

## AAPA Communications Awards Entry 2019

### Miscellaneous: Port of Oakland - Uniting the Staff



**Entry summary:** In 2018, the Port of Oakland signed new labor contracts with four unions representing nearly all its workers. Negotiations took longer than expected. There was no operational disruption during the bargaining period but labor-management relations were strained. Large groups of employees attended the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners meetings to express displeasure with negotiations.

Though settlements were ultimately reached with all bargaining units, some residual resentment remained. Staff displeasure posed a risk to completion of major strategic and operational initiatives. It also challenged a basic tenet of the Port's 5-year strategic plan which was to emphasize employee development. The Port identified a need to address employee issues. It sought a united workforce to get through an ambitious 2018 business agenda.

The Port implemented a comprehensive internal communications program to rally employee support. Electronic, print, web and face-to-face communications co-mingled to emphasize staff's critical importance to Port success. The message: The Port will only be as good as its employees make it.

The Port's Uniting the Staff campaign began in Q1 2018. It is ongoing. But in 2018 alone, it rallied employee support to achieve the following milestones:

- Successful year-1 implementation of a new 5-year growth strategy;
- Development of new market-leading services;
- Improved operating efficiency; and
- Record revenue and growth;
- Staff participation/buy-in for employee development programs.



Employee Development class

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

**– Describe in specific and measurable terms the situation leading up to creation of this entry.**

**– Briefly analyze the major internal and external factors that need to be addressed.**

The Port of Oakland adopted a new 5-year growth strategy in 2018. A centerpiece of the strategy was the pursuit of employee excellence. A key objective of the strategy: advance the Port's position as employer of choice in Oakland. This became a challenging goal considering protracted 2018 labor negotiations with four Port unions. The bargaining units agreed to new contracts without turning to job actions or operational disruption. But negotiations were sensitive. Labor-management relations became strained.

The Port had key 2018 objectives requiring employee buy-in. These included:

- Improving marine terminal performance;
- Opening the \$90 million Cool Port Oakland refrigerated distribution center;
- Beginning construction on the \$60 million Seaport Logistics Complex;
- Raising four ship-to-shore cranes making them 27 feet taller;
- Boosting TEU volume to an all-time high; and
- Initiating strategic employee development programs.

Given the state of labor relations and the strategic pressures it faced, the Port implemented a comprehensive employee communications program called Uniting the Staff. It was intended to improve labor-management relations and encourage support for the Port's strategic agenda.



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

The Port of Oakland's mission is to be fiscally sound and grow its business for the benefit of customers, employees and the communities it serves. But other stakeholder groups can't be served effectively without complete buy-in from Port employees. That's why the Port's internal communications program was developed. It called for better informing staff about Port business objectives. It emphasized recognizing employees for their contributions to the Port's successes. It highlighted training. And it acknowledged the strength that comes from workforce diversity. All elements were intended to align employee interests with Port objectives.

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

**– Describe the entry's goals or desired results.**

**– Describe the entry's objectives and list specific, measurable milestones needed to reach its goals**

The aim of Uniting the Staff was to align a cohesive workforce in support of the Port of Oakland's important strategic goals.

- The vision: The Port of Oakland is the employer of choice in the city.
- The objective: Overcome lingering sentiments from labor negotiations and unify employees behind critical business goals.
- The goal: Satisfied, high-achieving staff, reduce employee turnover, successful completion of key Port projects.
- The messages: 1) The Port will be only as good as its employees make it. 2) The Port will create and sustain a workplace culture of excellence and high engagement. 3) Investing in people permits them to grow.
- Milestones: Achievement of strategic business objectives, participation in employee development programs
- Audiences: Primary: rank-and-file employees; Secondary: managers, senior executives, Board of Port Commissioners



Employees' Service Recognition event

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

- Explain what strategies were developed to achieve success and why these strategies were chosen.**
- Specify the tactics used (i.e., actions used to carry out your strategies).**
- Detail the entry’s implementation plan by including timeline, staffing and outsourcing used.**

The Port’s Communications and Human Resources departments worked with senior management to develop and implement an employee communications program promoting staff alignment for achieving strategic business goals.



Strategies: 1) Dramatic impact – Significant, demonstrable investment of time/resources on new employee communications to illustrate management intent. 2) Career development – Provide meaningful training/advancement opportunities. 3) Diversity – Celebrate differences to overcome past discord/distrust.

Tactics: The Port of Oakland began with a foundational commitment to employee satisfaction by introducing a new 5-year strategic plan. More than a full page of the plan was devoted to eight employee satisfaction and development objectives. The Port’s Uniting the Staff communications plan evolved from the strategic plan. The communications plan employed activities including intranet, external website, videos, classroom training, media advertising, special events and advocacy campaigns.

