

AAPA 2017 AWARD SUBMISSION
Community/ Educational Outreach Category
Port of Gulfport Job Awareness and Preparedness Workshops

Summary of Entry:

In exchange for \$568 million in Katrina Disaster Recovery funds from the US Housing and Urban Development, the Port of Gulfport is required to create and fill 1,300 new jobs within 3 years of the end of restoration construction. In addition, the HUD statute requires that we “make available to the greatest extent feasible to low and moderate income persons 51% of the jobs created.”

The Port of Gulfport Job Awareness and Preparedness workshops were developed and implemented along Mississippi’s Gulf Coast to educate and inform local residents about the types of future jobs coming to the Port of Gulfport. The workshops included a construction update, Port tenant overview, types of jobs, education and training needed for the jobs, security requirements, and resources to help get them ready. We wanted job seekers to know far in advance of the coming jobs - what actions they could personally take now to get ready for the upcoming jobs.

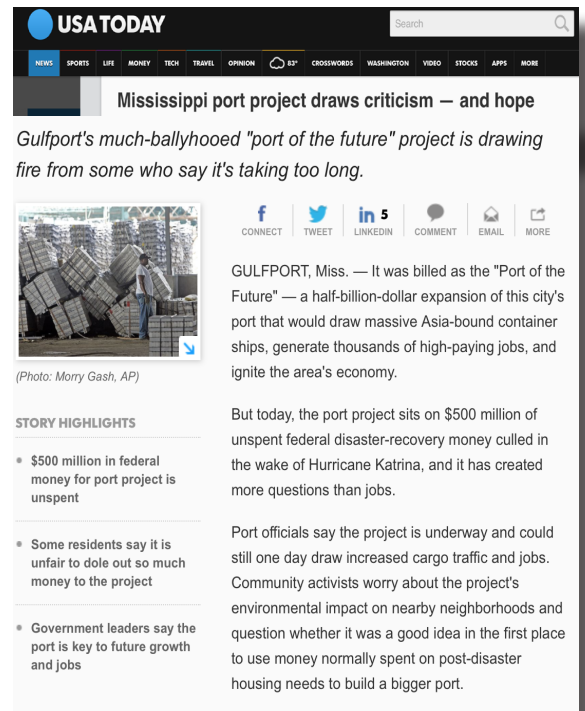
1. Communication Challenges or Opportunities

Describe specific and measurable terms to the situation leading up to the creation of this entry.

Hurricane Katrina’s fury hit land fall on the Mississippi Gulf Coast on August 30, 2015 leaving the Port of Gulfport and the surrounding communities devastated economically and emotionally by its tremendous force.

In our re-building efforts the Port of Gulfport has faced multiple challenges – lawsuits, design changes and even nesting lease terns on its way to planning, and implementing a \$568 million restoration project. The Port undertook an aggressive effort to not only re-build its original footprint but to modernize the Port into a future economic engine for Gulfport and the entire state of Mississippi.

Due to the numerous challenges that slowed our initial progress – the Port suffered a significant reputation problem with the local residents and communities in regards to actually creating and filling the promised jobs. Although we had attracted and retained long – term leases from new and existing tenants -nearly a decade after the storm only a handful of jobs had actually been filled.



External factors to be addressed included:

- The Port's poor reputation in the community regarding job creation
- Local residents' anxiety about the types of future jobs and the job requirements
- Inconsistent communication from the Port about the overall status of the restoration project

Internal Factors to be addressed:

- Developed a comprehensive strategic plan to build and prepare our future workforce
- Realigned Port resources to focus on the community outreach challenges. The
- challenges of planning and implementing the \$568 million restoration project had been consuming most of the Port's energy and resources. We needed to make community outreach a priority.

2. Mission

The Port of Gulfport's mission is: "Committed to providing world-class maritime service to our customers and facilitating economic growth and good jobs for the people of Mississippi."

