



## PORT OF STOCKTON - SAN FRANCISCO BAR PILOTS VIDEO

Videos

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The Port of Stockton (Port) relies on people possessing many specialized skills to operate safely. One of the unsung heroes who in particular contribute to the port's success are the River Pilots responsible for the hundreds of oceangoing vessels making the 80-mile journey up and down the San Joaquin River into and out of the Port. These River Pilots face many challenges and hazards during the course of this 8-10 hour journey, from currents to wind to pleasure boat traffic to shallows and an ever-changing riverine environment. This highly trained and experienced cadre of seamen and women step aboard unfamiliar vessels among unfamiliar crew members and bring their steel behemoths safely to their destination day in and day out. The Port could not function without them, and so we sought to honor them by sharing their unique story with a fascinated public.

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

The Port owes a true debt of thanks to the River Pilots, who safely navigate the challenging channel of the San Joaquin River that leads into and out of the Port. Port leadership was looking for a special way to express appreciation for the critical role the Pilots play in the Port's basic operations as a berthing destination for oceangoing vessels. It was felt that nothing would be quite as meaningful as a short video that featured their role and the demands they face as they go about their jobs in a dynamic environment. In fact, the Port felt that a more fitting tribute would be to share this story with a public audience. The Port has enjoyed considerable success publishing short videos on various topics regarding its operations via its website and social media platforms. Therefore, it was felt that a video featuring the River Pilots would be an ideal subject where the volume of visitors could be recorded.

Of course, the Port needed to secure the cooperation of the San Francisco Bar Pilots Association. Considerable logistics and scheduling had to be coordinated so the film crew could gain the the access and shooting positions necessary to acquire the material. Permission to board ships and to accompany them upriver was sought and granted. Additionally, a River Pilot representative had to be identified to serve as the main subject in the program. All of which required an abundance of communication, research, and collaboration among the River Pilots, the film production crew, and Port management.

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

The Port is a major regional economic engine and one of the leading employers in the area. It is always looking to partner with the local community and be a good neighbor. As such,



public relations is an essential part of the Port's outreach to residents. This short video program is an excellent outreach tool to acquaint members of the community and general public with an essential part of the Port's operations. It showcases the safety and care taken to shepherd large ships up a narrow channel and profiles the unique professionals, the River Pilots, charged with doing that. This all helps create a sympathetic view of the Port as a responsible member of the local community, while also explaining how operations are conducted at this unique inland site of international trade and transportation.

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

The intention of the video is to familiarize a general audience with the unique conditions encountered by shipping traffic transiting between the San Francisco Bay and the Port. Ships coming from all over the world to dock at the Port have one remaining challenge before arriving, and that is traveling the last treacherous 70 miles along the narrow channel of the San Joaquin River. This requires the skill and knowledge of a specially trained ship captain, the River Pilot, to safely undertake the 10-hour voyage. Few people know what it takes to steer a mammoth ship under highly variable conditions without mishap, but without the skill and experience of this small group of special commanders, the Port, which is so crucial to the vibrancy of the area, could not function. As a result of this video, people who benefit from the Port, or are just interested in this critical part of our trade and commerce infrastructure, will gain an insight into a special profession that makes the Port work.

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

The Port's first consideration was to consult with a video production company with which the Port has had a long and productive history. Because the Port's relationship with the River Pilots is a very important one, the Port needed to place considerable trust in the production company to both tell the Pilot/Port story accurately, but also safeguard the Pilot/Port relationship. The logistics were complex, with ship arrivals and departures subject to constant change, not to mention weather and sea conditions. The Port had to expect that the production team could operate fairly autonomously to acquire the footage and do it in a way that didn't inconvenience the pilots or jeopardize their operations. Also, the production team had to know how to conduct themselves safely in unfamiliar, if not potentially hazardous, circumstances.

With the production crew fully on board, so to speak, the Port facilitated discussions and exchanges with all parties to:

- identify a River Pilot to serve as a principal subject
- empower the production crew to make arrangements with the Pilot for an interview as well as accompany him and track the ship on its journey from San Francisco Bay to the Port
- oversee the program's editing until delivery of the finished product

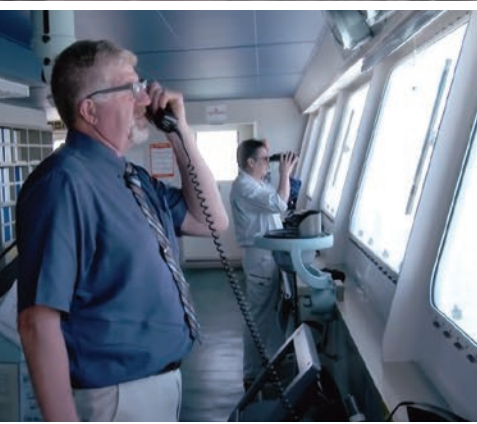


Although the project encountered unforeseen delays due to meteorological conditions and changing arrival times, the project was kept on track, if not on schedule, by continuous collaboration and communication among the parties. In the end, the finished program was delivered in time to debut at a critical ceremony honoring the River Pilots.

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



The preeminent audience for the video were the River Pilots and their association. Although the subject has great interest for the general public, they represented an ancillary market for the program. In some ways, the video was a way of showing that the Port of Stockton fully understands and appreciates the complexity and responsibilities of the River Pilots' work, and that the Port could not function without their highly specialized skill set. It is quite apparent, as was demonstrated at the program's unveiling at a special hosted function for the Pilots, that they were moved and deeply appreciative of the Port's very heartfelt gesture. It continues to cement this important relationship between the Port and Pilots.



The video also serves as a tool to educate the public about the complexity and challenges of operating a deep water port and demonstrates the role that these specialized pilots play in getting the cargo to and from the Port safely.

