

SUMMARY

In 2016, the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay (OIPCB) celebrated the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Coos Bay rail line which spans 134-miles from Coquille, OR to Eugene, OR. The rail line has been a staple of Southwest Oregon's rural economy and is not only a huge economic driver for the region but is part of the region's rich culture and history. Many community members had former relatives who worked on building the rail line or who currently work on the rail line. Thus, the Port wanted to honor the historical and cultural roots tied to the Coos Bay rail line as well as celebrate current achievements and future growth.

The Railroad Centennial was a \$100,000 project that involved the creation of an event logo, event mobile app, a Coos Bay rail historical booklet, community events, passenger train rides, opening and closing ceremonies, centennial T-shirts and hats, a legislative tour, and appearances from special guests.

Back in 1916, the community put on a three-day Railroad Jubilee event that was "the durnest celebration I ever seen," according to an attendee. Thus, the Port wanted to reflect this celebratory event in commemorating the 100th anniversary through a three-day Coos Bay Railroad Centennial event. Like the Railroad Jubilee, there would be a Coos Bay day, North Bend day, and Coos County day. There were many components and events that took place during the celebration but one of the key elements was the passenger train rides. As an exclusively freight railroad, this event gave a special opportunity for attendees to ride the Coos Bay rail line.

Overall, the event was a once in a lifetime celebration that brought the whole community together as well as raised awareness about the

Coos Bay rail line and the Port to our stakeholders and the State of Oregon. Most importantly, it solidified the Port's respect for the region's history and dedication to maintaining the Coos Bay rail line as a vital mode of transportation to the region.

I. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges the Port faced was lack of personnel to plan the event. Due to loss of staff in the beginning of the planning stages, only two staff members were available to coordinate the event, although there was significant direction from the Port's management staff. This challenge created an opportunity for the Port to reach out to community stakeholders for help in planning and organizing the event. During the event, all hands were on deck. All Port employees who could be spared helped to put on the Railroad Centennial. Port staff also organized volunteers for the event.

From a practical standpoint, the Port needed to be able to communicate all the information about the event (i.e. venues, speakers, where to buy train tickets, where to buy Rail Centennial merchandise, etc.) to potential attendees. Therefore, the Port decided on focusing mainly on digital platforms to disseminate the information by creating a mobile application just for the event. (<https://eventmobi.com/coosrail2016/>) This mobile application link and QR code was included in all advertisements for the Rail Centennial ensuring that it was the hub for information on the Railroad Centennial. Going digital not only saved money in print but also allowed the Port to disseminate information in an environmentally friendly manner.



Pictured Above: CBR passenger trains at Railroad Centennial



Pictured Above: John Burns, OIPCB CEO, and Coos Bay Mayor Shoji kicking off Coos Bay day.



Pictured Above: Coos Bay Rail Link arriving to the train stop



Pictured Above: OIPCB staff working on the planning the Railroad Centennial

Pictured Above: Coos Bay Swingspan bridge

Pictured Above: Oregon Representative Caddy McKeown kicking off North Bend day

Opportunities

From the very start, the Port of Coos Bay recognized the need to involve all the community stakeholders to help with coordinating the event, funding, and telling the story of the Coos Bay rail line. As the driving force behind the event, OIPCB needed to ensure that all community partners had the same vision for the event and believed in its success. Our partners included Coos Bay Rail Link, City of North Bend, City of Coos Bay, Coos Bay Downtown Association, South Coast Development Council, Coos County Commissioners, the Coquille and Confederated Tribes and volunteers. Transparency on the Port’s goals for this event (Part III) and frequent communication to all these partners was necessary to make the event a success. This event was an opportunity for the Port to strengthen relationships with our community stakeholders. As a result, many of these stakeholders helped put on events (Part IV) and market the Railroad Centennial.

