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Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity *44 years of community service*

Growth with a Justice Lens

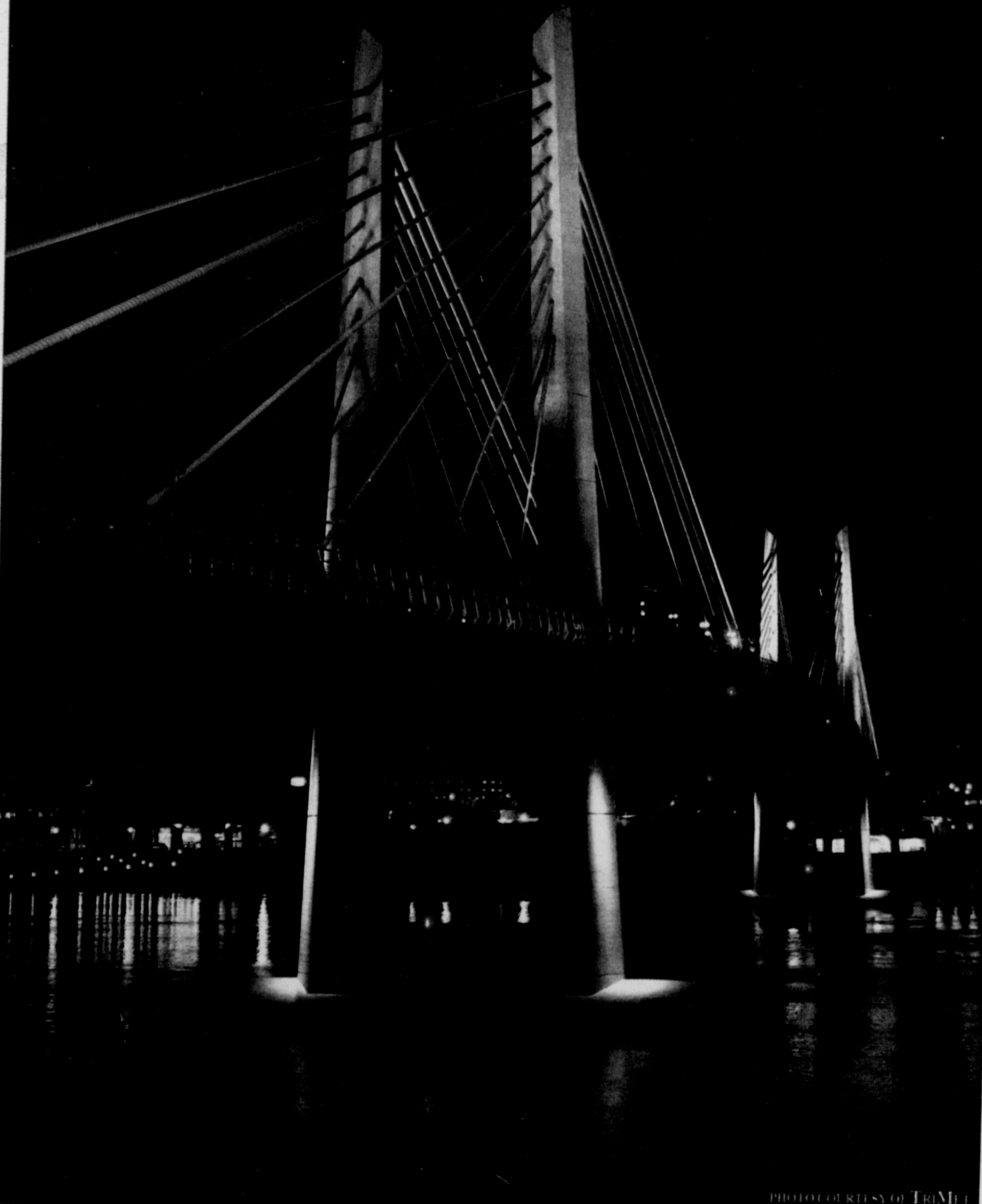


PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIMET

When representatives of minority-owned companies and diversity in the workforce gathered Thursday for a TriMet celebration of doing business with Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms, they saw some of the first testing of LED lights on the new Tilikum Crossing bridge near OMSI, part of the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project.

TriMet construction helps level the playing field

When it opens in 2015, the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Transit Project will improve transit and connections throughout the region. But the project has been benefiting the community since construction began in 2011, especially small firms owned by people of color and women, or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms.

The impact from the \$1.49 billion project was made clear during TriMet's second annual DBE/Small Business celebration last Thursday at OMSI. The transit agency shared the results of its efforts to remove barriers and increase contracting opportunities for people of color and women in both the professional and construction fields.

TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane said the diversity his agency achieved in terms of employment and contracting was a justice issue that the transit agency was proud to advance and a value TriMet would never back away from.

"When we committed to expanding our transit system with this project, we made a promise to maximize this investment for everyone in the community," McFarlane said. "We are delivering on that promise beyond just growing our transit system. This project has been an economic catalyst that has helped grow our economy and all communities along the way."

So far, the project has set a record for contracting for any regional project, with 538 firms participating in the work and 80 percent of them from Oregon. Of those companies, 130 are DBEs, representing nearly 25 percent of all contracting firms employed on the project.

To date, almost 12,800 jobs have been created. Twenty-five percent of the construction jobs are held by people of color and over 17 percent by apprentices, officials said. With this influx of new labor, the DBE program is not only providing jobs now, but creating the workforce of the future. The light rail project is also bringing family-wage jobs to more of the region's residents.

By promoting a level playing field, TriMet's DBE program is the envy of other governmental jurisdictions.

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