

# History of Caltrans District 11

Cathryne Bruce-Johnson and Carmen Sandoval

## Caltrans History

The California Department of Transportation, known as Caltrans, began in 1895 as the Bureau of Highways. Governor James H. Budd appointed R. C. Irvine of Sacramento, Marston Mansow of San Francisco, and J. L. Maude of Riverside as Commissioners of the new agency. They were charged with surveying 8,000 miles of California roads and creating a map of proposed roads for the state's highway system. The task was accomplished in a fringe-topped buckboard buggy pulled by horses.<sup>1</sup>

The first recommendation from the three-commissioner Bureau was to build a highway spanning the state from Yreka, California, and Ashland, Oregon, at the north, to San Diego, California/Tijuana, Mexico at the south.<sup>2</sup> In 1897, the Bureau of Highways became the California Department of Highways. Proposed roads required separate legislative approval and funding until 1902, when a constitutional amendment was adopted allowing the legislature to create a single highway system funded and administered as a whole.

In 1907, the Department of Engineering replaced the Bureau of Highways and became the new agency in charge of building and maintaining the state's roads. The agency's role was financially reinforced by the voter-approved Road Bond Act of 1909 that provided \$18 million for state highway system construction. Two years later, the state legislature created the California Highway Commission within the California Department of Engineering to take charge of building the highway system. The Commission divided the state into seven divisions, originally noted

---

**Cathryne Bruce Johnson**, who has worked as a Public Information Officer with Caltrans District 11 for nearly a decade, has been with the District since 1992. She has more than 30 years of service with the State of California. **Carmen Sandoval** joined Caltrans District 11 Public Affairs in 2014. She was previously with San Diego Transit and the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce.

by roman numerals. Each division was led by an engineer who was responsible for conducting surveys, constructing roads, and overseeing road maintenance.<sup>3</sup>

Below is the 1911 list of California Highway Commission divisions:<sup>4</sup>

Div. I	Willits	Northeastern California
Div. II	Redding	Northwestern California
Div. III	Sacramento	North Central Valley and Sacramento Valley
Div. IV	San Francisco	Bay Area
Div. V	San Luis Obispo	Central Coast
Div. VI	Fresno	Central Valley
Div. VII	Los Angeles	Southern California

The seven divisions were eventually restructured into 12 districts to accommodate needed highway expansion and maintenance spurred by population growth and development.<sup>5</sup> The Commission marked the first state highway construction contract in 1912. Crews began work on Highway 1, El Camino Real, Pacific Coast route. <sup>6</sup> In 1921, the Department of Engineering became the Department of Public Works, which presided over the Division of Highways. The Director of Public Works held a dual role as Division Chief of Highways and was required to be a state highway engineer. The California Highway Commission remained intact within the new department until 1923, when it was pulled out of Public Works to allow the Chief of the Division of Highways to focus on building and maintaining highways.

Another important event in 1923 was the first state gasoline tax, charging two cents a gallon. Also enacted was legislation for a “Motor Vehicle Fuel Fund” that dispensed money directly to counties and into the “State Highway Maintenance Fund” for maintenance, repair and improvements of state highways and roads and highways in state parks.<sup>7</sup> New legislation in 1927 reorganized the Public Works Department reinstating the Highway Commission within it and recreating the office of the Department of Engineering to oversee the Division of Highways.

In 1934, the California Division of Highways assigned route numbers to state highways.<sup>8</sup> Even numbered highways primarily go east and west while odd numbered highways go north and south. The Division of Highways continued to report to Public Works until the next major reorganization in 1937, when the Director of the Public Works became the Chair of the California Highway Commission. The year 1973 marked the end of the Division of Highways and the beginning of the California Department of Transportation. Senator Wadie P. Deddeh, then California Assembly Member, introduced and helped pass



Division of Highway Building District XI opening ceremony August 21, 1933. ©SDHC OP #4810.

legislation to create the California Department of Transportation.<sup>9</sup>

Caltrans today reports to the California State Transportation Agency, which was established on July 1, 2013, as a new state agency focused solely on transportation. The Agency is also home to the California Highway Patrol, Department of Motor Vehicles, Office of Traffic Safety, California High Speed Rail Authority, and California Transportation Commission.<sup>10</sup>

## District 11

The eleventh district of the California Division of Highways was created on August 21, 1933, from portions of District 7 in Los Angeles and District 8 in San Bernardino.<sup>11</sup> It comprised San Diego, Imperial, and east Riverside counties.<sup>12</sup> The District 11 boundary was revised in the mid-1990s when responsibility for all of Riverside County was placed under District 8.<sup>13</sup>