The Port also saw the event as an opportunity to promote and create awareness about our available waterfront properties on the North Spit to potential business partners, and the Channel Modification project to our elected officials. Port staff created a business development booklet to accompany the event to be put on the USB drives that would be handed out at the annual “Coastal Economic Outlook Summit” event that

followed the Railroad Centennial. On the last day of the event, Port staff also organized a tour for our elected officials to give them a firsthand view of the Coos Bay harbor and channel. The Port understood that no matter how many times one described or provided pictures of the channel, being able to see the navigation channel in person is the most impactful way for legislators to understand how the Channel Modification project in Coos Bay will positively impact the Port and the regional economy. Finally, OIPCB aimed to draw in 2000 – 3000 attendees from throughout the state and nation to the event, adding a tourism component to the event. This provided a chance for the Port to tell the story of the Coos Bay rail line beyond county limits as well as promote the natural beauty of Oregon’s South Coast.

II. PORT MISSION

The Port’s mission is to promote sustainable development that enhances the economy of Southwest Oregon and the State. The Railroad Centennial complemented the Port’s mission because it promoted the Coos Bay rail line’s economic impact on the region and emphasized how essential it is to continue to upgrade and maintain the rail line for many years to come. This event allowed the Port to tell the story of the rail line’s history and cultural significance, how the Port acquired the line, current projects on the Coos

Bay rail line and the Port’s vision for the future of the line. This story is very important to tell on behalf of Oregon’s rural economy to the state and nation. It is also important to reaffirm to the region the Port’s commitment to the economic development of this community, which has faced many economic challenges since the fall of the timber industry. The Railroad Centennial also brought in tourists and guests from all over the state and surrounding areas which had a direct economic impact on local businesses and promoted the region to people outside the bay area.

As stated above, the Railroad Centennial allowed OIPCB to tell the story of the rail line. Sharing that story promotes the Coos Bay rail line, its history, its current customers, rail line operators, CBR and the economic impact of the line. This shows the necessity of maintaining this multi-modal transportation option to export our region’s products to the rest of the state and nation. OIPCB was also able to promote its other assets like the industrial properties on the North Spit and try to draw in potential customers for business development. The Railroad Centennial included events put on together with the cities of North Bend and Coos Bay to help promote local businesses to visitors and event attendees.

2016 Railroad Centennial: Port of Coos Bay

The event touched a variety of groups including members of the Coquille and Confederated tribes, state legislators, rail fans, tourists, the local community and local businesses. The result was a better understanding of the Port's mission and an enhanced public image of OIPCB.

III. COMMUNICATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Railroad Centennial was three-fold and are listed in order of importance below.

1 Commemorate and Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Coos Bay rail line

Objectives

- Draw 2000 attendees to the event with at least 1/3 coming from outside the region
- Create a fun and memorable event that receives positive feedback from attendees and the media
- Secure passenger train cars for passenger rides along the Coos Bay rail line

2 Honor the history of the Coos Bay rail line and the community that has ensured its vitality for 100 years and highlight the role of the Port in the rail line's recent history

Objectives

- Reflect the Railroad Jubilee held in 1916 and communicate the historical significance of that event and the completion of the Coos Bay rail line
- Work with local historians to create a historical booklet about the Coos Bay rail line to be handed out on train rides
- Tell the story of the Port's role in acquiring and rehabilitating the Coos Bay rail line, current operations and projects on the line, and OIPCB's future vision for the line

3 Benefit and support the local economy by raising awareness for local businesses and Oregon's South Coast region

Objectives

- Involve multiple stakeholders and businesses in the community to put on events in conjunction with the train rides that will draw attendees to explore the whole bay area
- Promote the event effectively through a targeted marketing mix of both print and digital marketing
- Connect and strengthen relationships with the local businesses and community stakeholders

4 Highlight the Port's role in the region's economy, its commitment to the future vitality of the rail line, and enhance public perception of the Port

Objectives

- Tie in with the annual Coastal Economic Summit following the Railroad Centennial event to promote the Port's three business lines and the developable properties available
- Reach out to elected officials to attend and/or speak at the event
- Answer the question "What does the Port do exactly?" (a common question) by promoting the Port's facility and operations during the event

Target Audiences

Primary Audience: General Public
Secondary: Community Stakeholders and Businesses, Elected Officials
Tertiary: the Media



