



2018 AAPA  
COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM  
CLASSIFICATION 12: SPECIAL EVENTS

# STATE OF THE PORT ADDRESS 2017



PORT OF  
**GULFPORT**  
MISSISSIPPI

## SUMMARY

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The Port of Gulfport's business development efforts have made significant strides in recent years and has quickly positioned the Port of Gulfport as an important economic catalyst for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The need to engage the community about the importance of having a port in their region is ongoing. Community engagement is vital to ensuring that all stakeholders are given the opportunity to learn about the Port of Gulfport's operations and its role in the local economy. The Port of Gulfport met the need by partnering with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce to host the inaugural "State of the Port Address" in January 2017 as one of the Chamber's Gulfport Connections Quarterly Breakfast events. The event raised awareness of the Port of Gulfport's operations, status of the Restoration Project, job creation, and future expansion efforts.

The event took place at CLIMB CDC, which is a Mississippi non-profit community development agency that provides workforce training for low- and moderate-income residents in the Gulf South Region. The nonprofit is also a Port of Gulfport community partner. A representative from the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce welcomed attendees and invited Port of Gulfport Executive Director and CEO Jonathan Daniels on stage to deliver the main address. A PowerPoint presentation was included so we could provide the audience with an illustrative backdrop for the content being discussed. The presentation has been repurposed since the event for a variety of community outreach activities. The audience included, Port of Gulfport commissioners, staff, tenants, and vendors, as well as state and local delegates, and business and civic leaders from the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The State of the Port Address was produced in-house by the External Affairs team with almost 300 people in attendance.



# 1. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

More than a decade ago, South Mississippi was faced with the challenge of overcoming the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Since then the Mississippi Coast economy and its people have worked diligently to build an environment in which businesses can thrive. One of those economic engines is the Port of Gulfport, which is approaching the end of construction under the \$570 million Restoration Project following Hurricane Katrina and has seen tremendous success in recruiting new businesses to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Port of Gulfport operates under the Mississippi State Port Authority, and therefore is an Enterprise Agency of the State of Mississippi. A five-member Board of Commissioners that represents a cross-section of Gulfport and Harrison County serve as the governing body for the Port. The Port of Gulfport has all the elements to make it a national leader in waterborne commerce and an economic driver for Mississippi. The ideal location, history of perseverance, state-of-the-art facilities, cost effectiveness and dedicated staff merge to meet the needs of the port's customers. Ranked as the second largest green fruit facility in the United States and the third busiest container port in the U.S. Gulf, the Port of Gulfport handles more than 2.5 million tons of cargo and 225,000 TEUs annually.

Despite having more than \$300 million in construction taking place on the port site, Port leadership has successfully maintained port operations by working closely with tenants to ensure movement of cargo is not interrupted. Maintaining strong partnerships with customers and stakeholders are vital. Though it has been a challenge to upgrade the port's facilities while maintaining daily operations at the port, the Port of Gulfport has continued to provide world-class maritime service, build new facilities and diversify its tenant mix. Another challenge is ensuring the public is aware of the progress we are making with the Restoration Project and job creation.

Ongoing community engagement, education and relationship building efforts are vital to ensuring that all stakeholders are fully educated on the port's impact in the region. Hosting an event such as the State of the Port Address not only brought community stakeholders together but it also provided an opportunity to share the status of the Restoration Project, latest news with port tenants, and also discuss future expansion efforts at the Port of Gulfport.