The new District 11 headquarters, denoted by Roman numeral XI at the time, was established in 1933 at 1365 Harbor Street, across from the *Star of India* (temporary location) and the County of San Diego's Administrative Offices on Harbor Drive. It was built in the Spanish/Mediterranean architectural design, typically used for state buildings pre-world War II.<sup>14</sup> A dedication luncheon ceremony for the new District Office was held at the high class San Diego Hotel on August 3, 1935. The cost to attend was 75 cents.<sup>15</sup> In that year, San Diego County boasted a population of 210,000<sup>16</sup> residents compared to a count of 3.3 million people in 2015.<sup>17</sup>



*District 11 building on Harbor Street (lower left), Aerial 1940. City and County Administration Building on Pacific Highway, (upper right). ©SDHC 001C #79:741-528.*

A Spanish Revival Maintenance Building was built on Juan Street in Old Town in 1938, followed by a new district office building in the 1950s. The Division of Highways strived to meet infrastructure needs of a post-World War II economic boom. Plans for modernization were set in motion in 1950 when the California State Division of Architecture, Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the Division of Highways, hired architects C. Paderewski, Mitchell & Dean, and Adrian Wilson to begin design of the new District 11 office complex. The site was selected for its convenient and central location to downtown San Diego.



*Old Mission Olive Factory located on Juan Street, c.1916. ©SDHC #19F556F.*



*Caltrans San Diego Headquarters in Old Town San Diego built in 1951. Editors' collection.*

Below is a description of the proposed office complex according to the Department of Public Works, Division of Highways Order No. 2380SC issued on December 26, 1951 (as cited in Supernowicz and Calpo, 2011):

District XI Office Building, San Diego-Construct a new reinforced concrete office building having a three-story center section and three two-story wing sections; a new addition to a cafeteria building and remodeling of an existing building; a covered carport; a covered walk between office buildings and the cafeteria building; and site work, grading paving, fencing, electrical and mechanical services.<sup>18</sup>

Construction on the new San Diego headquarters began in 1951 and cost about \$975,000.<sup>19</sup> In 1953, seventy employees moved from Harbor Street to the newly constructed complex at 2829 Juan Street in Old Town, San Diego. The new structure replaced the Old Mission Olive Factory built in 1915. The factory had been built by businessman R. S. Truffley in the Spanish Mission Style that matched the Old Town and some Panama-California Exposition structures. The Harbor Street property was used by the Port Authority until the property was sold for construction of a hotel in 1956.<sup>20</sup>

The District 11 Office Complex at Juan Street was expanded in 1958 and again in 1964. It covered an entire city block bordered by Taylor, Juan, Calhoun and Wallace streets and across from the Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. By the early 1990s, it was apparent that district staffing would soon exceed the space limitations in the aging building and maintenance and rehabilitation costs were escalating. About \$7.1 million was needed for repairs according to the 1991 study by The Office

of the State Architect. The study estimated that an additional \$10 million would be needed for the required seismic retrofit of the main office building.

The lack of space and the prohibitive repair and rehabilitation costs prompted Caltrans to find a new district headquarters.<sup>21</sup> In February 2004, the Department of General Services awarded the contract for the new District 11 Office Complex Project to Clark Construction Group Inc. of Costa Mesa. Caltrans property across from the Juan Street complex was cleared and a groundbreaking event took place in May. The new complex featured three connected buildings of three, four and five stories totaling 301,000 square feet. The cost was slightly more than \$72.5 million. Construction finished eight weeks ahead of schedule in April 2006 and District 11 had a new address—4050 Taylor Street.

Some of the stand out features were a “Town Square” and “Grand Trellis” between the two main buildings offering a shaded courtyard for employee gatherings. The design includes a childcare center with an outdoor playground. It also has showers and locker facilities for bicycle commuters and at least one kitchenette on every floor.<sup>22</sup> The landscaping was coordinated with Old Town Planning group and plants were selected to conform to the established landscape in surrounding Old Town. Approximately 300 trees, 1,000 shrubs and 12 types of ground covers were planted. The new complex can house 950 employees, and has 850 parking spaces including motor pool parking.

Public Art works displayed on the property are the eucalyptus sculpture hanging from the Grand Trellis by artist Roman DeSalvo and the five transportation-themed carved cantera stone and glass wheels by brothers Einar and Jamex De La Torre.<sup>23</sup> A ceremony was held on April 5, 2006, dedicating the new District 11 Caltrans Office Complex as the Wadie P. Deddeh State Office Building. State Senator Deddeh, known as the “Father of modern-day Caltrans,” authored 1972 legislation that created the California Department of Transportation, formerly Division of Highways, California Department of Public Works.<sup>24</sup> Staff moved to the new building over the next few months from across the street and from leased office space in five separate buildings in Mission Valley, downtown and Kearny Mesa. This saved the state about \$3.4 million a year.<sup>25</sup>

Then came the question of what to do with the vacated building that was costing in excess of \$150,000 annually to maintain. It could not be given away, even to another state agency. Caltrans was bound by state law to auction the state property at fair market price.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, the space was occasionally used for law enforcement training exercises and as a set for television filming.<sup>27</sup> The former district headquarters was finally transferred to the state parks system in November 2013 through Legislative Joint Budget Committee approval advocated by Assembly Majority Leader Toni Atkins.<sup>28</sup>