Pictured Above: First Coos Bay rail line train in 1916 leaving North Bend for Eugene. (Coos History Museum)



Pictured Above: Congressman Peter DeFazio speaking at the Opening Ceremony

2016 Railroad Centennial: Port of Coos Bay

IV. STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Strategies:

- Engage the community to make this not only a port event but a community event
- Focus majority of Railroad Centennial marketing outside of Coos County
- Rely strongly on digital means to communicate and disseminate information about the event

February, 2016

OIPCB started to reach out to various community groups and stakeholders to solicit help in planning and funding the Railroad Centennial. Many groups were involved initially but key contributors were Coos Bay Rail Link, the Coos History Museum, the City of North Bend, the City of Coos Bay, Coos County, the City of Coos Bay Downtown Association (CBDA) and the South Coast Development Council. The External Affairs (EA) department consisting of initially three employees put together a marketing plan and budget for the event. Coos Bay Rail Link was tasked with handling the logistics of obtaining passenger cars for the event.

March, 2016

OIPCB involved the community for selecting a 100th Anniversary Logo through social media and e-mail blasts. OIPCB sent out three logos designed in-house which the com-

munity voted on through Facebook or by e-mailing the EA department. The logo with the most votes became the official logo of the centennial celebration as seen on the right or left. This logo was used on all Railroad Centennial print and digital material moving forward.

OIPCB decided to plan the event reflecting the Railroad Jubilee held in 1916 with a North Bend Day, Coos Bay Day, and Coos County day. Community partners were tasked with coming up with events in conjunction with the train rides on their perspective days. The City of North Bend organized a Centennial Stroll and provided ice cream for all event attendees. The Coos County Commissioners organized Sawdust Theatre performances for the train rides. The CBDA organized a Choo Choo "Selfie" Scavenger Hunt and a Music Train event. The Coos History museum provided educational events such as Centennial Hands On and A History of Coos County Railroads presentation.

April, 2016

It was a month of design. OIPCB worked with BNT promotions to complete designs for the Railroad Centennial merchandise which included t-shirts, hats, USB drives and water bottles. OIPCB started to carry out the marketing plan which meant scheduling ads, press releases, and media appearances and designing promotional material.

May, 2016

EA staff worked with local history "gurus", Steve Greif and Martin Callery, to complete a narrative on the history of the Coos Bay rail line. A Railroad Centennial historical booklet was then designed in house. This booklet was passed out to every passenger on the train rides and to event attendees. It was also included in the USB drives distributed at the Coastal Economic Summit. Business Development booklets were also designed inhouse and included on the USB drives.

Due to inspiration from New York City's Post-It Wars on Canal Street in 2016, OIPCB decided to challenge local downtown businesses to a post-it war. The Port Administration office is located in downtown Coos Bay so it was a fun way to engage businesses in the Railroad Centennial as well as provide marketing along Highway 101 for the event. A total of four other businesses participated in the event and some windows were truly works of post-it art.

June, 2016

Digital means were a primary mechanism for disseminating information about the event. OIPCB began working on an event app with Eventmobi. This app contained the event agenda, maps, speakers, and attendee profiles and was available for download in the app store or accessed online.



Pictured Above: Railroad Centennial merchandise, T-shirts and hats



Pictured Above: One of the musical performances for the Music Train event



Pictured Above: Passengers enjoying the train ride along the Coos Bay rail line

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OIPCB also started setting up online ticket sales through Eventbrite. Two years ago, OIPCB gave away train tickets for passenger train rides through first come, first serve. However, this caused extremely long lines and waits. Selling tickets online not only allowed customers to avoid long lines, it allowed OIPCB staff to answer customer questions, save time, and recoup some passenger train transport costs. Train tickets were \$10 and there were three train rides per day.

OIPCB also decided to donate 200 tickets to the Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA) Head Start program. Head Start is a program for children and pregnant women that come from lower income families. Seeing these children so excited for train rides during the Centennial provided some of the most heartwarming moments of the events.

