International trade has always had its opportunities and challenges. Today, our industry moves more cargo than ever in a single voyage on the largest, most efficient ships in history. That’s a great opportunity, but it brings numerous challenges.

Our industry challenge right now? Extending big-ship efficiencies throughout a complex supply chain to ensure that every link in the chain delivers the intended benefits of this new ocean carrier business model.

As the largest container port in the U.S., we’re on the front line of this challenge. In many ways, we are ahead of the curve. We’ve done this by working with our customers over the decades, continually planning for the future and making the necessary infrastructure investments.

Looking ahead to 2015 and beyond, it’s clear that the 10,000- to 14,000-TEU vessels are becoming the workhorses of choice for the carriers we serve. By and large, we have the assets and infrastructure to accommodate them. The supply chain, however, has had less time to adjust, and the challenges associated with servicing the larger vessels are compounded by another development: new shipping alliances that are dramatically changing the dynamics of cargo flow. As a result, major ports, terminal operators and supply chain providers worldwide are examining their operations to make any necessary adjustments.

At the Port of Los Angeles, we continue to leverage our leadership position to find solutions. With goods movement more interconnected than ever, those solutions hinge on unprecedented levels of collaboration among all stakeholders. We eagerly embrace the role of bringing all parties together to overcome our shared challenges. That means we are doing everything possible right now to help our customers and supply chain partners, providing resources and solutions where we can to resolve our cargo congestion issues.

While a lot of work in this area lies ahead for us in 2015, many positive stories and trends continue to emanate from the L.A. trade gateway, and this edition of LAtitude showcases a few of them. They include Potential Industries, Inc., one of the top three U.S. exporters of recycled paper, and the superior network of near-dock cold storage facilities that protect perishables moving through our Port. We’re also spotlighting our new Berth 200 Rail Yard and the work of our award-winning Trade Connect team in educating U.S. companies about importing, exporting and how to expand into foreign markets.

On a closing note, thank you for the warm welcome I have received since my arrival at the Port of L.A. this past June. It’s an honor to serve the shipping and maritime community in this capacity and continue to play a role in propelling our industry into the future.

Sincerely,

Gene Seroka
Executive Director