



**PORTS OF INDIANA**  
3 PORTS - 2 WATERWAYS - 1 SYSTEM

## 2018 AAPA Communication Awards

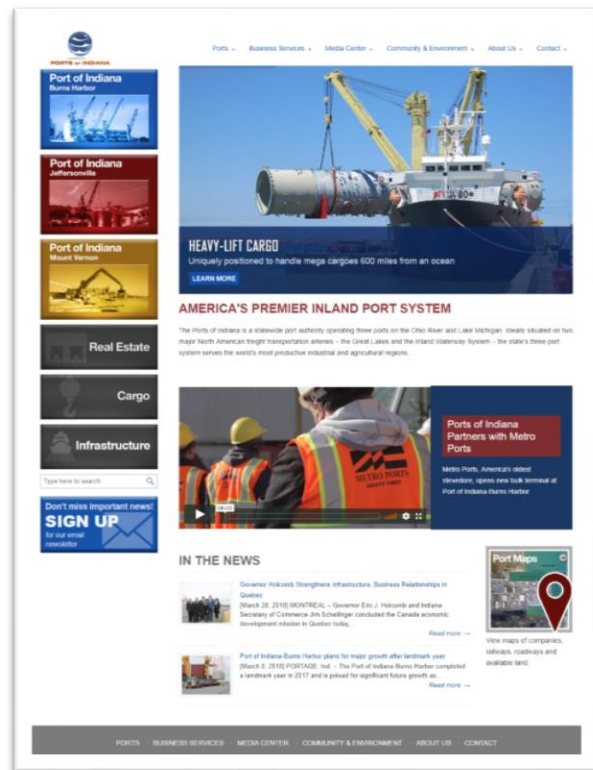
Websites: [www.PortsofIndiana.com](http://www.PortsofIndiana.com)

### Summary:

The Ports of Indiana website, [www.PortsofIndiana.com](http://www.PortsofIndiana.com), serves as the premier marketing tool for the Ports of Indiana.

### 1. Communications Challenge/Opportunities

**Situation Analysis:** We are a statewide port authority with three ports located as far as a six-hour drive apart. Our corporate headquarters is in downtown Indianapolis (at least two hours from water in all directions); it is impossible for anyone to physically stand on a dock and see all of our port operations. In fact, most of Indiana's businesses and population are not located near water, so the website is even more important because it is the only place they can really get a complete overview of everything we do. Due to the distance between and diversity of our ports, we use the website to "bring it all together," showing our target audiences how each individual port is a component of a broader economic engine that stretches across the entire state of Indiana.



### 2. Communicating the Ports of Indiana's Mission

Since 1961, the Ports of Indiana has been a valuable asset to the state of Indiana. The self-funded enterprise generates significant economic development by creating jobs, attracting businesses to the state and providing access to global markets. Its management team brings an entrepreneurial approach to the organization that invites opportunities and strategies for expansion, self-sufficiency and innovation.

Our Mission: *“To develop and maintain a world-class port system that operates as an agile, strategically-driven, self-funded enterprise dedicated to growing Indiana’s economy.”*

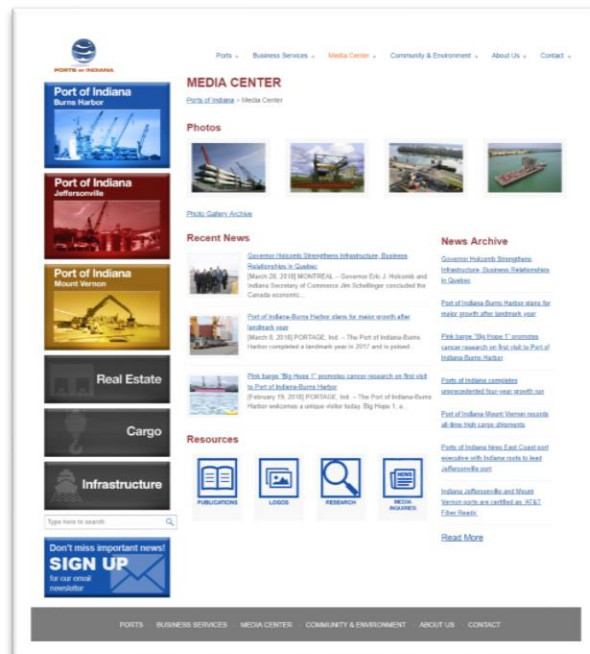
From a marketing perspective, the website is the first tool in maintaining market visibility. In today’s web-based society, it is the first place people look to research the Ports of Indiana. The website serves as the entry-level piece for anyone looking for information, but also offers deeper information for those who would like to learn more.

