



2018

COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

The North Carolina State Ports Authority

#countdowntocranes

Entry Classification: 11
(Social/Web-Based Media)

<http://ncports.com/about-the-ports/neo-panamax-cranes/>



COUNTDOWN TO CRANES

BECOME A PART OF NC PORTS HISTORY!
Snap a photo and upload it to social media using
#COUNTDOWTOCRANES




ARRIVING SOON: NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Sometimes opportunity knocks. At NC Ports it doesn't - it does - in just a few days.

March 20, the Port of Wilmington will welcome two new Panamax cranes, built by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Co., Ltd. (ZPMC). Taller and with longer booms, these two new cranes will accommodate the loading and unloading needs of ultra-Panamax container vessels, reaching the United States East Coast. And will allow the Port of Wilmington to simultaneously service two ultra-Panamax vessels.



#countdowntocranes Summary

The North Carolina State Ports Authority has embarked on a \$200 million infrastructure improvement plan including the purchase of three neo-Panamax cranes, berth renovations and container yard redesign. This aggressive plan will support record-setting container volume growth and allow the Port of Wilmington to service two ultra-Panamax vessels simultaneously on a two berth operation.

With the arrival of the neo-Panamax cranes serving as a catalyst for future growth, NC Ports launched the #countdowntocranes campaign. The campaign allowed NC Ports to highlight its recent growth, infrastructure plan and celebrate the historic milestone arrival of two neo-Panamax cranes.

The #countdowntocranes campaign launched via social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – when the cranes departed Asia in late January 2018. Communications staff used the social media platforms as well as a designated landing page on ncports.com to promote the arrival of the new cranes and garner engagement from local and regional communities, key stakeholders, customers and local and state leaders.



northcarolinaports Our neo-Panamax cranes have about a month to go before they reach the Port of Wilmington. Here's a look at the cranes leaving Asia in January. #countdowntocranes #ncports #portofwilmington #portofprogress



The countdown is officially underway. The Port of Wilmington's two new neo-Panamax cranes just left Asia & are making the long journey to NC. They'll allow the port to accommodate ultra-Panamax vessels more efficiently. #countdowntocranes #portofprogress #ncports



The Port of Wilmington's new cranes will pass Singapore today. They still have 12,416 miles to go before they reach the port! Each crane weighs 1,553 tons & will help the Port of Wilmington service vessels upwards of 14,000 TEU #countdowntocranes #ncports #portofprogress



7:47 AM - 31 Jan 2018

Communication Challenges and Opportunities

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

The North Carolina State Ports Authority recently underwent a brand overhaul by updating the NC Ports logo and launching a new website and ad campaigns. Since the rebrand, North Carolina Ports has reached several milestones including attracting four new container service lines to the Port of Wilmington, joining the USDA's Southeast In-Transit Cold Treatment Pilot program and embarking on a major infrastructure improvement plan. As NC Ports continues to gain brand recognition, it is important for the Authority to grow its social media presence and use those platforms to share its story with all of North Carolina, key stakeholders and government leaders.

The #countdowntocranes campaign allowed NC Ports to promote its recent growth by highlighting the arrival of two new neo-Panamax cranes. The campaign presented the opportunity for the Authority to grow its social media following across all platforms, launch an Instagram, drive traffic to ncports.com and boost community and stakeholder engagement.



#countdowntocranes

Mission Statement

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

The mission of the North Carolina State Ports Authority is to enhance the economy of the State of North Carolina. The Ports Authority will be managed like a business, focused on the requirements of its customers. North Carolina's Ports are recognized for self-sustaining operations, environmental stewardship, highly efficient workforce, satisfied customers, and modern, well-maintained facilities and equipment.

Modern, well-maintained facilities and equipment

- #countdowntocranes showcases the new neo-Panamax cranes and renovated container berth at the Port of Wilmington. It also allows NC Ports to highlight future projects which are part of the larger infrastructure improvements commitment.

Efficient workforce

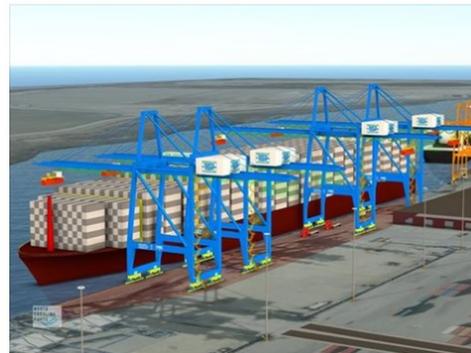
- #countdowntocranes showcases NC Ports' waterside efficiency. The Port of Wilmington has some of the fastest crane operating times on the East Coast – 45 net moves an hour.

Satisfied customers

- #countdowntocranes showcases NC Ports' commitment to customer satisfaction. Without a growing and trusting client base the addition of the neo-Panamax cranes was not possible.



