



2017 AAPA Communications Award Program

Entry Classification: Miscellaneous

Title: 1 Great Region, 3 Great Ports

### **Summary – 1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports.**

The Port of Vancouver USA is one of three public ports in Clark County, Washington. We are an economic driver for our community and region. Our most recent economic impact study shows we provide an annual economic benefit of \$2.9 billion to our local economy. That impact is even greater when combined with our other two ports. Clark County's three ports – Vancouver, Ridgefield and Camas-Washougal have partnered to market our region to potential tenants, build community awareness of our local economic benefit and create a joint legislative agenda to communicate a unified message to our elected officials. Led by the Port of Vancouver USA, this campaign communicates to our community and the world that we are “1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports.” This ongoing effort began at a public-private partnership conference in February 2015, and was highlighted last year by our Partnership commercial.

### **1. Communications Challenges and Opportunities**

Southwest Washington has much to offer businesses and industry in terms of regional assets. As part of the Portland Metro Area, Clark County often gets overshadowed by Portland when it comes to marketing our community to businesses on the move. While most people outside of our region are familiar with Portland, Oregon, few can locate Vancouver, Ridgefield or Camas-Washougal on a map. Further complicating matters is that people often confuse Vancouver, Washington, with Vancouver, B.C.

In 2015 the leadership of Clark County's three ports and Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) recognized the benefit of joining forces to market Southwest Washington, making us more competitive in attracting businesses to our area with the benefit of being near a major U.S. city.

The national 2015 Public Private Partnership Conference in Dallas, Texas, provided an opportunity for the three ports and CREDC to partner together in marketing our region. Our ports offer hundreds of acres of available land, connections to international trade and a business-friendly tax structure. Our region also boasts our outstanding educational institutions, access to river, road, and rail as well as world-class recreational activities.

The three ports and CREDC created a brochure for the Dallas conference and had a trade show booth with the tagline “1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports.” And as featured speakers at the conference, we presented our three ports message.

Following Dallas, the three ports message was well received by our commissioners, and “1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports.” was beginning to resonate in the community. We realized there were more opportunities and ways to promote our three ports message.



*Port of Vancouver  
USA CEO Todd  
Coleman speaks at  
the P3 Conference*

In February 2016, we contracted with Riley Research Associates to perform a district-wide survey of 450 registered voters in the port district. The survey showed that only 5 percent of those surveyed associated economic development with the port, and only 3 percent listed jobs or employment as one of the port’s primary activities. Yet the Port of Vancouver alone provides \$2.9 billion in annual, regional economic benefit. More than 3,200 people report to work at the port each day, and port activities support more than 20,200 jobs in our community. We recognized a great three ports partnership opportunity to communicate our economic benefit, so we produced and aired a “1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports.” commercial that we named “Partnership.”

After many years of visiting our state capitol as independent ports, we discovered we could be more effective and deliver a unified message to our state legislative delegation by presenting a joint, three ports legislative agenda. In 2016 and again this year, we partnered with the ports of Ridgefield and Camas-Washougal to produce a brochure with our joint legislative priorities.

## **2. Complement to Overall Mission**

The Port of Vancouver USA’s mission is to provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and waterfront development. The initial three ports brochure and tradeshow in Dallas were designed to attract businesses to our area, thereby contributing to the economic benefit we provide to our community.

Our Partnership commercial complements our mission by emphasizing how our three ports are connecting our community to global commerce and drive our local economy. Our economic benefit of \$2.9 billion is highlighted in this spot. The images show people at work at our ports and in the community, as well as marine, industrial and waterfront activity.

Our legislative priorities brochure is designed aid our efforts in getting legislative support to carry out our mission. We also use the brochure to highlight the jobs and economic benefit our three ports provide.



*3 Ports CEOs (left to right): Brent Grening, Ridgefield; Todd Coleman, Vancouver; David Ripp, Camas-Washougal*

### 3. Planning and Programming Components

Our goals for this effort were to:

- Jointly market Clark County and our three ports to attract businesses to our region.
- Present a joint legislative agenda to demonstrate solidarity, partnership and shared legislative priorities to our elected officials.
- Present a unified message to our elected officials that Clark County's three ports are an economic driver in our region.
- Create community awareness of local impact our three ports have as an economic driver.

In coordination with our sales team and partner ports, our External Affairs team put together roll up banners, a three ports brochure, tradeshow booth and PowerPoint presentation for our marketing efforts. This accomplished our joint marketing goal. Feedback from tradeshow attendees to our partners in the community and CREDC were very positive.