## Directors History and Regional Contributions

### E. E. Wallace

E. E. Wallace was the first District Engineer for District XI and served from September 1933 until his retirement in September 1955. A brief biography found in district records indicated that he was best known for accomplishments during WWII for “supervision of planning and construction of important access roads, developed by the state for the Federal Government that served aircraft plants, shipyards and military establishments.”<sup>29</sup> Wallace began his career with the Division of Highways in 1913 at San Luis Obispo in District V. Within six years he had become Assistant District Engineer. While in San Luis Obispo he worked on the Carmel-San Simeon Highway known at the time as State Route 1.



*E.E. Wallace District 11 Director (left) and M.H. West, 1952. ©SDHC UT#84:20154-1.*

He went on to become District Engineer for Fresno’s District VI in 1926 until his appointment to the newly formed District XI.

Wallace was born in Harlan, Iowa, and had also lived in Alabama and Tennessee. He completed civil engineering studies at University of Alabama before securing a civilian job with the U.S. Corps of Engineers in lock and dam construction in 1908. He worked the next year with the Southern Pacific Railroad in Los Angeles and Bakersfield. In 1911, he was hired by Associated Oil Company in its Bakersfield engineering department and worked there two years.<sup>30</sup>

Wallace was honored with a retirement dinner hosted by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce at the El Cortez Hotel on August 26, 1955. The 562 attendees included engineers and Division of Highway employees from across the state as well as members of the California Highway Commission, state legislators, and city and county officials throughout San Diego, Imperial, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. He was married with two children, Donald and Janet.<sup>31</sup>

Completion of the Cabrillo Freeway (U.S. 395 and later State Route 163 through

Balboa Park) shortly after the war was a significant achievement as one of the state's first full freeways. Other major projects were portions of U.S. 10—known then as the Oceanside-Carlsbad Freeway and Montgomery Freeway—connecting National City to the border with Mexico. Some of the projects completed during his leadership at District VI included the Grapevine Grade Section of U.S. 99 south of Bakersfield and initial groundwork for mountain roads leading into Kings Canyon National Park.

### **Jacob Dekema**

Jacob “Jake” Dekema was known as “Mr. Caltrans” in San Diego during his quarter century heading District 11. He followed E. E. Wallace in 1955 as District Engineer. In 1962, Dekema petitioned the San Diego Highway Development Association (SDHDA) to submit a resolution to Caltrans elevating his position in parity with his counterparts in the San Francisco and Los Angeles districts. The resolution passed and Dekema became Assistant State Highway Engineer that year.<sup>32</sup> In 1977, his title changed to District Director when the Division of Highways became the Department of Transportation.<sup>33</sup>

The region boasted 25 miles of freeway in 1955 consisting of the old Route 395 now State Route 163 in Balboa Park, Chula Vista and Oceanside sections of route 101. Dekema's tenure as District 11 Director saw more than 480 miles added to the state highway system.<sup>34</sup> He worked with the city of San Diego planning department and the County Road Commissioner to lay out the future freeway system for San Diego County.<sup>35</sup> Almost 95 percent of the total freeway miles in San Diego, Imperial and East Riverside counties was constructed during his tenure.<sup>36</sup>

Some milestone accomplishments include the opening of the San Diego-Coronado Bridge in 1969 with then Governor Ronald Reagan, and the district's first non-motorized roadway (where bicyclists and pedestrians were allowed on the shoulder of the highway) located on State Route 94 between Kelton Road and Federal Boulevard which was completed the same year.<sup>37</sup>

According to an oral history interview, conducted on July, 9 2001, by George Gray titled “Highway Recollections of Jake Dekema.” Dekema was born in 1915 in the Dutch East Indies, now known as Indonesia. His father was an agent for several steamship companies and Lloyd's Insurance. The family lived in San Francisco, Holland, and British Columbia before settling in Los Angeles where he graduated from high school in 1933. Dekema earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the University of Southern California, graduating with top honors in 1937. He held a summer job in Fresno District VI in 1936 and then worked briefly for District VII in Los Angeles after graduation. He took



a job with Los Angeles County and then became interested in becoming a bridge engineer with the Division of Highways where he found himself in 1938.