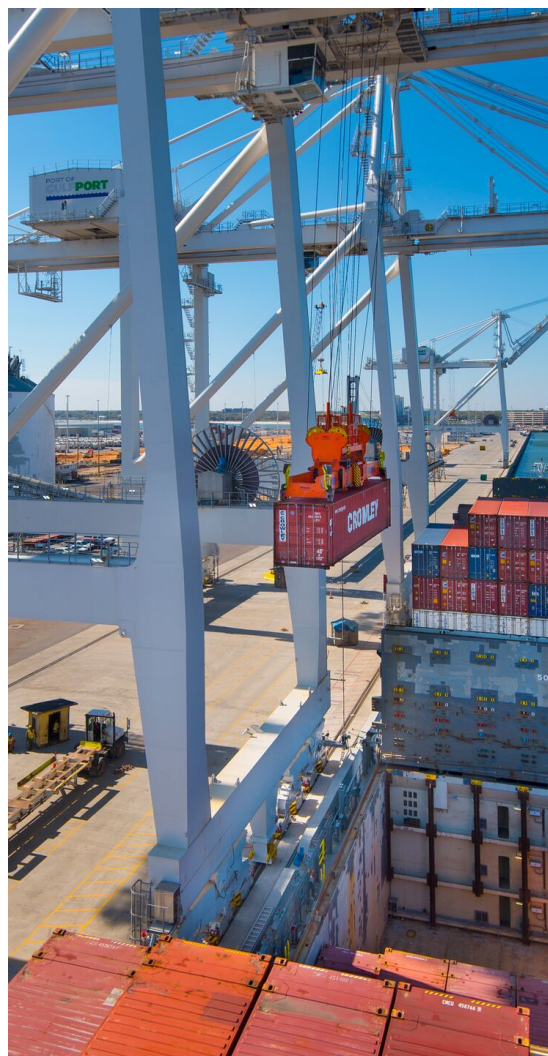




## 2. COMPLEMENTING THE PORT'S OVERALL MISSION

The Port of Gulfport's mission is to provide world-class maritime service to our customers while facilitating economic growth and good jobs for the people of Mississippi. The Port's External Affairs department engages the public throughout the year using multiple avenues such as social media, educational workshops, community sponsorships, advertising, publicity in traditional media outlets as well as outreach to key stakeholders at special events.

The State of the Port Address provided the opportunity to reach all of the Port's target audiences such as port tenants and vendors, community partners, local and state officials and business leaders all at once. The event highlighted the extensive buildout of facilities specifically tailored to the port's maritime customers and also discussed what the port is doing to recruit new industry to the region, allowing for the creation of new jobs and increased economic development.



# 3. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS

## Goal of the State of the Port Address:

To establish the "State of the Port Address" as a signature event for the Port of Gulfport.

## Objectives:


- Partner with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce on the event.
- To have a minimum of 200 people in attendance.
- To raise awareness of the Port of Gulfport's operations and the status of the Restoration Project including information about latest job creation numbers.
- Maximize the use of social media to spread the State of the Port messaging to individuals unable to make the event in person.

## Strategies:

- Collaborate with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce to promote and sell tickets to the event.
- Promote the event to key stakeholders and demonstrate the importance of the Port of Gulfport to the local community.


## Target Audiences:

- Current and potential port tenants
- Local and State elected officials
- Mississippi government agencies
- Community stakeholders and partners
- Business leaders
- Vendors and companies that service the Port of Gulfport




**GULFPORT CONNECTIONS**  
Gulfport Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Breakfast

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2017**  
**CAFE CLIMB**  
**1316 30TH AVE., GULFPORT, MS**  
8:00a.m. Doors Open | 8:30a.m. Program Begins




**2017**  
**STATE OF THE PORT**




The Port of Gulfport is reaching new heights and expanding its operations. During the inaugural "State of the Port" address, Port CEO and Executive Director Jonathan Daniels will present the latest accomplishments surrounding the \$570 million Expansion Project, the current business climate for the port, how the port is integrating itself into the community and what to expect in 2017.

\$10 Member Admission | \$15 General Admission  
\$250 Table Sponsorships  
Questions: 228-604-0014 | [mscoastchamber.com](http://mscoastchamber.com)



**GULFPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce, Inc.



Connect | Follow | Share | Watch

## 4. ACTIONS TAKEN AND COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS EMPLOYED

The Port of Gulfport partnered with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce for the event. The Port's External Affairs team met with the Chamber's event committee two months prior to the event taking place on January 31, 2017. The two teams determined the plan for the event and listed tasks to be completed and the budgets associated with each task. The budget for this event was \$6,000 and that include the cost to be a Gulfport Connections Quarterly Breakfast sponsor, advertising for the event, venue rental and AV setup. In order to attend, individuals were required to purchase admission tickets. It cost \$10 for Chamber members, \$15 for general public and \$250 for a table sponsorship. The money collected for for the event covered the cost of breakfast.