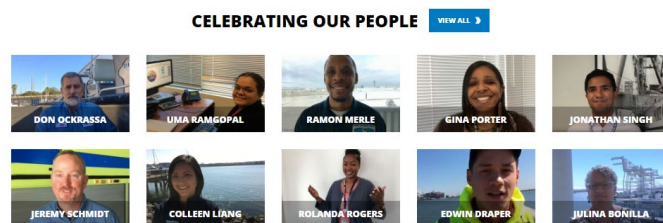
Implementation: Uniting the Staff began Q1 2018 with introduction of the Port’s 5-year strategic plan. It peaked in Q1 2019 with introduction of the Diversity & Inclusion advocacy campaign. Four Port Communications Division full-time staffers contributed to program development, implementation and communications along with six Human Resources staffers and two from IT. External consultants advised and led training for

the Diversity & Inclusion campaign and developed the Port's new Intranet site – Port360.

Here were the communications elements employed to support the Port's key message:

**The Port is only as good as its employees make it.**

- Make employees a central tenet of Port strategy
  - [Strategic plan](#), pages 8-9
- Develop a success plan that incorporates training and development opportunities
  - Port of Oakland year-round training classes
  - Port of Oakland job and promotional listings on Intranet
- Recognize employee contributions
  - Employees' Service Recognition event
  - [Employees' Service Recognition event - revolving portrait video](#) (video shared internally with staff – this link was created for convenience of this entry)
  - Celebrating our people video gallery ([www.portofoakland.com](http://www.portofoakland.com) – please scroll down the Port of Oakland home page to see the video gallery; it follows the press release section)



- Hellos and farewells summaries
- Improve employee communication
  - Launched new Port360 employee intranet – includes announcements regarding available training, internal promotions, new hires, internal business successes, Port related news article links, employee events, a Port happenings photo gallery, and Port videos about Port projects, community outreach and employees
  - Lobby screens with training class schedules
- Emphasize employee wellness
  - Announcements for fitness, yoga, healthy eating, stress-reduction classes
- Celebrate diversity
  - [Diversity & Inclusion video](#) (video shared internally with staff – this link was created for convenience of this entry)
  - Oakland Post diversity ads

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

**– Describe any formal/ informal surveys used, or anecdotal audience feedback received, that helped in evaluating the success of this entry.**

**– If possible, explain how this entry influenced target audience opinions, behaviors, attitudes or actions.**

Success of the Port's Uniting the Staff was measured along two tracks: 1) achievement of key business objectives; and 2) buy-in for employment development programs.

Metric: Achieving business objectives: The Port of Oakland reported record revenue and cargo volume in 2018. It opened a major new distribution facility – Cool Port Oakland – and began construction on another – the Seaport Logistics Complex.

Metric: Employee turnover rate decreased in 2018 compared to 2017.

2017: 10.26% (47) separations (458 employees)

2018: 6.11% (28) separations (458 employees)

Internal Promotions: More employees were promoted internally. This is attributed to employee buy-in for taking training offered through the Port's employee development program and belief in the opportunity for internal advancement.

2017: 2.83% 13 promotions

2018: 4.36% 20 promotions

2019: 1Q - 9 promotions

No. of staff enrolled in diversity training – 40 percent of all Port employees have already enrolled in this training.

No. of visitors to Port360 - 83 percent of users visit Today's Headlines and Employee News; average of 100 viewers per week (Half of Port staff have desktop computers; other employees like janitors have access through kiosks at the work site). Port360 includes the LearnCenter where employees can sign up for in-the-classroom trainings and can access web trainings directly from the site.

- Port of Oakland job and promotional listings on Intranet (Port360) – Twice a month
- Hellos and farewells summaries – Monthly (12 postings on Port360)
- Employees' Service Recognition event – close to half of our 463 employees attended this annual event; a few similar, but smaller events were held to reach 2nd and 3rd shift employees because some positions require round the clock coverage



Port staffer reading latest employee news on Port360

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## Port-wide Classes

October 2018 - July 2019

For more information (including translation), please contact Janet Jackson at [jjackson@portoakland.com](mailto:jjackson@portoakland.com) or (510) 627-1190.

如需更多有關材料(包括翻譯), 請聯繫

Janet Jackson, email: [jjackson@portoakland.com](mailto:jjackson@portoakland.com) 或致電 510-627-1190.

Si necesita más información sobre los cursos de formación profesional o si necesita información en español, por favor llame Janet Jackson al [jjackson@portoakland.com](mailto:jjackson@portoakland.com), 510-627-1190.

Enrollment is offered on a first-come basis. Attendance is subject to coverage and Class schedule and content subject to change.

Dear Port Employees,

Welcome to Fall 2019! We have an exciting lineup of knowledge and skill-enhancing classes available to boost your career. We encourage you to review this brochure and use the LearnCenter to sign up for classes as you plan for your professional and career growth.

