



VIRGINIA PORT AUTHORITY

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## **AAPA Communications Awards Submission**

### **Category: Special Events**

**Summary of Entry:** In an effort to recognize and thank our port truck driving community during National Truck Driver Appreciation Week (Sept 10 – 16), we set up times at each of our six terminals to personally thank over 1,000 motor carriers and provide them with refreshments and a branded “goodie” bag.

### **1. What are/were the entry’s specific communications challenges or opportunities?**

60% of the overall volume handled by The Port of Virginia is handled by motor carriers.

We wanted to use the already-existing National Truck Driver Appreciation Week as a way to take time and personally thank them for their hard work as we continue to handle record volumes, and do so more safely, swiftly and sustainably than ever before.

We wanted to find a way to thank drivers at each of our facilities – not just our two largest container terminals. Additionally, we wanted to find a way to do so that did not interfere with the operations at our terminal or put anyone in harm’s way.

The opportunity was to show appreciation to the motor carrier community and share that admiration and appreciation with our colleagues and social media audiences.

### **2. How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization’s overall mission?**

The Port of Virginia’s mission is as follows:

*Guided by our company values, The Port of Virginia will achieve our shared vision of operational excellence, fiscal responsibility, and sustainable growth. Above all, we will remain responsible members of the communities we serve, a valuable resource to our customers, an excellent place to work, and an economic engine for the region.*

This week-long event highlighted our commitment to our community.

**3. What were the communications planning and programming components used for this entry?**

Our Director of Internal and Partner Communications as well as our Area Manager of Mid-Atlantic Sales acted as project leads for this effort. Further, we engaged the port's Volunteer Council to help with the bag stuffing efforts.

In terms of communications, we shared images of the efforts across all social media platforms. Additionally, we sent a "thank you, motor carriers" text through our Motor Carrier Notification Network, and placed digital "Thank You, Motor Carriers" signs at the entrances of our terminals as well.

**4. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were employed in this entry?**

In an effort to recognize and thank our port truck driving community, we undertook the following initiatives:

- "THANK YOU" messages on social media and on digital signs located at VIG and NIT
- Assembled more than 1,000 gift bags (Volunteer Council) containing a water bottle, a Port of Virginia "koozie," a branded bag of peanuts and a card

containing contact details for the Customer Service Team and instructions to register for the text notification system

- Collaborated with Operations, Port Police/Securitas and the Safety Teams to determine the best times and locations to interact with port drivers
- Handed out hundreds of safety vests, and a limited supply of branded baseball caps and winter stocking caps, from the port's Health & Safety Team

### **Tuesday morning, September 13 – Norfolk International Terminals**

With support from the Port Police and Maintenance, we established a position east of the final outbound checkpoint, in proximity to Commonwealth Ave.

- From 0900 – 1130, approximately 250-300 individual gift bags were distributed to drivers, along with an undetermined number of safety vests and hats
- Chief Sales Officer Tom Capozzi took the lead from 0900 – 1000 (Director of Internal and Partner Communications Greg Edwards in support), with Edwards handling the 1000 – 1130 slot alone

### **Wednesday morning, September 14 – Portsmouth Marine Terminal**

With prior approval from Ops and Police/Securitas, we established a position under the outbound canopy, using the pedestal beyond the security booth

- From 0900 – 1130, approximately 150-200 individual gifts bags were distributed to drivers, along with an undetermined number of safety vests and hats
- Area Manager of Mid-Atlantic Sales Kara Matzko took the lead, with Edwards in support

## **Thursday morning, September 15 – Virginia International Gateway**

With support from Securitas and Maintenance, we established a position at the outbound lanes, adjacent to the Drivers' Assistance building

- From 0830 – 1130, approximately 300 individual gifts bags were distributed to drivers, along with an undetermined number of safety vests and hats (highest volume of the week)
- Chief Innovation Officer Joe Ruddy and Kara Matzko shared driver greeting duties from 0900 – 1000, with Capozzi taking over for Ruddy from 1000 – 1130 (Edwards in support)

## **Newport News Marine Terminal, Richmond Marine Terminal, and Virginia**

**Inland Port** Approximately 50 – 100 gift bags were delivered to each terminal and distributed by security personnel at the truck gates.

### **5. What were the communications outcomes from this entry and what evaluation methods were used to assess them?**

Nearly 80 new subscribers have joined the Text Notification System since August 15, with the majority of those joining in the last two weeks (“How To” card in the gift bag) Social media promotion was highly successful, with Facebook as the primary platform.

#### **Facebook:**

- 204,388 people reached
- 92,302 video views

- 92,118 post engagements
- 45 new Port of Virginia Facebook page “likes”