The External Affairs team developed the overall theme and look for the event. All collateral pieces used to promote the State of the Port Address such as flyers, advertisements, and email marketing were done in-house. The External Affairs team also developed the PowerPoint presentation with input from the Port's Executive Director and created an official "State of the Port" pamphlet to give to each guest with key facts about the Port of Gulfport.

Since the venue only had a stage for the event, the Port did have to hire out AV services. Those services included two large screens for the presentation to be viewed on, a backdrop for the stage, and audio. The AV services were provided by a local AV provider.





## TACTICS & TIMELINE:

### November:

- Port staff met with Chamber of Commerce to discuss options of hosting a State of the Port Address
- Port staff and Chamber determined a date for the State of the Port that would fall under the Chamber's Quarterly Breakfast Series
- Identified location and time for the event

### December:

- Conducted planning meetings
- Developed State of the Port Address flyers and collateral materials
- Created news release and distributed to local media outlets: television, print and online
- Created Facebook event page and developed creative postings to promote ticket sales and create excitement for the event
- Posted event on local event calendars
- Designed print and digital ads
- Placed ads with the local newspaper
- Created email invite that would be sent to key stakeholders
- Publicized to over 5,000 email boxes through the Chamber of Commerce
- Collected key information to be included in the PowerPoint presentation

### January:

- Continued to promote the event on social media and with local media outlets
- Partnered with the Chamber to send email invite to Chamber members
- Finalized catering needs
- Finalized PowerPoint presentation with CEO

### Format of the Event:

- The State of the Port Address event was held on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. at CLIMB CDC, which is conveniently located in downtown Gulfport, Mississippi. Breakfast was served as part of the cost of admission into the event
- The event began with a welcome from the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber highlighting their Gulfport Connections Breakfast Series and then followed up with introducing the Port Executive Director and CEO
- Port Executive Director and CEO Jonathan Daniels presented the State of the Port Address
- The presentation included images from the 2016 year
- The "State of the Port" pamphlet, designed by the External Affairs team and printed by a local vendor, was placed at every seat
- The event was streamed on Facebook Live

# STATE OF THE PORT POWERPOINT SLIDES



**WELCOME**

Hannah Burnett

**GULFPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
Member Since 2011

**Jonathan Daniels**  
CEO & Executive Director

**The Port of Gulfport:**  
YOUR State Port

**One of 5 container seaports in the Gulf of Mexico Region**

- Handle more than 200,000 TEU's annually
- Average 2 million tons of cargo annually

Seaport activities generate an estimated \$25.9 million in State and local taxes



**FINANCIALS**  
2015-2016 Fiscal Year

- Net Position (increased): \$112.7 million
- Operating Revenues: \$16.1 million
- Maritime Revenues: \$7.5 million
- Clean Audits: 21 Straight Years

**DIVERSIFIED CUSTOMERS**

**STRATEGICALLY LOCATED**

Our reach across the U.S. is extensive:  
North: Chicago, IL  
East: Charleston, SC  
West: El Paso, TX  
California - Crowley



**Building the Future:**  
Expansion

**CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED IN 2016**

- Arrival and Installation of Gantry Cranes
- Chemours Bulk Handling Facility

**CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED IN 2016**

- Wharf Upgrades
- Truck Scales

**CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED IN 2016**

- Small Craft Harbor
- Terminal 3 M&R

**Current Construction:**

- General Storage Tanks
- Lighthouse
- West Terminal Tractor Stand Phase 1 & 2 (100,000 sq ft)
- West Terminal Site Work: Phase 2
- West Terminal 2 M&R Building & Gate

