Focus* article only featured bridge designers. Yet, there was another player in the industry who was equally important—the contractor. So in 2014, we introduced articles about contractors in the Spring and Fall issues, while retaining the focus on designers in the Winter and Summer issues.

In the Summer 2014 issue, we announced the all-new, electronic version of *ASPIRE*, available for laptops, tablets, and smartphones from aspirebridge.org. This also facilitated the addition of a search option for all issues, a feature that readers had requested.

In the Fall 2014 issue, we launched a new series called *Concrete Bridge Technology*. This series cuts across design, detailing, and construction questions that are often on practitioners' minds. Many of us who have been around the industry for some time take many aspects of design and construction for granted because we have grown up with them. Yet, anybody coming into the industry today has little idea about their history or background. We hope this series will begin to fill this void.

To increase the usefulness of the magazine to the academic world, we added a series called *A Professor's Perspective* in Winter 2015. This series

focuses on addressing topics related to creating the next generation of concrete bridge engineers. The articles are aimed at both teaching concrete bridge design and introducing students to their career as a practicing bridge engineer.

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To date, we have featured articles from 46 states. If your state is not one of them, we would like to hear from you at info@aspirebridge.org.


What is Next?

If you have read this far, you will know that *ASPIRE* has changed incrementally to meet the needs of its readers. No doubt this will continue into the future but the overall mission of delivering both inspirational and practical information about all types of concrete bridges will remain.

During the life of *ASPIRE*, changes have taken place in the concrete bridge industry. *ASPIRE* has reported on the longest span segmental box-girder bridge in the United States; the use of curved, precast, prestressed

concrete U-beam bridges; the practical application of ultra-high-performance concrete as a grouting material for joints; and the first extradosed cable-stayed bridge in the United States to name a few. No doubt that the next 10 years will provide many new projects and new ideas for *ASPIRE* to report.

Acknowledgements

The accomplishments of *ASPIRE* would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and drive of the initial Executive Editor, John Dick; the new ideas and leadership brought in by William Nickas, the current editor-in-chief; the original layout designs by Leader Graphic Design; the contributions of our regular authors, Frederick Gottemoeller and Dr. Dennis Mertz; the participation of the Federal Highway Administration; the willingness of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute to accept the financial risk as the publisher; the support of the other associations whose logos now appear on page 2; our advertisers; the production staff over the 10-year period and, finally, the many authors, who have contributed articles. With your help, *ASPIRE* has become a truly industry-wide publication. 

Dr. Henry G. Russell is an engineering consultant who has been involved with the application of concrete in bridges for 40 years. He served as the managing technical editor of ASPIRE™ from the first issue in 2007 through the Fall issue of 2014.