### Instructor-Led Classes

Sign up early for classes that interest you. Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. To register, please visit the Port's LearnCenter (on the Port360 Intranet) and click on Catalog or Find Learning. Please consult with your supervisor prior to registering for a class.

Classes are offered in the following categories:

- **Business Skills** – Project Management, Critical Thinking, and Customer Service
- **Career Planning** – Preparing Your Internal Resume, and Acing an Internal Interview
- **Desktop Applications** – popular Microsoft Office classes, such as Excel, Access, (NEW!) Using Windows 10, Office 365, SharePoint and OneDrive, (NEW!) three-hour refresher Power-Up on Outlook, and Microsoft Project
- **Leadership and Management** – classes that inspire leadership and prepare supervisors and managers with the skills to plan, direct, engage, monitor and achieve objectives with their teams
- **Port Policy and Compliance** – Purchasing Policy and Procedures, supervisor's class on FMLA, Workers' Compensation and ADA, and Ethics for supervisors and non-supervisory employees
- **Port Specifics** – How to Write and Present Board Reports, New Employee Orientation, The Oakland City Charter, Commercial Real Estate, Aviation, and Maritime Terminal Operations
- **Safety** – Workplace and Personal Safety

### e-Learning

Learn at your own pace, at your convenience. Access a wide variety of courses, including Port-developed e-learning resources, courses from Skillssoft (one of the world's largest corporate training providers) and several other courses and videos offered by renowned training providers. Visit the LearnCenter (on the Port 360 Intranet) and click on Catalog and e-Learning to find courses of interest. Additional e-learning courses will be added this Fall.

No registration is required for e-learning. Simply click and launch a course or video from the LearnCenter. Please consult with your supervisor prior to taking a course.

Janet Jackson, Training & Development or call (510) 627-1190.

### Instructor-Led Classes by Category

Below is a summary of in-person, instructor-led classes organized by category and listed chronologically by the date of the first session.

Category	Classes	Dates
1. Business Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Essentials (2 Days)</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Providing Extraordinary Customer Service</li> <li>• Project Management Roundtable</li> </ul>	January 30, February 6 June 26 TBD TBD
2. Career Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Your Internal Resume</li> <li>• Ace the Internal Interview</li> </ul>	February 21 February 28
3. Desktop Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excel 2016 Level 1</li> <li>• Excel 2016 Level 2</li> <li>• Using Windows 10, Office 365, SharePoint and OneDrive (3 hours)</li> <li>• Excel 2016 Level 3</li> <li>• Access 2016 Level 1</li> <li>• Access 2016 Level 2</li> <li>• Outlook 2016 Power-up (3 hours)</li> <li>• Microsoft Project 2016 Level 1</li> </ul>	October 26 November 9 November 28 January 24 November 30 January 11 January 25 February 1 March 15
4. Leadership and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Art of Writing the Performance Evaluation</li> <li>• Completing Performance Evaluations Using Taleo Appraisal System</li> <li>4.1 Inspiring Management Certificate               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizing Supervisory Skills</li> <li>• Getting to Great</li> <li>• Hiring the Best Candidate</li> <li>• Creating a Respectful Work Environment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	October 10 November 6, 16, 20 May 8, 16, 24  April 17 May 1 July 10 July 10
5. Port Policy and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Purchasing Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• What Supervisors Need to Know about FMLA, Workers' Compensation and ADA</li> <li>• Ethics (Supervisory Employees) mandatory</li> <li>• Ethics (Non-supervisory Employees)</li> </ul>	December 7 January 17, February 22 March 7, 12 April 19, 25 April 26, May 2, 3, 8, 16, June 13
6. Port Specifics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Write and Present Board Reports</li> <li>• The Oakland City Charter: How Does the Charter Affect Port Governance, Operations, Personnel, Real Estate and Finance?</li> <li>• Introduction to Commercial Real Estate</li> <li>• Introduction to Aviation at OAK Airport</li> <li>• Introduction to Maritime Terminal Operations</li> <li>• New Employee Orientation</li> </ul>	October 30 May 17  June 14 June 21 June 28 TBD
7. Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace and Personal Safety</li> </ul>	November 16

## EmployeeNews / New job openings posted

April 25, 2019 – The following job openings have been posted at the Port of Oakland: Airport Ground Transportation & Parking Operations Coordinator; Airport Operations Specialist I; Aviation Senior Properties Representative; and Manager, Financial Planning. [Click here for information, or to apply.](#)

There is also a transfer opportunity for Semiskilled Laborer, due May 8. [Click here for more information.](#)

Last Thursday at 2:53 PM

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## EmployeeNews / New job opportunities at the Port of Oakland

July 16, 2018 - There are new job openings at the Port of Oakland: Human Resources Manager - Click here <http://www.portofoakland.com/business/job-center> for more information.