Dekema's career was interrupted for three years by World War II and his service with the U.S. Navy, specializing in aviation ordinance. He met his wife Shirley and finished his tour of duty in 1946.<sup>38</sup> They had two children, Pamela and Douglas.<sup>39</sup> He returned to the Division of Highways and eventually became District Construction Engineer in District IX (Bishop), Assistant Construction Engineer at the Sacramento headquarters



Jacob Dekema ©SDHC UT #84: 4006-1 195F566E.

office and Assistant District Engineer of Administration at District VIII in San Bernardino before his appointment to head District XI.<sup>40</sup> Dekema retired from a distinguished 42-year career on December 29, 1980. A surprise testimonial dinner was held for him on January 16, 1981, at the Bahia Motor Hotel.<sup>41</sup> The guest list included more than 300 state and local officials.<sup>42</sup>

In 1981, the state legislature passed a bill sponsored by State Senator Jim Ellis to name Interstate 805 as the Jacob Dekema Freeway. The San Diego Highway Development Association presented Caltrans with a bronze plaque at a dedication luncheon in honor of the freeway naming. The plaque stands at the Park & Ride at I-805 and Governor Drive.<sup>43</sup> Other honors to Dekema include one of the American Public Works' Association's Top Ten Public Works Men of the Year Award in 1972, the Distinguished Civil Engineering Alumni Award from USC in 1973. He has received many proclamations and awards, has been presented keys to many cities and has a street named for him in the City of Blythe. He is also listed in the *Who's Who*. Dekema wrote many transportation related articles over his career including "Transportation Trends, Can Some of the Cures be Worse than the Diseases?" and "The Ecology of Transportation."<sup>44</sup> Dekema celebrated his centennial birthday on July 22, 2015, and was honored in person the following day during a Dekema Scholarships Presentation.

### **Russell O. Lightcap**

Russell O. Lightcap was well known for his quiet, steadfast leadership and held many positions with Caltrans. In the early 1970s, he took over responsibilities for the state's entire fleet of Caltrans vehicles, everything from the bright orange maintenance trucks to the snowplows in the Sierra. Those were the days of the oil crisis, and Lightcap had to prove himself adept at stretching what fuel was available to power the work vehicles.

Lightcap's experience in Sacramento served him well. He was highly regarded as someone who could cut through the bureaucracy and deliver projects. He served as the District Director of District 6 (Fresno) before being appointed to succeed Jake Dekema in April 1981. He led District 11 for two years before moving back to Sacramento.<sup>45</sup> In 1990, he was sought out to again serve as District Director in District 12 (Orange County) until 1993 when he retired after 45 years with Caltrans.<sup>46</sup>



*Russel O. Lightcap, Caltrans photo.*

### **William "Bill" Dotson**

Caltrans records indicate that Bill Dotson served as Caltrans District Director for San Diego, Imperial and east Riverside counties from 1983 through 1988. The Caltrans 11 *News Bulletin* from May 18, 1983, announced that Dotson had been permanently appointed as the new District Director as of 4:45 p.m. the previous day. According to an interview with Dotson in the June 9, 1983, edition of the newsletter, he had been awarded the promotion after two stints as Acting District Director. Dotson was born in Texas but had lived most of his life in southern California. He attended high school in Brawley, California, and graduated from the California Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

Notes in Caltrans files indicate that Dotson served as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy toward the end of World War II. He had been sent to the South Pacific and Marshall Islands and the island of Kwajalein. Released from the Navy, Dotson began his 41-year career with the state of California in 1947 as a Junior Civil Engineer with the Division of Highways. Dotson achieved several milestones in 1973. He graduated from a professional program in Urban Transportation at

Carnegie-Mellon University. The program included travel to Europe and major U.S. East Coast cities where he learned about world-wide transportation practices. He became a licensed civil engineer and was promoted to Principal Transportation Engineer.

Advancements continued in following years through various assignments in District 11 including serving as Deputy District Director for Project Development. One document from the Caltrans archives conveyed that Dotson's tenure as District Director came with challenge and opportunity. The total five-year budget at his appointment was about \$600 million—a \$200 million increase from the previous year, with an anticipated fifty-percent increase the following year. District 11 was project ready but short on people. Dotson was tasked with reorganizing the district to develop the projects and hire staff to fill the needs—65 in the first year. About 40 percent of the new hires would be entry level Junior Civil Engineers requiring training. The plan was to bring in a broad range of experience for the remaining openings, including promotional opportunities for seasoned civil engineers.

Much of the construction work covered rehabilitation and reconstruction of interchanges to bring them up to current design standards for the time. He focused on replacing highway lanes and adding shoulders. At the same time, costs were rising to maintain the roads already in place. Funding was allocated to both highway maintenance and traffic operations. On-ramp metering projects were implemented as a permanent feature to allow cars to enter the roadway in a slower, more uniform pace, so that traffic flow could continue on the main lanes. Design on San Diego highways—Interstates 5, 8 and State Route 163— took place under Dotson's supervision. Construction on State Route 52 from the Interstate 805 separation to San Clemente Creek was completed in 1987. The portion of State Route 52 from Convoy Street to Santo Road opened in May 1988. This new segment completed a 9-mile long link from Interstate 5 to Santo Road. That same month, construction began on the first of several projects totaling 18 miles to widen State Route 78 from four to six lanes between Oceanside and Escondido.

