

## The Other Story of the San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge

by Jim Kollaer on Thu, 09/26/2013 - 1:31pm

The newest, "earthquake proof" bay bridge opened earlier this month on Labor Day to the delight of thousands of commuters in cars, on bikes and on foot who have been waiting for two decades for the new bridge to open.

An earthquake during the 1989 World Series collapsed two fifty-foot long sections of the original bridge. Commuters have been waiting over two decades for a replacement bridge that ultimately cost \$6.4 billion (5 times the original estimate). The engineers and contractors have claimed the new bridge will withstand the most severe earthquake that will likely occur over the next 1500 years, even though none of them or us will be around to monitor it.

According to Fox News, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom said: "I hope this is more than just connecting two land masses. I hope that the progress that's being represented at this moment is for a generation to dream big dreams and to do big things."



The San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge website has published the following 4-minute time-lapse [EarthCam](#) video of the bridge construction from 2008 through this year, covering more than 42,000 hours of construction.

As there often is on any project of this magnitude, there is another story on this "big build": the story of the workers who risked their lives to build this newest piece of public art and roadway. There were many construction photos taken during the construction, many from the bridge cams, but perhaps the most interesting are those taken over 15 years of construction by Joe Blum, a retired boiler-maker and welder who followed the construction crews and photographed their every move.

"His images are stunning, showing workers suspended from frightening towers, maneuvering catwalks, hanging cables," quipped Robin Young of the public radio show Here & Now. You can view a slideshow of some of his astonishing images and listen to Young's interview of Blum on the Here & Now website. We hope that you will find that his story and photographs tell the other story of the construction workers who made this incredible structure a reality.