**AAPA Communications Awards Submission**

**Category: Newsletters**

**Summary of Entry:** An engaging digital update sent quarterly to port users, economic development directors, site selectors and others in an effort to share news of The Port of Virginia’s momentum and ability to serve as an economic catalyst for their businesses or cities.

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

We created this quarterly newsletter to help convey that sense of momentum and mission in a document that helped educate and engage our audiences about the port’s ability to serve as an economic catalyst for their respective businesses or cities.

As of April 30, 2018, 42 port users made announcements of either locating their business in or expanding their current businesses within Virginia during our 2018 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018). Further those 42 businesses have built or are in the process of building 2.4 million square feet of warehouse space, created a potential 4,347 jobs and invested $1.33 billion.

We wanted to create a newsletter that kept economic developers and site selectors informed on the benefits of using The Port of Virginia and the momentum on which we continue to build.

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

As we continue to move forward with our projects on land and the water, it is critical to ensure that we keep our audiences informed so that they recognize the opportunities The Port of Virginia offers.

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

Our Economic Development team drafts brief articles that are then paired with compelling imagery in an engaging, digital newsletter format to capture readers’ attention and help educate them. We create an editorial calendar for the year and ensure that the articles being written make sense from a timing perspective.

1. **What actions were taken and what communication outputs were employed in this entry?**
   1. **Explain what strategies were developed to achieve success and why these strategies were chosen.**

We wanted to stay in consistent contact with these stakeholders and show demonstrated evidence of our momentum (e.g. business announcements, volume growth, grand awards, etc.) to encourage and entice the audience to take a closer look at The Port of Virginia.

* 1. **Specify the tactics used (i.e., actions used to carry out your strategies).**

Our Economic Development team drafts brief articles that are then paired with compelling imagery in an engaging, digital newsletter format to capture readers’ attention and help educate them.

* 1. **Detail the entry’s implementation plan by including timeline, staffing and outsourcing used.**

We create an editorial calendar for the year and ensure that the articles being written make sense from a timing perspective.

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

The Winter 2018 Economic Development Newsletter has 342 views – about a 21% open rate based on the total distribution list.

To view the latest edition of the Economic Development Newsletter, click the following link: <http://bit.ly/POVEconDevNewsletter>