This is the future of the Port of Wilmington! It won't be long before our new neo-Panamax cranes arrive and our berth 8 renovation project is complete. This will open the door for the Port of Wilmington to service two ultra-Panamax vessels simultaneously on a two berth operation!
#countdowntocranes #ncports #portofwilmington #portofprogress #portofodrama



Did you know NC Ports' new neo-Panamax cranes have the availability to reach 10 containers above the deck of a vessel? That will allow the Port of Wilmington to service the growing ships transiting the expanded Panama Canal.
#countdowntocranes #ncports #portofwilmington



Planning and Programming Components

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

Goals

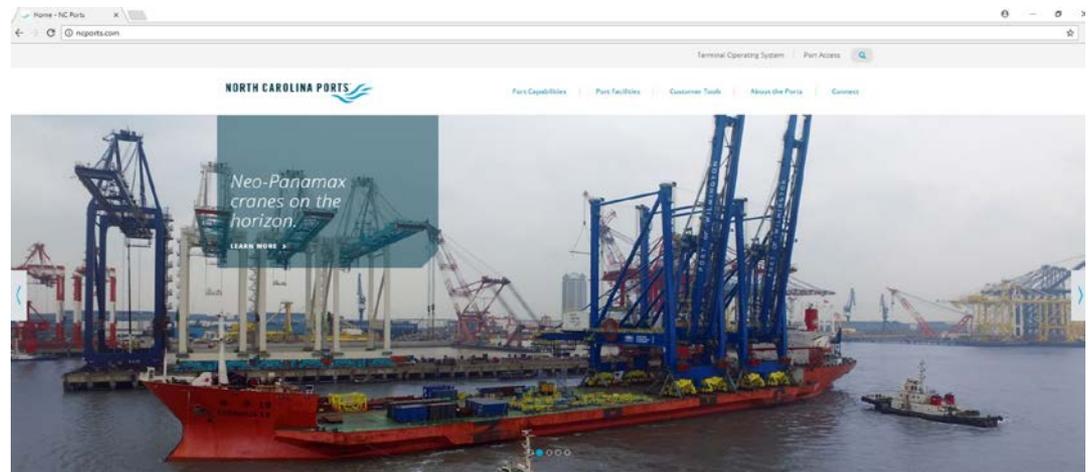
Highlight NC Ports' monumental growth by celebrating the historic arrival of the neo-Panamax cranes using social media and a designated landing page on ncports.com to attract engagement from local and regional communities, key stakeholders, customers and local and state leaders.

Primary Audience

Key stakeholders
Local and state leaders
Local and regional communities

Secondary Audience

Customers



<http://ncports.com/about-the-ports/neo-panamax-cranes/>

Planning and Programming Components continued

Objectives

- Work with local leaders to designate three viewing areas for community members to witness the cranes transit to the Port of Wilmington
- Create a “VIP” viewing area and experience for local and state leaders and key stakeholders
- Create an informational landing page about the cranes and their arrival on ncports.com
- Create an informational flyer to distribute on the day of the arrival
- Host a “Lunch and Learn” for NC Ports employees to learn more about the cranes and celebrate their arrival
- Create an image gallery on the designated landing page for community involvement
- Create images and videos suitable for social media usage
- Increase social media following across all platforms
- Create and implement new social media platform, Instagram
- Recognize community support by featuring a food truck and souvenir cups at designated watch party
- Engage local and statewide media



Actions and Communication Outputs

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

North Carolina Ports selected social media and ncports.com as the main communications strategies for the #countdowntocranes campaign. Due to the fluidity of the cranes' arrival, it was important to utilize communications tools that provided NC Ports staff flexibility to disseminate information to the public.

NC Ports launched the campaign in January 2018 when the cranes departed the manufacturer. During the two months prior to the cranes' arrival, Ports staff posted about the cranes on all social media platforms weekly. Two weeks before the arrival NC Ports launched the cranes landing page. Once the landing page was live on the website, social media posts increased therefore driving traffic to the website which provided community members an opportunity to learn more about the cranes, where to watch their arrival and how to get involved.



NC Ports



We are seeing a lot of great photos of NC Ports' new neo-Panamax cranes just off the coast of Bald Head Island. Here is a great photo of the cranes captured by Kendrick Schwarz. If you snap any photos of the cranes at sea or during their transit to the Port of Wilmington on Thursday be sure to post them on social media using the hashtag #countdowntocranes

Don't forget, you can watch the transit to the Port of Wilmington at Southport Waterfront Park, River Road Park, or Riverlights Marina.

Waterfront Park - cranes to pass between 7:30 & 8:00 am (a food truck will be on site serving breakfast)

River Road Park & Riverlights Marina - cranes to pass between 8:30 & 9:00 am

For more information on the cranes just check out our website:

<http://ncports.com/about-the-ports/neo-panamax-cranes/>

#countdowntocranes #ncports #portofwilmington #portofprogress



12,396 people reached

Actions and Communication Outputs continued

Project timeline – Pre-arrival

1. Launch #countdowntocranes campaign across all social media platforms when the cranes depart manufacturer
2. Post weekly status updates of the cranes on social media to boost community excitement
3. Work with marketing and advertising firm to hire photographers and videographers for mini-documentary, drone footage, time-lapse and still photography
4. Work with marketing and advertising firm to develop informational flyer and landing page for website
5. Work with local printer to create souvenir cups for employees and community members
6. Meet with local leaders to designate viewing areas for the cranes' arrival
7. Hire food truck to serve breakfast at primary viewing location
8. Two weeks before arrival issue media advisory to local and state publications and send invitations to local and state leaders and key stakeholders
9. Week of arrival host a “Lunch and Learn” for NC Ports employees to celebrate and learn more about the arrival of the new cranes. Drive traffic to crane landing page to boost community involvement using all social media platforms.

