



On Top of the World

High-Pressure Job Demands Intense Focus

Crane operator Mike Mitre of Long Beach was recently profiled in "Pulse of the Port," the Port of Long Beach's cable television program.

Port TV

The "Pulse of the Port" program airs on Long Beach Television 8, Charter Communications, and is also available for viewing anytime on the Port's web site, www.polb.com.

Check your local cable TV listings, or the Port's website, for the latest "Pulse of the Port" features.

Not many jobs demand the concentration of a medical surgeon, the depth perception of an NFL quarterback and the steely nerves of an air traffic controller – for hours at a time while suspended 128 feet in the air. Yet that's all part of each challenging and rewarding workday for Mike Mitre, a gantry crane operator at the Port of Long Beach.

Crane operators like Mitre hold some of the most highly skilled jobs at the Port, moving dozens of enormous metal cargo containers from ship to shore and from shore to ship each hour with remarkable swiftness and pinpoint accuracy.

From a glass-enclosed crane cab perched high in the sky, Mitre, who works for Hyundai at California United Terminals, uses two high-tech joysticks to maneuver "hooks" onto each corner of a metal container before lifting it, moving it quickly across a ship's deck, and placing it perfectly into position atop a truck chassis waiting on the dock. Mitre has about two minutes to complete each highly technical maneuver. Moving 250 containers in an eight-hour shift is considered exceptional; Mitre's personal best is 330.



Intense focus and concentration are the keys to successfully operating such a gigantic piece of machinery, Mitre said. "You have to be 'in the game,' every second. I had sweaty palms the first six months I was doing the job. Eventually, though, you get used to it and the pressure doesn't really affect you."

Opportunities for Big and Small

Contracts for Small Businesses Soar at Port

The Port of Long Beach, having expanded its pool of contractors, is including more small businesses in its construction and planning jobs.

Beginning in the fall of 2004, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners approved the Port's Small Business Enterprise/Very Small Business Enterprise (SBE/VSBE) Program to diversify its contracting pool and boost the number of small businesses working on Port contracts. The first-year goal was to award 20 percent of Port contracts to small businesses, twice the percentage of the previous year.

The Port has exceeded that goal by three times, officials recently announced. More than 60 percent of construction and planning contracts, worth a total of \$17 million, were awarded to small businesses during the past fiscal year, which ended in September 2005.

"Our program is providing opportunities to all companies, big and small," said Harbor Commission President Doris Topsy-Elvord. "Bringing in a bigger pool of businesses to bid for work benefits businesses throughout our community, and it saves the Port money."

The Port has calculated potential savings of at least \$700,000 through increased use of small firms, because larger businesses may bid higher on some projects due to larger overhead costs.

As part of the SBE/VSBE program, the Port has been adding qualified businesses to

an online database so the Port, and larger firms looking for subcontractors for work at the Port, can easily contact them. The Port also conducts training forums to help small business owners participate in the SBE/VSBE program. To participate, small businesses must meet criteria similar to those set by the U.S. Small Business Administration.



Expanding the number of small businesses involved in Port contracts has meant more work for firms such as CSI Electrical.

Join the Network

Qualified businesses wishing to participate in the Small Business Enterprise/Very Small Business Enterprise Program are encouraged to register using the Port's online database, The Network.

Benefits of The Network include:

- Free participation to all businesses
- A simple application for Small Business Enterprise certification.
- Search capabilities so large companies can find qualified small firms for subcontracting projects.

The Network also gives the Port access to many small businesses registered through other agencies.

Visit www.polb.com to register.