**Future Construction:**

- Landscaping Project
- North Harbor Reconstruction
- Terminal 3 Admin Building & Gate
- Terminal 1 M&R Facility
- Range Storage Project
- West 18 Improvements
- Port Security Phase 4 Equipment
- West Pier Phase 3

**TRANSITIONING THE PORT INTO THE COMMUNITY**

**LONG-TERM LEASES**

- Chemours: 60-years
- Island View: 50-years
- Dole: 25-years
- Crowley: 15-years
- Topship: 40-years
- M: 40-years

**STRATEGIC SEAPORT DESIGNATION**

**PRIVATE INVESTMENTS:**  
\$270 Million To Date

**EPICENTER FOR OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

**Port Accomplishments:**  
Celebrating Our Successes

**CHIQUITA RETURNS TO GULFPORT**

**National Objective Accomplishments:**

- NUMBER OF NEW JOBS CREATED: 425
- NUMBER OF LMI JOBS: 331 (78%)

**TOPSHIP COMMITS TO 1,000 JOBS**

**AMMENDED LEASE WITH ISLAND VIEW**

**External Affairs:**  
Supporting Our Community

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Environmental Initiatives:**  
Preserving Our Coast

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS**

**GREEN MARINE**

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

**A Bright Future Ahead:**  
What's On the Horizon

**FUTURE EXPANSION**

**THANK YOU!**



## 5. COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION METHODS

Overall the inaugural State of the Port Address was received well by the community and we made plans to host the event again in 2018. The PowerPoint presentation assisted the Executive Director in clearly explaining the status of the Restoration Project, where the port stands on business development activities and what was to come in the future for the Port of Gulfport. The PowerPoint was replicated for other port presentations throughout the year following the event to ensure the port's message was consistent.



We met all of the objectives that we set out beforehand:

- We partnered with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce on the event, which allowed us to capture more individuals from the local business community and garner additional attendance from the general public by using their database.
- We exceeded original goal of 200 people by 100, with a total of 300 people in attendance.
- The event helped shine a light on the Port of Gulfport's operations and the status of the Restoration Project and job creation. We used Meltwater to keep track of the news coverage and "job creation" was a topic of many news articles following the event, with a total of 80 print and digital stories shared.
- We were able to maximize the use of social media by using Facebook Live to stream the event for those that otherwise could not attend. The video was viewed 251 times.



The three main news organizations on the Mississippi Gulf Coast were present at the event including the Sun Herald newspaper, WLOX-TV, and WXXV-TV. In general, the coverage was neutral. We did have some individuals who are not fully convinced we will meet our 1,300 job goal, which is associated with the Restoration Project. Those voices were heard and we have ensured when speaking about the job goals that we clarify the time-frame in which we have to create these jobs following three years after the end of construction.

# COMMENTS FROM THE STATE OF THE PORT EVENT:

“The entire look of the port has changed in the last few years. New structures down there with Chemours and the new cranes. It’s looking good.” – Mayor of Gulfport

“What Jonathan is saying today, he’s halfway there (referring to the Restoration job goal) and he’s aware that these 1,300 jobs are looming over him, and that he’s going to get it done because that’s what we need, are those real jobs that will change the quality of life for our port.” – Gulfport City Council Woman

“We remain concerned that the focus today wasn't on job creation. That's what this has always been about, is creating permanent jobs. We strongly advocate any effort that is actually going to create jobs. When I look at the numbers from where we started and where we are today, we've only lost jobs at the port.” – Community Activist

“Great event. Was very informative and look forward to seeing what you all accomplish this year.” – Business Leader

## EVENT RECAP:

- The inaugural State of the Port Address provided the opportunity to raise awareness of the Port of Gulfport's operations, status of the Restoration Project, job creation, and future expansion efforts.
- The event welcomed almost 300 people to CLIMB CDC in Gulfport, Mississippi.
- The PowerPoint presentation provided the audience with an illustrative backdrop for the content being discussed by Port Executive Director & CEO
- The event was received well and the Port of Gulfport plans to host a State of the Port event again in 2018.