Day of arrival

1. Host three community crane arrival events. During each event encourage people to take photos and post them using #countdowntocranes.
2. Live tweet crane arrival and post Instagram stories of arrival
3. Film footage for mini-documentary including drone footage, time-lapse, b-roll and interviews with Ports staff and community members

Post-arrival

1. Recap crane arrival on all social media platforms and encourage people to post their photos using #countdowntocranes
2. Update website to show cranes have arrived and when they will be fully operational
3. Keep community updated on status of crane installation using all social media platforms and designated landing page
4. Premiere time lapse, photo gallery and mini documentary

Staffing

NC Ports staffing included the communications manager to create social media posts, community viewing events and internal “Lunch and Learn”. The vice president of external affairs organized VIP viewing location and experience for all government leaders, key stakeholders and customers. The Port worked with its agency of record, HMMH, to create and design landing page, informational flyer, photography and mini-documentary. On the day of the arrival NC Ports staff attended each event to communicate directly with the public.

Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

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

The #countdowntocranes campaign was successfully carried out and succeeded NC Ports' expectations.

Several hundred people attended the community viewing locations. Between 200-300 people attended the primary crane viewing event and more than 100 people attended the two additional viewing events.

The social media elements and crane landing page proved to be successful communication tools contributing to the significant turnout and follow up social media posts across all platforms.

Ken Worley
@kenworley
Follow

I stopped by the waterfront on the way in to watch the huge cranes come through. They were so large the river have to be closed this morning.
#southportnc #countdowntocranes #saltlife



Kay Goodan:
I think that the NC Ports Authority should be congratulated and thanked for coming to our waterfront this morning and setting up a food truck to serve the hundreds of people there to see the passage of the huge ship. They offered coffee, fruit and rolls...free...to anyone wishing to partake. A very pleasant gesture for our early visit. Thank you very much!!! 🙌❤️👍

Cape Fear River Rowing Club added 2 new photos.
March 29 at 11:01am · 🌐 Like Page

CFRRC members and Wilmington Marine Center boat owners watch the new cranes on their journey to the port. #countdowntocranes



anna_laura01 · Follow
Wilmington, North Carolina



7 likes

anna_laura01 I got to witness history in the making today! #countdowntocranes #ilm #wilmingtonnc #northcarolinaports #portcity

Outcomes and Evaluation Methods continued

Boost Twitter activity

- The month of crane delivery, NC Ports had the most tweet impressions since launching its twitter account in 2014 at over 68,000 impressions.

Top Tweet earned 46.8K impressions

At @NCPorts we pride ourselves on waterside & landside efficiency. Our crane operators make about 45 moves an hour, allowing vessels to move in and out of the Port of Wilmington as quickly as possible #ncports #portofwilmington #portofprogress #portofnodrama pic.twitter.com/TJU1cVmwes



1 12

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Tweets

20

Tweet impressions

68.3K

Profile visits

1,261

Mentions

44

New followers

34

Top mention earned 100 engagements

N.C. Commerce
@NCCommerce Mar 29
The Neo-Panamax Cranes have arrived in Wilmington. Celebrating new possibilities with @NCPorts this morning. #countdowntocranes pic.twitter.com/eH2UAJpog



1 7 18

View Tweet

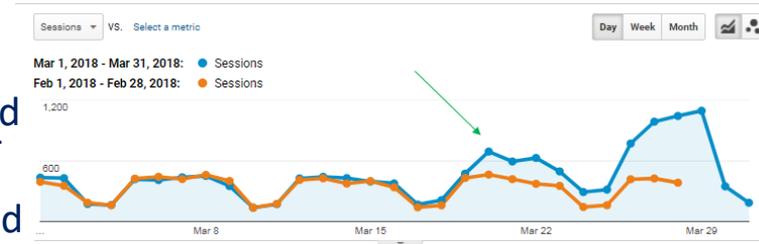
Top media Tweet earned 1,949 impressions

The cranes just passed Southport! Don't forget you can catch the cranes at River Road Park and Riverlights Marina from 8:30-9:00 am #countdowntocranes #ncports #portofwilmington #portofprogress pic.twitter.com/F1LgR6MSUK



Drive traffic to ncports.com

- The cranes landing page resulted in a late month volume spike
- The cranes landing page had the second highest number of page views with an average view time of around 5 minutes
- The cranes landing page delivered the second highest number of landing page hits



Boost Facebook activity

- The month of crane delivery, NC Ports' reach was up 355%, page preview was up 365%, post engagement was up 299% from the previous 28 days.