Two huge events during the event also included the Opening and Closing Ceremony to kickoff and conclude the event. OIPCB reached out to speakers who advocated or are impacted by the Coos Bay rail line on a regional, state and federal level. Special speakers included Congressman Peter DeFazio and Senator Ron Wyden. One of the biggest surprises of the event was the unveiling of the "Peter De Fazio" locomotive at the Opening Ceremony due to Congressman De Fazio's relentless advocacy for the vitality of the rail line.

July 2016

Once everything was finalized, a press release was sent out to all the local and state media outlets and tickets went on sale.

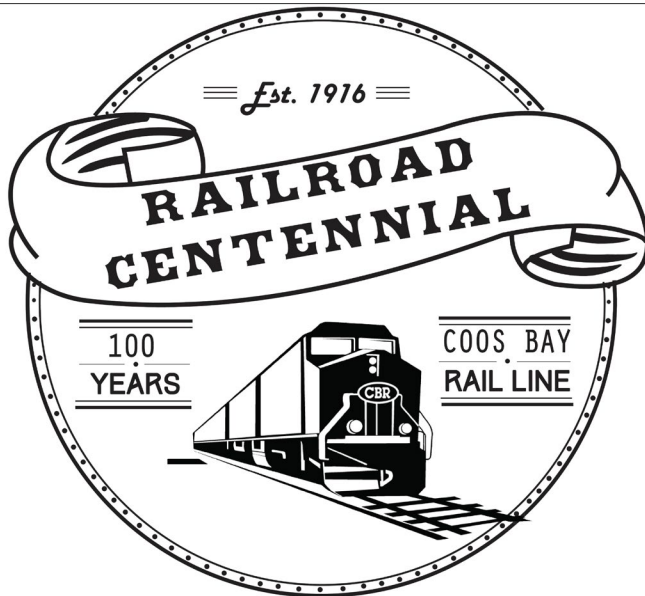
The hashtag #choochoocoos was created for the event so that attendees could tag the Port in social

media posts and pictures.

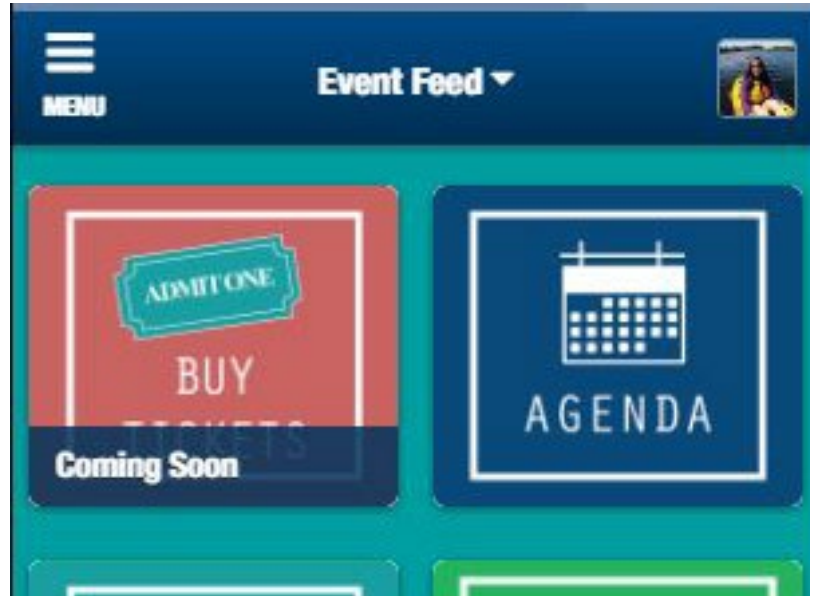
OIPCB also coordinated and trained about 100 volunteers for the event. Volunteer positions included on-board assistants, ticket takers, and crowd control. All volunteers were briefed before the event so they could answer all attendee questions and most importantly, ensure the safety of the attendees.

August 2016

At 7 PM the day before the event, OIPCB staff was notified that the first train would be late. OIPCB staff had to notify all customers on the first train ride that their rides had to be moved to a later time. Despite the hiccup, the event kicked off at 10 AM on August 5th with North Bend Day. It continued until August 7th ending with a Closing Ceremony. A full schedule of events can be accessed on <https://eventmobi.com/coos-rail2016>.