### 3. Planning and Programming

**Goals:** The goal of the website is to serve as the primary “portal” or entry point for our entire Ports of Indiana system. It is the main marketing piece that brings our very diverse and expansive system of ports all together for public view under one brand and one corporate structure. We use it to market our port resources and our tenant companies, which we do through substantial background information, maps, printable brochures, tenant information and more.

The website must reflect the broad range of capabilities, services and activities of the Ports of Indiana.

**Objectives:** Our first objective for the website is to provide an overview of Indiana’s three Ports. The website brings each port to the forefront with color-coded graphics and links along the left side of the page. (Links to each port’s section can also be found along the top of the page in the “Ports” drop-down menu.) The main page for each port includes a brief video summary of the port, with expanded sections that include a port overview, map, real estate information, cargo information, a port directory and additional resources. Another objective of the website is to inform our audience of notable current events. The two most recent news items are found on the main page, just below the scrolling header. The media center pulls the three most recent news pieces to the front and center; making it easy for our constituents to stay updated. It also includes a news archive, photo gallery, publications, research materials and more.



Additionally, the website serves as a way to generate business for our ports and port companies. The Real Estate section highlights available properties at each of the ports, with maps and other property information. It also includes all pertinent information site selectors need regarding economic development partners, requirements and more. Port companies are highlighted in the Port Directories with brief descriptions and contact information for each company, on the Port Map and within the cargo section.

The website also acts as a resource for key issues related to our ports. The Community & Environment section includes information on economic impact, education and environmental programs regarding the ports and waterborne shipping. The media center also has a Research section, which highlights studies involving the waterborne shipping's safety, environmental and economic impact statistics.

Recently, we've also begun using the website to help capture additional information and results from advertisements and direct mail pieces that Ports of Indiana launches. For advertisements, we used similar creative from the ad to create pages with vanity URL's. On those pages, we've tailored specific content to the audience of the ad as well as including a form to capture important lead generation information for our business development team. These pages are purposefully not navigable from our main landing pages as to allow us to monitor the ad value in driving audiences to our website. An example of what we've done to incorporate direct mail pieces on the website can be found on our Jeffersonville landing page. For this piece, we added a section to the main landing page for the port, with a photo of the direct mail piece, with a link to free materials. When clicked, the link automatically populates and email to our team requesting information. This not only allows us an opportunity to share our materials, but also gives us a way to capture contact information from interested parties. While we're still in the beginning phases of utilizing the website in this way and do not have complete results on these initiatives, we're excited about the interactions we have had thus far and the opportunities this could bring. An example of an ad and corresponding webpage are below.



Print Ad



Webpage with specialized URL

**Target Audiences:** The target audiences for our website includes: current port tenants and customers; prospective customers looking to locate at or use our ports; media; government officials; port communities' leaders; and economic development partners.

As a secondary focus, it is also geared toward the general public and raising awareness among those without any previous contact or knowledge of the Ports of Indiana.

#### **4. Actions and Communication Outputs**

**Strategies:** We need the site to fully-encompass the activities of the Ports of Indiana, yet be easily-navigated and user-friendly for both those viewing the site and our staff. Our primary strategy is to provide simple answers to the reoccurring question: "Indiana has ports?" One of our goals is to include a comprehensive description of the organization and its various functions for those who are not at all familiar with our ports or ports in general (government, community leaders, businesses that don't currently ship by water, general public) and to do it in an easy-to-understand format.

The organization is multifaceted and offers a broad scope of services. A challenge in the creation of the website involved breaking these down into a clear, concise, well-navigated site where information could be found easily.

**Tactics:** We need navigation on the website to be instinctive. On the homepage we highlight our organization's five primary focuses: each of the three ports, real estate and cargo. These feature a graphic link along the left hand side of the page for quick navigation. All of the sections, (Ports, Business Services, Media Center, Community & Environment, About Us and Contact) run across the top of the pages, for easy navigation between sections.

Content throughout the site is written to be concise and web-friendly. The website design also incorporates photos and graphics that are appropriate for the section in which it appears.

Ports of Indiana staff manage the daily upkeep of the site. To keep things simple, and avoid the need to update numerous pages for one statistic, one page can be linked to and from multiple pages. For example, the main Cargo page is linked to and from the homepage cargo graphic, business services and each of the ports' pages. This allows us to keep the site updated without having to weed page by page through the site, updating many references.

