Engineering Mega Projects – Connecting the Past with the Future

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Through a unique background growing up in the Panama Canal Zone, I witnessed the constant struggle to maintain one of the greatest civil engineering feats of the last century. Seeing the resources utilized and the never-ending maintenance of the Panama Canal, the man-made connection between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, provided a very clear view of the importance infrastructure plays in the global economy. It is through engineering that we have been able to pave the paths to overcome any obstacle and create the cities and global trade systems, as we know them. The amazing inner workings of the Canal made me decide early to become an engineer in search of ways I could be part of the team developing the solutions for tomorrow, as so many engineers have done in the past. This presentation explores the common challenges faced on three Civil Engineering Mega Projects: the construction of the original Panama Canal, The Expansion of the Panama Canal and the construction of the New Midtown Tunnel in Norfolk Virginia. The three projects differ in time, scope, and complexity; however they all present similar challenges. In each case, the decisions made by engineers led the project to success. By examining the challenges faced and lessons learned by the great engineers and builders, we will continue to develop and implement new and innovative engineering solutions to improve our future.

Dan Norman works with Elizabeth River Crossings, as the Assistant Construction Director overseeing the construction of the new $1.5 billion dollar New Midtown Tunnel Project. Prior to joining Elizabeth River Crossings, he was working on the Panama Canal Expansion. Mr. Norman has over 15 years of experience in design, construction, and project management. Mr. Norman was born and raised in the Panama Canal Zone and has spent the majority of his life living overseas. He earned his BSCE from the University of Notre Dame and an MBA from the Keller Graduate School of Management.