A retirement dinner was held for Dotson at the U.S. Grant Hotel on August 27, 1988. According to notes attributed



*William "Bill" Dotson, Caltrans photo.*



*Senator Wadie Deddeh helped found Caltrans, 1973.*

to then Caltrans District 11 Public Information Chief Jim Larson, participants included elected local and state officials such as City of San Marcos Mayor Lee Thibadeau, City of Oceanside Mayor Lawrence Bagley, County of San Diego Supervisor George Bailey, California Transportation Commission Chairman Tom Hawthorne, and Senator Wadie Deddeh. Larson was quoted to say that Bill Dotson was “a universally respected engineer and administrator running what

is generally regarded as the most efficient and trouble-free of the Caltrans’ 12 districts.” Bill and his wife Dorothy continued to live in the San Diego region after his retirement. They remain close to their two grown children, Janet and James, spouses and grandchildren.

### **Jesus Garcia**

Jesus Garcia served as the District Director for Caltrans District 11 from September 1988 to October 1993. During that time, he directed 1,400 employees and administered an annual transportation budget of more than \$400 million. He previously served as District 3 Director (Marysville) from 1987-1988 and District 5 Director (San Luis Obispo) from 1980-1986. His career foundation was formed shortly after serving as a U.S. Navy Officer, graduating in the top five percent of his class at Officer Candidate School in Newport Rhode Island. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Arizona and followed with a Master’s Degree in Transportation Planning from the University of California, Davis.



*Jesus Garcia, Caltrans photo.*

Recognized as one of the top transportation experts in the state, Garcia served on countless professional boards and advisory groups, including the San Diego Association of Governments and the Sacramento Council of Governments. He also played key roles as chairman of the Caltrans Management Style Task Force

and member of the department's Executive Development Advisory Committee and the Executive Management Workshop. Garcia's expertise stretched beyond department boundaries and brought benefits to the state and local regions. He was a member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, American Public Transit Association, the Transportation Research Board and the San Diego County Transit General Manager's Group.<sup>47</sup>

In 1991, the American Public Works Association (APWA) recognized Garcia as one of the Top Ten Public Works Leaders that year. The prestigious national award, established in 1960, recognizes the contributions of APWA members to the public works profession in public, private sectors and academic institutions.<sup>48</sup> During his career, he was the Chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Development Board Finance Task Force, the Tri-Agency Grants Committee and the Rotary Club Group Study Exchange. He was also a Board member with the Centro Cultural de la Raza in Balboa Park and served as Chair of the Implementation Subcommittee, Independent Citizen's Committee for the San Diego School District and a member of the city of San Diego's Task Force on locating financing for the Padres' baseball stadium.

Contributions during his tenure included reducing freeway fatalities of migrants at the border and in Camp Pendleton, initiating the high-tech Traffic Operations Center, opening the original Interstate 15 Express Lanes, and portions of State Routes 52, 54, 56, 78 and 125. Garcia implemented ramp metering on Interstates 5 and 15—now a permanent feature on nearly every highway—to control the flow of traffic entering the highway. He is credited with working tirelessly to diversify the workforce and build strong binational relationships with transportation and government officials in Mexico. Garcia led by example and dedicated himself to being an effective department liaison with government agencies and the public while working on sensitive and complex transportation issues.<sup>49</sup> The Garcia Conference Room located at the Caltrans District 11 Office Complex in Old Town San Diego is named in his honor, as is the Conference Room in Caltrans District 3 (Marysville).<sup>50</sup> He passed away on October 19, 2015, at the age of 87.<sup>51</sup>

## **Gary Gallegos**

Gary Gallegos is a nationally recognized expert in transportation, land use, regional public policy-making, and bi-national planning and diplomacy. He served as the District Director from 1994 until 2001 when he became the Executive Director of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).<sup>52</sup> During his tenure with

Caltrans, Gallegos was instrumental in developing a number of transportation policy initiatives resulting in public/private strategies which attracted more than \$300 million in additional funding for San Diego and Imperial counties. He recognized that the regional transportation system was adequate, but did not efficiently serve the International Border with Mexico. Gallegos became involved in what would be termed the “North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Network.” This included identifying more than a billion dollars of infrastructure needs at the International Border. State highway improvements under the NAFTA Network included work on State Routes 7, 78, 86, 111, 905, and the Route 125 Toll Road.<sup>53</sup>



*Gary Gallegos, Caltrans photo.*

Gallegos adopted state-of-the-art outreach techniques and strategies to shape effective partnerships with regional community, business, elected officials and transportation stakeholders and build consensus on transportation needs for District 11. He also further developed working relationships with transportation officials in Mexico and often represented Caltrans at bi-national forums relating to cross-border issues. Other key responsibilities with Caltrans prior to joining District 11 included some of the department’s most sensitive and difficult issues at the time—the emergency reconstruction of the Interstate 5 bridge over the American River in Sacramento, serving as the resident engineer for construction of the Potato Slough Bridge in the Sacramento River Delta and spearheading the department’s response to record snows and flooding during the winter of 1993.<sup>54</sup>

After serving as District Director for seven years, Gallegos was named the third Executive Director of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)—the leading research, planning, and transportation agency for the San Diego region. The agency builds consensus; makes strategic plans; obtains and allocates resources; plans, engineers, and builds public transportation; and provides information on a broad range of topics pertinent to the region’s quality of life. Agency policymakers are elected officials from each of the area’s 18 cities and the county. Gallegos’ recent accomplishments at SANDAG include spearheading the acquisition of the State Route 125 toll road, also known as the South Bay Expressway, for \$341.5 million.