In order to assure fulfilling our mission of "good jobs for the people of Mississippi" we have taken seriously our obligation to frequently engage with the public to educate and inform them of the good jobs we are creating at the Port of Gulfport.

The depth and breadth of our strategy, tactics, and materials development for the Job Awareness and Preparedness workshop has given confidence to all of our stakeholders that we are fully committed to make good on accomplishing our goals and obligations.

3. Communications Planning and Programming Components

The goal of the Job Awareness and Preparedness workshops was to create an awareness and confidence about the future job opportunities at the Port of Gulfport and how local Low/Moderate income residents can personally prepare for those job opportunities as they become available.

Our main objective was to hold numerous public workshops targeting local low/moderate income residents. We held workshops in a variety of locations across the coast and at different times of day so that time and space would not be an obstacle in attending. The workshops have been held in public libraries, churches, WIN Job Centers, homeless shelters and community centers. We chose these locations as they were often the places that our target offices were and/or were they were already receiving services. Public transportation also serves the locations where we held workshops.

Another objective was to develop ongoing and robust partnerships with local non-profit organizations, community leaders and local/state government entities. These partnerships would help lay the groundwork for this and future efforts to achieve our goal of filling the 1,300 jobs. To date we are working with 60+ partners on a regular basis which includes local housing authorities, homeless shelters, job training programs, local/state entities, civic and religious organizations.

Key Publics:

Primary Audience: Working age (18-65 years old) Low/moderate job seekers residing on the Mississippi's Gulf Coast

Secondary Audience: Gulf Coast non-profit organizations, community leaders and governmental agencies that serve and/or represent Non Low/moderate job seekers residing on Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

Tertiary: Working age (18-65 years old) general public active and passive job seekers

4. Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Employed

The Port of Gulfport held 36 public workshops in Mississippi's 3 coastal communities that were the most impacted by Hurricane Katrina. We held 15 additional workshops at partner facilities to assist them in promoting and supporting our efforts as many of them serve similar populations.

We utilized a variety of communication outputs with the implementation of the workshops:

- Interviews on local news programs – links here:
<http://wxxv25.com/2016/04/19/port-offering-job-preparedness-workshop/>
<http://www.wlox.com/story/31153261/port-of-gulfport-to-host-job-preparedness-workshops>
- Facebook posts on the Port's Facebook page
- Monthly ads in the local newspapers
- Emails to community partners to help spread the word
- A video that showed what the Port of Gulfport will look like completed and discussed the job opportunities
- Workshop postings on our website
- Multiple one on one meetings to educate, inform and recruit community partners
- CEO presentations to civic and community groups

Strategies:

- Collaborate with community members, specifically individuals and organizations that serve similar populations and have a common interest in workforce development.
- Identify locations that were frequented by low/moderate income residents in the community
- Provide resources – flyers, detailed information about the agenda for partners and interested non partner community members to share about the workshops.

PORT OF GULFPORT
Job Awareness and Preparedness Workshops

Residents of the three Coastal Counties are invited to learn more about how to prepare for future job opportunities at the Port of Gulfport. Topics will include an update on the Port Restoration Program, future training opportunities, and the types of anticipated jobs and their requirements.

Saturday, May 7, 2016 9:30am - 11:30am Margaret Sherry Library 2141 Poppa Ferry Rd., Biloxi, MS	Tuesday, May 10, 2016 5:00pm - 6:45pm Orange Grove Public Library 12135 Old HWY 49, Gulfport, MS	Wednesday, May 11, 2016 5:00pm - 7:00pm Ocean Springs Library 525 Dewey Ave., Ocean Springs, MS
Monday, May 16, 2016 2:30pm - 4:30pm Bay St. Louis Library HWY 90, Bay St. Louis, MS	Tuesday, May 17, 2016 5:00pm - 7:00pm Good Deeds Community Center 15101 Madison St., Gulfport, MS	

RSVP BY CALLING 228-865-4300 OR EMAIL HFOUNTAIN@SHIPMSPA.COM.