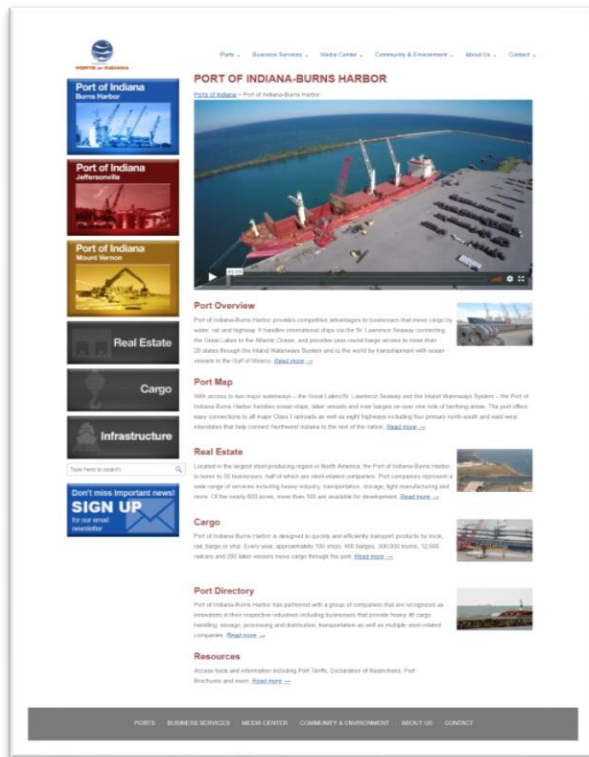
**Implementation Plan:** The Ports of Indiana website is designed and maintained by a combination of in-house staff and an outside vendor, with most updates being done by staff. By having staff update the website directly updates happen faster and are more cost-effective, reducing the website expenses by more than \$5,000 per year.

We aggressively promote the site by including the web address on a variety of our promotional materials and on all of our publications. Every presentation we give incorporates the address, driving new groups to the site. The link is also included on all press releases, emails and any information distributed by our organization, and as mentioned above, we're

beginning to utilize the website to determine the impact and value for specific advertisements.

## 5. Evaluations Methods and Communications Outcomes

We evaluate the success of [www.PortsofIndiana.com](http://www.PortsofIndiana.com) through website analytics. In the past year, 12,935 users have launched nearly 19,000 sessions on [www.PortsofIndiana.com](http://www.PortsofIndiana.com). Eighty-



six percent of users were new, and our bounce rate (percent of single-page sessions in which there was no interaction with the page) is less than 40 percent, which is consistent with the bounce rate this time last year. This means that users are purposefully visiting the website. In total, our website garnered 65,000 page views this year, which is an 8 percent increase from last year. The landing pages for each of our three ports are included among the top five pages viewed on our website; tying back to our objectives of providing an overview for each of the ports as well as aiding in generating business leads. Of the three pages for our individual port locations, the Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor garnered about 6 percent of the total page views. As we continue to monitor and evaluate the success of our website, the landing page for Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor will serve as a

tool to measure and compare the Port of Indiana-Jeffersonville and Port of Indiana-Mount Vernon pages with.

We have also significantly reduced printing costs for our main marketing brochures and magazine by posting them online. We still have some print costs for the brochures but they are not on an annual basis and we have eliminated delivery costs and postage now that our ports and potential customers can access every marketing brochure online.

The website [www.PortsofIndiana.com](http://www.PortsofIndiana.com) is the Ports of Indiana's primary marketing tool bringing together all the facets of our three-port system. The design of the website allows users to intuitively navigate the site. It is the flagship of our marketing efforts and it is something all of our employees take great pride in showing off to their contacts, associates, prospects and friends.

## **Website Links to be Reviewed by Judges**

Homepage: [www.PortsofIndiana.com](http://www.PortsofIndiana.com)

### **Additional pages:**

1. Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor: <http://www.portsofindiana.com/burnsharbor/>
2. Port of Indiana-Jeffersonville: <http://www.portsofindiana.com/jeffersonville/>
3. Port of Indiana-Mount Vernon: <http://www.portsofindiana.com/mountvernon/>
4. Media Center: <http://www.portsofindiana.com/media-center/>
5. Landing page for ad placed in Great Lakes Seaway Review:  
<http://www.portsofindiana.com/glsr/>
6. Port Maps: <http://www.portsofindiana.com/maps/>