

PORT OF GREEN BAY

ICE BREAKING AWARENESS OUTREACH



ATTENTION

If you fish, operate a snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle or otherwise recreate on the bay of Green Bay during periods of ice cover, please be aware!

**SHIPPING CHANNELS WILL
STAY OPEN THROUGHOUT
JANUARY 2018**

SUMMARY

The Port of Green Bay is the western-most port of Lake Michigan offering the shortest, most direct route for shipments between the Midwest and the rest of the world. As a critical link in Wisconsin's transportation system, the Port serves as a multi-modal distribution center connecting waterborne vessels with an extensive network of highways and railroads.

When a major fuel pipeline between Milwaukee and Northeast Wisconsin shut down permanently, the Port of Green Bay became a key link in the supply chain in order to move the critical cargo. To keep shipping channels open for transport, throughout the winter months when the Port was usually closed, the U.S. Coast Guard conducted ongoing ice breaking.

In turn, this created a need for community outreach about the ice breaking activities to ensure the safety of affected stakeholders; in particular outdoor recreationalists such as snowmobilers and ice fishermen/women. The Port of Green Bay developed and implemented a strategic awareness and educational outreach campaign to accomplish this goal. The result was significant media attention, public awareness and most importantly, public safety.



PORT OF GREEN BAY

ICE BREAKING AWARENESS OUTREACH

1) CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The sub-zero temperatures of December 2017 and January 2018 had an impact on cities across the country. For Northeast Wisconsin, the impact was ice buildup in an important shipping channel. While the bay of Green Bay freezes over every year, the ice cover on Lake Michigan peaked higher in January than it did at any point in 2017. This created some unique challenges for imports of critical cargo.

The first challenge was the unusual, and critical, shortage of fuel. The only fuel pipeline connecting a large part of northeast Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to major fuel suppliers in Milwaukee was shut down in the summer of 2016, which created an immediate need to bring in fuel supplies through shipping. When the fuel pipeline was shut down permanently in 2017, the need to import petroleum was critical to ensure business, commerce and residents were able to access the petroleum products they needed. That necessitated bringing in those products via shipping.

The second challenge caused by freezing weather was also transportation related; but this challenge was related to vehicles heading out onto icy roads. Each year, all of the road salt for northeastern Wisconsin and parts of central Wisconsin is shipped in through the Port of Green Bay. Thanks to those sub-zero temperatures in January, icy roads were a significant issue and demand for salt was extremely high.

The Port of Green Bay facilitated solutions to both of these challenges (fuel and road salt) with ice breaking operations in the bay of Green Bay. Several times, the U.S. Coast Guard and Great Lakes cutters accompanied ships to clear a path through the ice so that over 120,000 tons of petroleum and 390,100 tons of salt could be brought into the Port of Green Bay. While this provided solutions to the fuel and road salt issues, it also created a third challenge: making sure those who used the ice for recreation in the winter were aware of the operation. The public needed to understand when and where ice breaking took place so they could avoid those areas.



PORT OF GREEN BAY

ICE BREAKING AWARENESS OUTREACH

2) PORT OF GREEN BAY MISSION

“The Port of Green Bay exists to enhance the prosperity of the people of Northeast Wisconsin by providing facilities and infrastructure able to effectively and efficiently move commodities and goods across the nation.”

Because a major piece of the Port's mission is to provide facilities and infrastructure to move commodities, the Port rose to the challenge of replacing the fuel pipeline with shipping. Another key piece of this mission is to enhance the prosperity of the people of Northeast Wisconsin. This goes beyond working to build a strong economy; in this effort it meant keeping people safe, which of course helps people prosper and builds the community.

Successfully bringing in imports, with no safety issues, also makes a strong case to the community for continued shipping in the future. If the Port of Green Bay can continue to offer safe and successful shipping solutions, then it can continue to achieve its mission.

3) PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

The desired results of the outreach and awareness effort were twofold:

1. Increase public awareness about the possibility of ice breaking
2. Reach targeted audiences to ensure safety on bay of Green Bay

Specifically, the objectives were the following:

- To generate 5 media placements about ice breaking occurring and safety tips
- To rapidly respond within 72 hours to notify the public when ice breaking activities were to occur
- To have zero fishing/boating/snowmobile accidents as a result of the ice breaking activities

The target audiences of this outreach effort were the main stakeholders concerning ice safety; these were recreational users of the Bay of Green Bay (ice fishers, snowmobilers, etc.) The secondary audiences were the general public in Northeast Wisconsin and local media.



PORT OF GREEN BAY

ICE BREAKING AWARENESS OUTREACH

4) ACTIONS & OUTPUTS

The strategy to achieve these goals and objectives was to reach out to the targeted audiences with information about the possibility of ice breaking and then again with alerts about actual ice breaking activities when they occurred.

Making this strategy challenging was the fact that it was impossible to say with certainty whether the icebreaking would or wouldn't occur because it was totally driven by the weather and the percentage of the bay that would become frozen. The U.S. Coast Guard could not provide more than a short-term notice to the Port about when ice breaking would occur; therefore, the decision was made to alert potentially impacted parties of the possibility, with additional notification taking place when/if ice breaking operations were underway.

The following tactics were used:

- Developing a poster and distributing it to regional snowmobiling and fishing clubs, ice guides, eateries and bait shops from Sturgeon Bay and Marinette south to Green Bay. The poster also let people know where they could find additional information as the ice breaking season was underway. An accompanying letter was also drafted clearly explaining why it was important that the poster be made as visible as possible.
- Issuing a news release to local and regional media about the possibility of ice breaking occurring in the winter and then additional news releases every time ice breaking took place.
- Enlisting the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource to help distribute information through its offices and connections.
- Developing social media posts to help spread the word through the Port of Green Bay and the Brown County Sheriff's Office social media pages.

The timeline for the strategy and tactics ran from November 2017 to March 2018. The strategy and tactic materials were developed in November 2017. The ice breaking possibility news release was distributed to media in early December. The poster and letter was sent in early December as well. Social media posts and news releases when ice breaking occurred were posted and distributed as needed throughout March 2018.



PORT OF GREEN BAY

ICE BREAKING AWARENESS OUTREACH

5) OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

The ice breaking awareness outreach had very good results. The outreach raised awareness about the ice breaking activities in communities from Sturgeon Bay-Marinette south to Green Bay. In external communications, details about ice breaking activities and tips about ice safety were shared and helped keep people safe. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of targeted stakeholders were reached through the campaign.

- Social media measurements showed that the reach on the platforms of Facebook and Twitter was significant. Social media posts were shared over 350 times and the total sum of reach was approximately 65,550 people on the Port of Green Bay social media pages alone.
- News releases garnered noteworthy local media coverage, which included Wisconsin Public Radio, WBAY, WFRV, WLUK, WGBA, Daily Press, WLUC, WTAQ, WNMU-FM, WDJT, WQWO, WDIO, WWTW, WorkBoat.com and Coast Guard News. Additional updates were given when ice breaking operations occurred; further reinforcing the information and safety messaging.
- One local TV station filmed a clip of ice breaking taking place and that video was subsequently shared by ABC News on its Facebook page, where it was viewed over 260,000 times. News stations from Arizona and California even covered this story thousands of miles away.
- In addition, thirteen non-local news television stations featured segments about the ice breaking in the bay of Green Bay. The Chicago Tribune included an online article on their website about Port of Green Bay ice breaking in March.

Most importantly, there were no accidents, deaths or mishaps among ice recreationalists due to ice breaking operations.

In addition, the facilitation process had some secondary positive results. 120,000 tons of petroleum and 390,100 tons of salt were successfully imported into the Port of Green Bay. Petroleum is a critical commodity to all area residents and businesses. Salt is also an extremely important commodity as it helps keep vehicles on the road safe despite icy conditions.