



# Press Release

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## **PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF MARKS 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

### ***Celebrating Its Legacy...Looking Ahead***

NEW YORK, NY — Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) is celebrating its 125th year as a New York City-based international engineering giant.

In 1885, William Barclay Parsons established a consulting engineering practice at 22 William Street in Lower Manhattan. Since then, PB has continued to play leading roles on transportation, power, buildings, and environmental projects throughout the world. Today, the firm is a strategic consulting, planning, engineering and program/construction management organization with approximately 14,000 employees in 150 offices on six continents. In January, the firm, which maintains its headquarters in New York City, welcomed a new Chief Executive Officer, George J. Pierson, and began its first full year of operation as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Balfour Beatty plc, London.

During its 125-year history, PB has participated in the development of the first mass transit systems for New York City, San Francisco, Atlanta, Taipei and Singapore; the advancement of immersed-tube tunnel technology; and various innovations in the design and construction of bridges. Recent and current PB projects include the Kanchanaphisek Bridge in Bangkok, Thailand, opened in November, 2007; the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge outside Washington, D.C., dedicated in May, 2008; the Epping-to-Chatswood Rail Link in Sydney, Australia, opened in February, 2009; the Central Link light rail in Seattle, Washington, opened in July, 2009; the ongoing Medupi Power Station in South Africa; the ongoing Chicago O'Hare International Airport Modernization Program; and the ongoing Building Schools for the Future program in Newcastle, UK.



## **Setting a Precedent for Mass Transit in the U.S.**

One of the first undertakings of Parsons's new venture was the design of a subway system for New York City in the 1890s. And from the first IRT line, which opened in 1904, to the current extension of the No. 7 line and the new Second Avenue Subway, PB's service to the New York City subway system has spanned its entire 125-year history.

As Chief Engineer of the Board of Rapid Transit Railroad Commissioners, Parsons oversaw the planning, design and construction of the initial New York City subway system. The first segment of the subway system — the IRT line, running 9 miles (14 kilometers) from City Hall to 145th Street in Harlem — was completed in 1904 to great fanfare. At the time, *The New York Times* called it “the greatest achievement of the time in municipal engineering.”

Today, PB is the primary designer of the project to extend the No. 7 subway line from Times Square to 34th Street and Eleventh Avenue. The firm is also providing construction management services on the Second Avenue Subway, which will initially provide operating service between 96th Street and 63rd Street.

Similarly, PB's long service to the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system began in 1953 with a feasibility study that recommended a system of heavy rail mass transit for the San Francisco Bay Area. Beginning in 1959, PB served BART as part of general engineering consultant (GEC) joint ventures for development of the initial 71-mile (114-kilometer) system as well as the 30-mile (48-kilometer) BART extensions program, including the 8.7-mile (14-kilometer) long, four-station San Francisco International Airport Extension, which opened in June 2003. Today, PB is GEC for the 5.4-mile (8.7-kilometer) Warm Springs Extension, which will bring BART southward from Alameda County to the edge of Santa Clara County.

For 40 years, PB also worked closely with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority in Atlanta, leading four distinct GEC joint ventures to develop a system that today includes 48 miles (77 kilometers) of rail and 38 stations fully integrated with a 1,500-mile (2,400-kilometer) bus network.

## **Pioneering Mass Transit in Asia**

PB has also played an integral role in pioneering mass transit projects in Asia. In 1986, Taipei's Department of Rapid Transit Systems approved the initial network of four heavy rail lines and a medium-capacity line, and PB led a GEC joint venture for the planning, design and construction management of that network. Ground was broken in 1988, and in 1996 the Muzha Line opened as the first driverless



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medium-capacity rapid transit line in Taiwan. It was followed a year later by the opening of the Danshui Line, the country's first heavy-capacity rapid transit line. PB has continued to support the Taipei MRT, and in 2009 completed a three-year project management support assignment for a 9-mile (15-kilometer) extension that brought the Muzha (renamed Wenshan-Nehui) Line to Neihu, the last of Taipei's districts to have rapid transit.