In 2004, Gallegos led the charge to extend *TransNet*, a regional half-cent sales



tax for transportation. Administered by SANDAG, the original 20-year *TransNet* program generated \$3.3 billion to fund highway, transit, and local road projects. The 40-year *TransNet* extension will raise another \$14 billion for similar improvements. Gallegos also led the effort to create the *TransNet* Early Action Program, which focuses on jump-starting construction of top priority transportation projects identified in the Regional Transportation Plan. Gallegos holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of New Mexico.<sup>55</sup>

### **Pedro Orso-Delgado**

Pedro Orso-Delgado served as the Caltrans District 11 Director for nearly nine years, leaving in 2009 to become the Deputy City Manager of Santee.<sup>56</sup> During his tenure as District Director, Orso-Delgado worked determinedly to secure a Presidential Permit to enable the new port of entry at Otay Mesa East to continue to move forward. He forged strong partnerships with local community and business stakeholders, as well as federal transportation partners, who have all provided critical support to this ongoing, pioneering project.<sup>57</sup> When California voters approved the \$40 billion Proposition 1B infrastructure improvement bond in 2006, Orso-Delgado led the charge to enable San Diego to become the first county in the state to break ground on a bond-funded transportation project. The Interstate 5/Lomas Santa Fe Project, which opened in February 2009, was also the first major bond-funded project to be completed in the state.<sup>58</sup>



*Pedro Orso-Delgado. Caltrans photo.*

Orso-Delgado was tasked with implementing the seismic retrofit program in the region that led to a very innovative partnership with University of California San Diego. He was instrumental in working with community stakeholders in Barrio Logan where residents, artists, and activists were alarmed about the potential loss of the Chicano Park murals. Working in collaboration, an innovative solution was found and the art preserved.<sup>59</sup> The San Diego native attended schools in both San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, graduating from San Diego State University in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and began his career with Caltrans in 1984 as a Junior Civil Engineer, working his way up to Senior Transportation Engineer.

Orso-Delgado served as the Deputy District Director of Maintenance and Deputy District Director of Program Project Management prior to being selected

as the District Director. He sought to reduce bureaucracy and worked to position District 11 as a transportation innovator in the state.<sup>60</sup>

### **Laurie Berman**

Laurie Berman was appointed as District Director in November 2009, becoming the eighth district director for the region and the first woman to hold this prestigious post. Berman is responsible for the daily operation of 1,200 employees and more than 1,000 centerline miles of highway. Under her leadership and in collaboration with regional stakeholders, a record level of investment in Imperial County infrastructure is underway with over \$544 million in improvements for the area's highways and roads.<sup>61</sup>



*Laurie Berman, Caltrans photo.*

Recruited by then-District Director Gary Gallegos to work on an innovative seismic retrofit program, Berman was charged with implementing a new structural design group in District 11, which had previously only been done in headquarters. Additional career accomplishments include extensive work on SR-125 South – Toll Road Segment in a variety of roles including design of the project and Project Manager. The project was the district's first public-private partnership, the first design-build project, and presented a different way to deliver the work.<sup>62</sup>

Berman's top priority for motorists and Caltrans employees is safety. In 2013, District 11 launched a pilot project to enhance work zone safety through additional warning signs, reduced and enforced speed limits and an extra buffer lane between highway workers and live traffic. Caltrans partnered with other agencies for the Move Over Law public awareness campaign, urging motorists to slow down and enable highway workers to safely perform their vital duties.<sup>63</sup>

Berman understands the value community partnerships and stakeholder collaborations bring to projects such as the retrofit of the iconic Cabrillo Bridge in Balboa Park and the creation of the Martin Luther King Jr. mural on State Route 94. She was also the ultimate key to the historic restoration of the Chicano Park murals, now designated in the National Register of Historic Places. Working with a federal grant, she was tenacious in bringing the restoration to fruition. She strongly believes these and other infrastructure projects contribute to a sense of place and help to build and shape communities. In 2012, Berman served on special assignment for an intensive department program review. She is an integral part of a statewide leadership team that is working to ensure Caltrans will effectively meet growing



*Caltrans Headquarters completed in April 2006 and dedicated as the Wadie P. Deddeh State Office Building. Editor's collection.*