Pictured Above: Official Railroad Centennial Logo



Pictured Above: Railroad Centennial event app home page





Pictured Above: So-It-Goes Coffeehouse illustrated Marilyn Monroe by Post-It notes as part of the Coos Bay downtown Post-It Wars

IV. EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

This was the first time current Port staff had planned such a big event so there were definitely challenges and hiccups made along the way. However, overall the event was a success. Train tickets sold out so event attendance was at least 2000 attendees. Based on the data, most event attendees used the mobile app to access information about the event. (Table 1) The data indicates that the majority of users opted for the mobile app and probably used it throughout the event as a resource for information based on the high number of page views.

In addition, the weeks leading up to the event and during the event, there was increased social media (Table 2) and website (Table 3) reach and engagement. During this period, the Port increased our Facebook followers by about 200 people. OIPCB also received positive feedback on social media and by word of mouth. (Figure 1)

Table 1: APP Data from August 3-9, 2016

Unique Visitors	Page Views	Mobile Users	Web Users
1247	11894	70%	30%

Table 2: Port Facebook Reach

Week	Page Likes	Total Post Reach	Engagement	Ad Dollars
July 1-11	1216	4339	2252	\$10
July 12-18	1224	4195	226	\$10
July 21-27	1336	27427	4014	\$20
July 28-Aug 3	1404	18170	1131	\$20
Aug 4-9	1424	6249	1051	\$8

Figure 1: Facebook Reviews



Ken Parks reviewed Port of Coos Bay — 5★
August 8, 2016 · 🌐

We had a wonderful time riding the Saturday morning train. Great PR. Let's do it again next year. Thanks.



Kyle Stockman reviewed Port of Coos Bay — 5★
August 6, 2016 · 🌐

Had an awesome day on the train your crew and staff are very welcoming and hospitable I hope you can do more train rides in the future. I'll definitely be back. Thanks again everyone.

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Table 3: Port Website Reach

July 4 - 10	768
July 11 - 17	625
July 18 - 26	968
July 17 - Aug 3	1283
Aug 4 - 9	1347
Aug 10 - 16	508
Aug 18 - 23	453
Aug 24 - 29	560

OIPCB uses the Meltwater software to track media and monitor campaigns. Online and in print, there were about 40 articles written about the Railroad Centennial with a potential reach of 7 million people. (Figure 2) Originally, Meltwater said there was a potential reach of 20

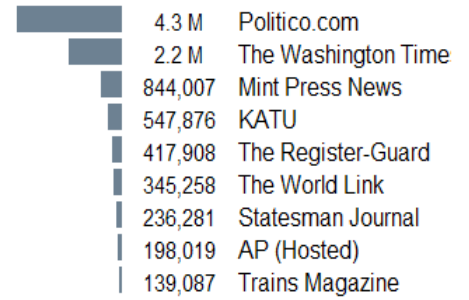
million people but OIPCB suspected an overestimation. The majority of the reach came from a Bloomberg article which mainly focused on the FASTLANE grant. Thus, we discounted this from our data.

Most of these articles were neutral talking about the Railroad Centennial celebration and what the event entailed. Many articles tied in the Railroad Centennial with the \$11 Million FASTLANE grant that the Port received earlier in 2016. The naming of the "Peter De Fazio" locomotive was also a hot topic.

The Railroad Centennial drew in a variety of attendees including local community members, local Tribe members, elected officials, rail fans,

business partners, and Oregon Coast tourists. With OIPCB as the leader, the Railroad Centennial was truly an event put on by the whole community and gave all of us a platform to tell the historically significant and ongoing story of the Coos Bay rail line.

Figure 2: Top 9 Publications by Reach



Pictured Above: Kids participating in "Centennial Hands On" at the Coos History Museum



Pictured Above: Families enjoying the passenger rides during the Railroad Centennial



Pictured Above: Oregon Congressman Peter DeFazio with OIPCB CEO, John Burns, and ARG Transportation President, Scott Parkinson after the unveiling of "The Peter DeFazio" locomotive