Our state senators and representatives continue to praise our joint legislative agenda and regularly talk about the positive impression our efforts in Olympia have made. Our goal was to unify our message for greater effectiveness and impact, which we have by all accounts accomplished in the minds of our state legislators.

*"Clark County's ports send a powerful message when they speak in unified voice. In a time when things seem to be so divisive, our ports' one great region, three great ports message and agenda stands out as an example of what we can do when we work together. I think I can safely speak for the entire Clark County legislative delegation in saying that we are extremely impressed by what our ports are doing through their partnership and the economic benefit they bring to our community."*

*-Representative Brandon Vick, 18<sup>th</sup> District*

Our community survey showed that most registered voters in our port districts know very little about their port. While this effort began as a marketing tool, the community became our primary audience, with potential customers as a secondary audience, as we saw a

tremendous opportunity to build community awareness of the importance of ports and the jobs and economic benefit they bring to the community.

We wanted to reach as many people possible in our community and found that television advertising on Comcast cable would provide our greatest reach. With a market share of more than 55% in Clark County, running our Partnership commercial on Comcast was an effective method in helping us hit our milestone of reaching the community. This provided us with 229,118 impressions per month with our cable spots reaching an impressive 96% of Comcast subscribers. Other delivery methods included public meetings, Board of Commissioners meetings, community events, social media, YouTube and our website.

**4. Actions Taken and Communication Outputs** This partnership project required collaboration between our three ports and the CREDC. We developed marketing and presentation materials for the Dallas tradeshow and conference. Leadership of the three



ports met regularly to develop our joint legislative agenda and legislative brochure. We continue to meet monthly to discuss partnership opportunities.

*3 Ports trade show booth at P3 Conference in Dallas, Texas*

For the Partnership commercial, we worked with our marketing firm – Grady Britton – to shoot the video and schedule the Comcast slots. We promoted the ad through a news release to local media, social

media platforms, and shared it at our public Board of Commissioners meetings and at community events we sponsored.

The port used the 1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports messaging throughout 2015. In December, 2015, commissioners from all three ports directed staff to collaborate on the joint legislative agenda for the 2016 session. In the fall of 2016, commissioners directed staff to work together on a joint legislative agenda for the 2017 session. Our Partnership commercial was produced in early 2016 and ran on Comcast cable from March 2016 through December 2016.

## **5. Outcomes and Evaluation Methods**

In February 2017, the port performed another community survey that showed a higher percentage of people were familiar with the port compared to results from the 2016 survey. Our elected officials continue to provide positive feedback about our joint legislative efforts

and often say our tagline of “1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports.” before we have an opportunity to say it.

Throughout 2016 community members would frequently let us know they saw our Partnership commercial on TV. We shared the Partnership commercial at the 2016 Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Dinner and it was received with great applause and excitement. Without exception, the feedback on our 1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports efforts has been positive.

We have seen tremendous success sharing news about our partnership on our social media accounts; 1 Great Region. 3 Great Ports and Partnership posts have been some of our most popular to date across all platforms.

### Social media outcomes

- In just the last six months, we’ve shared several updates on Twitter, reaching 5,057 people and receiving 148 engagements, giving us an engagement rate of 2.92 percent.
- Facebook continues to be our highest-performing platform for this kind of news. With just four posts over the last six months, we have reached 9,854 people and received 1,853 engagements, giving us an outstanding engagement rate of 18.8 percent.

We are also seeing success in marketing our region as three ports, communicating a powerful unified message to our elected officials as it related to the regional impact of our three ports, and success in communicating our message of job creation and economic benefit to the citizens of our community. CREDC President Mike Bomar recently said:

*“The ‘One Great Region, 3 Great Ports’ campaign was both a fun and powerful demonstration of our community’s reputation for partnering to leverage greater opportunity. It wasn’t just a superior marketing tool for the ports, it was a benefit to all the economic development partners in the region and an inspiration for many other entities who saw the benefits of coming together to reach our common goals.”*

We couldn’t have said it better ourselves.



## Supporting Documents

- Partnership :30 commercial - <https://youtu.be/9hyPU5leS2U>
- CREDC news release: [www.portvanusa.com/econ-development/credc-clark-county-ports-credc-present-national-public-private-partnership-conference/](http://www.portvanusa.com/econ-development/credc-clark-county-ports-credc-present-national-public-private-partnership-conference/)
- The P3 Conference:
  - <http://thep3conference.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/P3C-2015-Program.pdf>
  - <http://thep3conference.com/speakers/2015/>
  - <http://thep3conference.com/speakers/todd-coleman/>
- P3 PowerPoint presentation (see attached)
- Joint legislative agenda (see attached)
- Brochure (see attached)