*Distinctive sign marking the Caltrans Headquarters at 4050 Taylor Street. Editor's collection.*

transportation demands. She shares the vision for a future state transportation system infused with innovation and new technologies that will provide truly multi-modal options to efficiently move people and goods across California.<sup>64</sup>

In 2011, Berman was honored as the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) San Diego's "Woman of the Year." She serves on the United Way of San Diego County Board of Directors and as an ex officio member of the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, San Diego Association of Governments and the Imperial County Transportation Commission. She is a member of WTS and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Berman began her career as a Junior Civil Engineer in bridge construction in Santa Barbara after earning her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering at Michigan State University in 1983 and has more than 30 years of experience with Caltrans.<sup>65</sup>

NOTES

1. James E. Reading and Andrew P. Schlaefli, "The California Bureau of Highways." *70th Anniversary Edition History of San Diego Highway Development* (for the San Diego Highway Development Association), 2006, 14-15.
2. Reading and Schlaefli, "First Highway." *Ibid.*, 18.
3. Dana E. Supernowicz and Janice Calpo. *Historical Resources Evaluation Report for the State of California, Department of Transportation Former Caltrans District 11 Office Complex APN 442-463-01 San Diego, San Diego, County California EA 1100000072*. Historical Resources Evaluation Report Prepared for Kim T. Smith, D-11 Chief Environmental Resource Studies Branch, Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, San Diego: State of California Department of Transportation, 2011.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Caltrans District 11 Archives *District 11 August 1935-August 1988*.
6. California Department of Transportation, n.d. - *Fact Sheet, Important Events in Caltrans History*. Accessed 12-16-2015, 2015. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/paffairs/about/cthist.htm>.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Supernowicz and Calpo. 2011
10. State of California. 2010. *California State Transportation Agency*. Accessed November 21, 2015.
11. Ron Main, "53 Years & 5000 Miles." *District 11 August 1935 August 1988*. California Department of Transportation, District 11.
12. Division of Highways, Department of Public Works, State of California. 1955. "Retirements from Service: E. E. Wallace." Edited by Kenneth C. Adams. *California Highways and Public Works* (September-October 1955): 42-43. Accessed December 2, 2015.
13. According to Main, "53 Years & 5000 Miles." The District 11 Map was to remain intact for the next 55 years until the addition of District 12, headquartered in Santa Ana. This information was found to be incorrect, and the error has been corrected.
14. Supernowicz and Calpo. 2011 (pg. i, 18)
15. Main, *Ibid.*
16. Balboa Park Online Collaborative. n.d. San Diego History Center. Accessed December 22, 2015. <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/links/sandiegopopulation.htm>.
17. U. S. Department of Commerce. 2015. *United States Census Bureau*. December 02. Accessed December 22, 2015. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06073.html>.
18. Supernowicz and Calpo. 2011 (pg. i).
19. Department of Public Works, Division of Highways. 1951. "Public Works Order No. 2380C." *cited Historical Resources Evaluation Report: Former district 11 Office Complex, San Diego*, Supernowicz and Calpo, 2011. copy on file at California State Archives, Sacramento, California, December 26.
20. Main, *Ibid.*
21. State of California Department of Transportation. 2011. *Disposal of the Former California Department of Transportation District Office Complex*. Final Environmental Impact Report, San Diego: State of California Department of Transportation.
22. Steve Saville, 2004. "Final hurdle cleared for construction of New District Office Complex Project." *District 11 Not to Scale Newsletter*, February 11: 1.

