



GEORGE E. LEVENTIS

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Negotiated in an intense political environment to help broker deals that saved Greece's multibillion-dollar roadway program.

LENDING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE TO COMPLETE GREEK ROADWAYS

George Leventis is no stranger to Olympian feats—literally. Recruited in 1998 to oversee master-planning for fast-track construction of facilities in Athens for the 2004 Olympic Games, he honed his ability to “deal with different people with different agendas and needs. At the end of the day, I had to pull things together,” he says.

That experience left him well prepared to navigate Greece's notoriously intense politics and ongoing financial crisis and help stakeholders to complete more than 1,000 kilometers of roadway throughout the country—an estimated \$10-billion program.

Leventis, managing director of U.S. design firm Langan International, has long advocated for and gained experience with construction public-private partnerships in Greece, particularly on the Rion-Antirion Bridge, completed in 2001. As director-general of the Olympics organizing committee, he brought up the idea of privatizing Olympic venues but encountered regulatory obstacles, he recalls. Leventis calls the experience “gut-wrenching, but it allowed me to become more confident in dealing with issues openly in a public forum.”

That diplomatic ability proved crucial when Langan was hired as technical adviser to Olympia Odos, one of five concessionaires striving to build or improve Greek roads to boost tourism and show P3 viability. Economic crises, both local and global, caused uneasy lenders to consider shutting off money to the consortia building the network, which would have jeopardized thousands of jobs as well as billions of dollars in investment. “George's role was very instrumental in keeping the construction going in such a harsh economic environment,” says Panayiotis Papanikolas, CEO of Olympia Odos. The project was suspended for three years and required negotiations among the concessionaire, the Greek



OLYMPIC FEAT The Olympia Odos roadway concessionaire ceased construction for two years as stakeholders hashed out new terms.

state, lenders and the construction joint venture. He says Leventis went beyond “his contractual responsibilities as technical adviser and participated in many discussions and negotiations with the state and the contractor. He managed to gain the respect and trust of all parties.”

Two years of negotiations modified the projects' scope of work and deadlines. Changes included reduced bank loans and claims, a government agreement to cede expected toll revenue and cover inflation for extended deadlines, and increased European Union contributions. It was still rough going, with austerity measures, national riots, changing governments and anti-toll sentiment. But the consortia “collaborated to keep enough money trickling in” to continue construction and complete work in 2017, recalls Leventis, adding, “What should have been about \$30 million per month in work was about \$3 million. But we kept it going.” ■

By Aileen Cho

were bits and pieces” in other standards, says McAllister.

Though the appendix gives PBSFE objectives and goals, the manual is a “how to” for structural engineers, says Maria E. Garlock, a professor of civil engineering at Princeton University. In her former role as chair of the ASCE/SEI fire-protection committee, Garlock was the catalyst for Appendix E.

“Kevin, who was then new to the committee [in 2012], emerged as the enthusiastic participant, working diligently with myself and Terri on the appendix,” says Garlock, also a manual co-author. “He then mobilized the committee for the manual of practice, which is impressive because it is all volunteer work,” she adds.

With the manual approved for publication, likely this summer, LaMalva is on to other projects to elevate PBSFE. Spreading awareness of the new standard of care tops his list. This is important to LaMalva because it is related to curtailing improper intermingling of standard fire-resistance design—using code-

prescriptive methods—and structural fire engineering to justify structural fire-protection variances. LaMalva says the variances allow the removal of fire protection from steel structures without proper structural analysis.

Next, LaMalva's aim is to revise fire-resistance-rating terminology in codes. “We seek to transition ratings to an alphabetical classification system to help dispel major misconceptions concerning the significance of hourly ratings,” he says.

Another of LaMalva's projects is code reform to incentivize the adoption of structural fire engineering for buildings with high consequences if they fail in a fire, such as buildings taller than 420 ft. But LaMalva's overarching goal is to disrupt, in a good way, a century-old mindset within structural fire protection. He says, “Our efforts are not to replace the long-standing empirical indexing method but to provide stakeholders a regulated engineered alternative.” ■

By Nadine M. Post