SECTION 3 REQUIRES THAT WHEN EMPLOYMENT OR CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES ARE GENERATED BY HUD-FUNDED PROJECTS, PREFERENCE IS GIVEN TO LOW MODERATE INCOME PERSONS AND BUSINESSES RESIDING IN THE COMMUNITY WHERE THE PROJECT IS LOCATED.

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Tactics:

- Finalized agenda topics
- Developed Power Point presentation and supporting “resource packet” materials
- Confirmed dates and locations of the workshops
- Created workshop flyer
- Created ad for local newspapers
- Created and distributed Media Alert to local media outlets: Television, print and online
- Workshop flyer was posted on www.shipmspa.com homepage
- Distributed the workshop flyer to 66 community partners, local elected officials in the three coastal counties and 32 Port employees
- Created Facebook Event pages for the workshops
- Shared workshop info on Facebook and Twitter
- Posted flyers at each workshop location prior to the workshop
- Developed script for Port receptionist to answer questions for residents who were registering for the workshop
- Determined refreshment needs for each workshop
- Developed sign-in sheet that would help us track who attended the workshops. This would allow us to develop a database to use for communicating with them in the future about upcoming events, job openings, progress, etc.
- Had participants complete HUD income guideline forms to determine their low/moderate income eligibility
- Developed a video with the dual purpose of business development and community outreach so that they could visualize what the Port would look like when it was fully operational.

Timeline, staffing and outsourcing:

- May 2015 – Developed pilot workshop agenda and resource materials
- July 2015 – Held pilot workshops in coordination with the NAACP to test the concept
- August 2015 – Revised workshop agenda and resource materials based on participant feedback at the sessions
- September 2015 to December 2016 - Held 36 Job Awareness and Preparedness public workshops and 15 partner workshops
- The workshops were staffed by the Port’s Director of External Affairs who is also responsible for our workforce development efforts, a Port administrative assistant and a part-time workforce development coordinator. The Port’s Marketing/Media Manager also attended several of the initial workshops to address the media, and help coordinate the overall logistics.
- The Marketing and Media manager developed all of the workshop and resource materials in coordination with the Director of External Affairs.
- The budget for the workshops included:
 - Over- time wages for the administrative assistant and \$170 per workshop for the workforce coordinator.
 - Newspaper ads for the workshops of average of \$4,000 per month
 - Refreshments for the workshops which averaged approximately \$50 per session
 - Salaried Port staffs were not compensated financially or with comp time in implementing this community outreach effort.



5. Communication Outcomes and Evaluation

Meeting our obligation to our federal funder's in creating and filling the 1,300 jobs within three years from the end of construction is and will be the primary evaluation for the success of this entry and the Port's ultimate test.

Our efforts are beginning to pay off:

To date over 850 coastal county residents have attended a Job Awareness and Preparedness workshop and 41% of attendees have identified themselves as being low/moderate income as defined by HUD.

Results to date – We have filled 427 of the 1,300 jobs with 72% of the hires being low/moderately income with approximately four years remaining to achieve our goal.

Other examples of the progress we are making in communicating about our work with various stakeholders.

In March 2016, on the day the new gantry cranes were being delivered from China, a worker was driving by on a fork truck and was waving enthusiastically. Although we thought he wanted us to get out of the way – he drove up to scream – “hey remember me – I went to your workshop and look at me I got a job at the Port!”

Local residents and workshop participants call on an average of 11 calls a week inquiring about job opportunities. Many of the folks calling are referred to Port staff by a friend or family member who attended one the workshops. They are calling to check in to see if there are any updates, and want to remind the staff of their interest in coming to work at the Port. Prior to the workshops, calls from residents were almost non-existent.

The Port of Gulfport went from having virtually no community partners to over 60+ today. Since we began the workshops the Port has also won multiple Business Partner of the Year awards. In addition, community members who previously had gone on record saying they would never work with the Port on anything, have since become very engaged in supporting our efforts and even asked Port staff to join their respective boards.