23. California Department of Transportation District 11. n.d. "Wadie P. Deddeh State Office Building." San Diego.
24. Jeff Ristine, "Headquarters dedication honors father of Caltrans." *San Diego Union Tribune*. Electronic Document. San Diego, California, April 6, 2006. Accessed December 14, 2015. [http://www.utsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060407/news\\_2m7caltrans.html](http://www.utsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060407/news_2m7caltrans.html).
25. Ibid.
26. State of California Department of Transportation. 2011. *Disposal of the Former California Department of Transportation District Office Complex*. Final Environmental Impact Report, San Diego: State of California Department of Transportation.
27. Department of Public Works, Division of Highways. 1951. "Public Works Order No. 2380C." cited *Historical Resources Evaluation Report: Former district 11 Office Complex, San Diego*, Supernowicz and Calpo, 2011. Copy on file at California State Archives, Sacramento, California, December 26.
28. State of California Department of Transportation District 11. 2013. "Transfer of Old Town Caltrans Building to Parks is Finalized New Historical Addition to Old Town San Diego Planned." *News Release #158-13*. San Diego, November 13.
29. Ron Main, "53 Years & 5000 Miles." *District 11 August 1935—August 1988*. California Department of Transportation, District 11.
30. Division of Highways, Department of Public Works, State of California. 1955. "Retirements from Service: E. E. Wallace." Edited by Kenneth C. Adams. *California Highways and Public Works* 42. Accessed December 11, 2015.
31. Division of Highways, Department of Public Works, State of California. 1955. "Wallace Tendered Farewell Dinner By Many Friends." Edited by Kenneth C. Adams. *California Highways and Public Works* (September-October 1955): 42-43. Accessed December 2, 2015.
32. Reading and Schlaefli. 2006. "Division of Highways District XI." *70th Anniversary Edition History of San Diego Highway Development* (For the San Diego Highway Development Association), 33-34.
33. George Gray, "Introductions." *Highway Recollections of Jake Dekema Oral History Interview*. San Diego: Highway Recollections Series of Caltrans History Preservation Committee, July 9. 2001.
34. Caltrans District 11. "It Was Jake's Turn." *District 11 News Bulletin*, December 22, 1980 1-2.
35. Gray, "Introductions."
36. Caltrans District 11. "It Was Jake's Turn."
37. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. 2015. "District 11 Milestones, 1955-2015." San Diego.
38. Caltrans District 11. 1980. "Script Sheet - Jake Dekema." San Diego.
39. Caltrans District 11. 1980. "It Was Jake's Turn."
40. Division of Highways. "Jacob Dekema in New Post." Edited by Kenneth C. Adams. *California Highways and Public works* (Division of Highways, Department of Public Works, State of California) September-October 1955: 51. Accessed December 11, 2015.
41. Bahia Motor Hotel-Elizabeth Yaeger. "Letter to Howard Thomas." San Diego, November 21, 1980. "Surprise Testimonial Dinner for Jake Dekema."
42. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. 1980. "Guest List - Testimonial Dinner for Jake Dekema."
43. Reading and Schlaefli. 2006. "Division of Highways District XI." *70th Anniversary Edition History of San Diego Highway Development* (For the San Diego Highway Development Association) 33-34.
44. Caltrans District 11. 1980. "It Was Jake's Turn." *District 11 News Bulletin*, December 22: 1-2.
45. Eric Bailey. "Caltrans Chief Savors Measure M Challenge." *LA Times*, December 27, 1990. Accessed December 15, 2015. [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-12-27/local/me-10210\\_1\\_orange-county](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-12-27/local/me-10210_1_orange-county).

## THE JOURNAL OF SAN DIEGO HISTORY

46. Geoff Boucher, "Countywide: Caltrans Names Interim Director." *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles, January 18, 1994. Accessed January 07, 2016. [http://articles.latimes.com/print/1994-01-18/local/me-13008\\_1\\_interim-director](http://articles.latimes.com/print/1994-01-18/local/me-13008_1_interim-director).
47. Steve Saville, Biography of Jesus Garcia, 1992
48. News at Eleven, Caltrans District 11 Newsletter, May 1991
49. Saville, Biography of Jesus Garcia, 1992.
50. Elma Garcia (wife of Jesus Garcia) interview by Carmen Sandoval, October 21, 2015.
51. Obituary: Jesus Macias Garcia, July 6 1928-Oct. 19-2015, *La Prensa San Diego*, October 23, 2015. Accessed January 7, 2016. <http://laprensa-sandiego.org/breaking-news/obituary-mr-jesus-macias-garcia-july-6-1928-oct-19-2015/>.
52. San Diego Association of Governments. "Gary L. Gallegos Biographical Sketch." San Diego, December 2014. Accessed December 2015.
53. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. "The 1999 Charles H. Purcell Management Award Nomination for Gary L. Gallegos." San Diego, April 16, 1999.
54. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. "Gary L Gallegos Biography." San Diego, October 5, 1998.
55. San Diego Association of Governments. 2014. "Gary L. Gallegos Biographical Sketch." San Diego, December. Accessed December 2015.
56. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. 2009. "Caltrans District 11 Director Pedro Orso-Delgado Biography." San Diego, July.
57. Caltrans District 11. Caltrans District 11 Directors, *The Interchange of Innovators*. Prod. Tami Rogers. San Diego, December 8, 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_n0P4rtUBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_n0P4rtUBs).
58. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. 2009. "Caltrans District 11 Director Pedro Orso-Delgado Biography." San Diego, July.
59. Caltrans District 11. 2015. *Caltrans District 11 Directors - The Interchange of Innovators*. Prod. Tami Rogers. San Diego, December 08. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_n0P4rtUBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_n0P4rtUBs).
60. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. "Caltrans District 11 Director Pedro Orso-Delgado Biography." San Diego, July 2009.
61. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. "Biography Laurie Berman District 11 Director, California Department of Transportation." San Diego, February 2015.
62. Laurie Berman, interview by Carmen Sandoval, Caltrans District 11 District Director, January 6, 2016.
63. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. "Biography Laurie Berman District 11 Director, California Department of Transportation." San Diego, February 2015.
64. Berman, interview by Carmen Sandoval.
65. Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office. 2015. "Biography Laurie Berman District 11 Director, California Department of Transportation." San Diego, February, 2015.