



## **PORT OF STOCKTON - SAN FRANCISCO BAR PILOTS COMMEMORATIVE COIN**

Miscellaneous

The San Francisco Bar Pilots are the elite pilots who specialize in traversing the narrow, dredged channels that enable large ocean-going vessels to travel through the shallow waters of the San Francisco Bay. Within the larger Bar Pilots Association there is a smaller subdivision that is approved to take vessels all the way to the Port of Stockton: the River Pilots (Pilots). On October 26, 2017, the Port of Stockton held an appreciation dinner for the Port's Commissioned Pilots at St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco. At this celebration the Port presented the Pilots with a commemorative challenge coin, featuring illustrations of the Pilot boat, a cargo ship on the river, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Port of Stockton's water tower, and the Bar Pilots' and Port's logos. It serves as a literal token of the Port's appreciation for the River Pilots.

### **1. WHAT ARE/WERE THE ENTRY'S SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES OR OPPORTUNITIES?**

Being an inland Port, the Port of Stockton would not be accessible by oceangoing vessels without the skilled piloting of the River Pilots. "Taking a deep ship through a shallow channel, determining the height of tide, the clearance under the ship... that's our job," explains Pilot Captain Tom Miller. Despite working long hours under stressful conditions, these River Pilots brought 268 ships safely to dock at the Port in 2017. With the occasion of the San Francisco Bar Pilots Appreciation Dinner, the Port saw an opportunity to create something the Pilots could take home to commemorate the special relationship they share with the Port.

Internally, the Port had to brainstorm and decide exactly what sort of souvenir they should give at the event. A commemorative coin was chosen as an eye-catching item people would want to not only keep but display. The coin then had to be conceptualized and designed so that it would be eye-catching — in other words, worth showing off — while bearing symbols that link the Pilots with the success of the Port. Externally, the Port had to coordinate for the manufacturing of the coins with a vendor and make sure they would arrive on time for the ceremony.

### **2. HOW DOES THE COMMUNICATION USED IN THIS ENTRY COMPLEMENT THE ORGANIZATION'S OVERALL MISSION?**

Our overall mission is to provide excellent service to our current business partners and attract new business, all while being a positive force for the local Stockton community and an exemplary steward of the environment at large. The Port could not do any of



these things without cargo reaching the Port from the San Francisco Bay. It is very important to the Port to show appreciation and nurture relationships with the many entities and individuals that play a role in its continued success – and few play as vital a role as the Pilots.

### **3. WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS USED FOR THIS ENTRY?**

The goal of providing the commemorative coins was to recognize and salute the hard-working Pilots and the job they perform. If proudly displayed by the Pilot, an eye-catching coin could also be a conversation starter that leads others to learn about the important work the Pilots do, while simultaneously spreading the word about the Port.

#### **Brainstorm**

The Port could have chosen any number of souvenir-type items to provide at the event for attendees to take home with them. Coins were chosen because the maritime industry has a long history of exchanging and collecting challenge coins. Challenge coins have a long military and maritime history, used to identify the coin-holder as a member of an elite group or organization.

#### **Design**

The 2”-diameter coin is finished with an antique gold plating. It features illustrations of the Pilot boat, a cargo ship on the river, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Port of Stockton’s water tower, and the Bar Pilots’ and Port’s logos, along with the number of ship calls in 2017.

#### **Order**

The coin vendor was based in Florida, but the actual manufacturing of the coins took place in China. Needless to say, plenty of advanced planning was required to make sure the coins were received in time for the ceremony.

#### **Distribute**

The coins were distributed to the Pilots in attendance at the appreciation dinner. The President of the San Francisco Bar Pilots, Captain Joseph Long, collected additional coins to provide to Pilots that could not attend the dinner. Coins were also given to select Port staff.

The primary audiences for these coins are the recipients of them. The coin serves more as a true token of appreciation to the Pilots, for all of the safe passages they provide day in and day out, than as an outward marketing piece. That said, the secondary audience is anyone who the coin is shown to. Showing off the coin, or having the coin displayed (on a desk for example), might elicit questions about and interest in the Pilots program when the person may otherwise not have known about it.



#### **4. WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AND WHAT COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS WERE EMPLOYED IN THIS ENTRY?**

The strategy behind the coins is to nurture the Port's close relationship with the Pilots by showing sincere gratitude, and to encourage the Pilots to show the coins to others. Since the coins have a long maritime history, the Port would be seen as partners that "speak the same language." The strategy was carried using the steps previously outlined in Question 3.

##### **Timeline**

The appreciation dinner was held on October 26, 2017. Brainstorming occurred in early summer, sketched out and then digitally designed in August, leaving plenty of time to coordinate the order with the coin vendor to get the coins manufactured and shipped.

The Port engaged its Communications and Public Involvement sub-contractor, HDR, to design and illustrate the coin artwork. HDR also coordinated with the coin vendor, Signature Coins, to ensure the manufactured coins came out exactly as designed.

#### **5. WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS OUTCOMES FROM THIS ENTRY AND WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WERE USED TO ASSESS THEM?**

Feedback on the commemorative coins has been anecdotal in nature. The coins have been very well received by the Pilots. Here a few quotes taken at the appreciation dinner:

"The Port of Stockton has really gone out of its way to show their appreciation. The coin is a really special gift. We can see the care that went into them." -Captain Joseph Long, President, San Francisco Bar Pilots

"What a cool little thing! It's going on my desk for sure." -Captain Tom Miller, Bar Pilot, San Francisco Bar Pilots

"We love our job and wouldn't trade it for the world, but it sure is great to be recognized like this. I loved the video and especially the challenge coin." -Captain Mark Haggerty, Bar Pilot, San Francisco Bar Pilots