For more than 40 years, PB also has been involved in Singapore's development of one of the most modern, convenient mass rapid transit systems in Asia. PB has been responsible for architectural planning concepts and conceptual design, mechanical/electrical design, and quality control since the onset of the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project in 1967. Since the MRT opened in 1987, PB has been involved in various extensions of the system and is currently providing architectural, mechanical/electrical and civil/structural detailed design for stations, systems assurance and tunnel ventilation system design services for the MRT's 20.5-mile (33-kilometer) Circle Line. The new underground line encircles Singapore and interchanges with all radial lines leading to the urban center.

PB also contributed to the planning, design, construction and commissioning of the Taiwan High Speed Rail, which opened in January, 2007 and allows travel between Taipei and Kaohsiung in 90 minutes on trains that reach speeds of 190 miles (300 kilometers) per hour.

## **Advancing Immersed-Tube Tunnel Technology**

Designed by PB, the 1-mile (1.6-kilometer) Detroit-Windsor Tunnel connecting Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario, which opened in 1930, was only the third subaqueous road tunnel in the United States and served as a model for more than a dozen immersed-tube tunnels to which PB has contributed.

Today, PB is the engineer to the joint venture responsible for design, tender preparation and construction supervision for the world's deepest immersed tunnel to date. Located in Istanbul, the Marmaray Tunnel under the Bosphorus Strait will provide a rail link for a rapid transit system connecting Europe and Asia. While most of the tunnel will be bored through solid rock, the central .9-mile (1.4-kilometer) section will be an immersed tube designed to absorb seismic forces.

## **Spanning the Decades**

One of PB's earliest bridge projects was the railroad bridge over the Cape Cod Canal, which was the longest vertical lift bridge in the world when it opened in 1935. In the succeeding 75 years, PB has applied innovation to the design and construction of hundreds of bridges of all types.



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In the 1950s, the George P. Coleman Memorial Bridge crossing over the York River near Chesapeake Bay, Virginia held a double distinction as the longest double-swing span in the world at 1,000 feet (305 meters) and as an engineering innovation because it was supported by a foundation of six hollow caissons. In the 1990s, PB studied alternatives for replacing the bridge and prepared a design for a four-lane bridge on the existing caissons. In 1996, six sections of the new superstructure were assembled 30 miles (48 kilometers) away, floated to the site and placed on the caissons in just nine days, marking the first time that a bridge of its size was assembled off-site and floated into place ready to carry traffic. The project won the 1997 Grand Conceptor Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies, the 1997 Roebling Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers and the 1997 George S. Richardson Medal from the International Bridge Conference.

More recently, PB has played key roles in the design of cable-stayed bridges in Owensboro, Kentucky; Charleston, South Carolina; and Bangkok, Thailand. PB is currently leading a general engineering consultant joint venture for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge outside Washington, D.C., which was named the Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement of 2008 by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

## **Looking Ahead**

January 2010 not only marked PB's 125th anniversary, but also a transition in executive leadership, with the appointment of Pierson as Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 2010. The firm also enters its 125th year with new strategic alliances. In October 2009, PB became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Balfour Beatty, an international engineering, construction, professional services and investment firm based in London. The acquisition of PB by Balfour Beatty also led to the integration of Heery International, an Atlanta-based company owned by Balfour Beatty, into PB, adding another nearly 1,000 employees and bringing to PB a respected building design and construction management team.

While continuing to look globally for growth, PB maintains its high profile in New York. In addition to its work on the New York subway system, PB continues to contribute to the future development of the region's transportation infrastructure. PB is leading a joint venture that is designing the East Side Access project, which will bring Long Island Rail Road service (which currently terminates at Penn Station on the west side of Manhattan) to Grand Central Terminal on the East Side. Additionally, PB is part of a joint venture team that is designing the Trans-Hudson Express Tunnel Project, a new underwater crossing of the Hudson River from New Jersey to an expanded Penn Station in New York City.



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“We designed the first subway here and more than 100 years later we are still playing a major role in planning, designing, building and maintaining the critical transportation infrastructure this city needs to prosper for the next 100 years,” Pierson said.

**Parsons Brinckerhoff is part of Balfour Beatty plc, the international infrastructure Group operating in professional services, construction services, support services and infrastructure investments.**