There is a transfer opportunity for Custodian, due July 26. Click here <https://portoakland1.sharepoint.com/HR/SitePages/Jobs.aspx> for more information.

Jul 16th, 2018 at 3:57 PM

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# *Employees' Service Recognition and Port Update*

All Port employees are invited to attend the following event:

**Thursday, January 31, 2019**  
**10:00 am to 12:00 noon**

**Metropolitan Golf Links**  
**10051 Doolittle Drive**  
**Oakland, CA 94603**

To RSVP, please call Cheryl Ho at (510) 627-1541  
or  
e-mail [cho@portoakland.com](mailto:cho@portoakland.com)

~Food will be provided~



## EmployeeNews / Employee recognition event next week

January 22, 2019 - The Port of Oakland's employee recognition event will be held on Jan. 31 from 10 a.m. to noon at Metropolitan Golf Links located at Oakland International Airport. The Port will recognize employees who have reached their 2018 service anniversaries (in five year increments). Breakfast will be provided. Please RSVP to Cheryl Ho at [cho@portoakland.com](mailto:cho@portoakland.com) and indicate if you need a ride to the event.

Jan 22nd, 2019 at 10:25 AM

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# EmployeeNews / Port employee hellos and farewells

September 4, 2018 - Please welcome the newest Port employees and give a fond farewell to the newly separated employees. Click on the attachment to see the list.



Sep 4th, 2018 at 9:48 AM

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Hello's and Farewells-Port Employees.pdf

The Port of Oakland is happy to announce the newest members of the Port of Oakland family. Please take a moment to welcome them.

Name	Job Title	Department
Adel Alsibai	Airport Operations Specialist I	Aviation
Kevin Fong	Director of Information Technology	Information Technology
Stacy Mattson	Airport Operations Manager, Landside	Aviation
Isaac Njuguna	Airport Operations Specialist I	Aviation
Sybrina Segura	Assistant Port Construction Administrator	Engineering
Leonard Sierra	Plumber	Aviation
Pamela Trawick	Human Resources Manager	Human Resources

Please congratulate the following employees in their new assignment.

Name	Job Title	Department
Antoine Stocker	Power Equipment Operator	Aviation

In addition, we wish the following employees a fond farewell as they have separated from the Port of Oakland.

Name	Job Title	Department
Edgar Lemi	Port Equipment Mechanic	Engineering



# PORT360 The Port of Oakland Employee Intranet

## TODAY'S HEADLINES

- Port Commission approves plan to reduce big-rig i...
- Oakland port truck management plan nears final a...
- Port-City of Oakland truck plan nears ok.url
- PIL starts service from Oakland to Vietnam.url
- Port of Oakland is a job creator.url
- Key bills for A's stadium plans advance.url
- Rebuild of MacArthur Maze gets tangled up.url
- Semi-truck overturns at Port of Oakland.url
- Free dance festival Saturday and Sunday.url
- Festival takes place at Jack London Square.url
- Farmhouse Kitchen sponsors festival.url
- Port of LA leads cybersecurity collaboration.url
- 737 Max, Southwest preps for return.url

## EMPLOYEE NEWS

### Senior maritime reporter here Tuesday

April 29, 2019 - Journal of Commerce Senior Editor Bill Mongelluzzo addresses the Northern California Propeller Club April 30 at noon at Sc...

### Ethics classes for non-supervisors start today

April 26, 2019 - Ethics classes for non-supervisors begin this morning. This class will cover ethical culture, transparency, and fairness ...

### Truck plan nears adoption

April 26, 2019 - A 5-year plan to make truck traffic less annoying moved closer to adoption at the Port of Oakland last night. The Port's ...

### Two festivals at Jack London Square this weekend

April 26, 2019 - Two cultural festivals take center stage at Jack London Square tomorrow and Sunday. Both are free and open

Finance

HR

IT

Legal

5 Year Strategic Plan

LearnCenter

All Forms

Emergency Center



**PORT OF OAKLAND**  
Diversity & Inclusion

Nondiscrimination Statement



2nd annual Port Day at Children's Fairyland



Port of Oakland - Economic F...

May 2019



People Search



Comments for this section of the intranet should be sent to Mike Zampa at [mzampa@portoakland.com](mailto:mzampa@portoakland.com)

### QUICK LINKS

External Port of Oakland Website

Oakland Airport Website

Ergonomics and Wellness

Oracle ERP

WebERS

Port Whistleblower Hotline

Port View GIS

Webmail

Granicus

LearnCenter

Taleo Perform

IT Help Desk Support



# Register for Classes!

## **FMLA, Workers' Compensation and ADA\***

Thursday, January 17, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm | OAK  
February 22, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm | Water St.  
March 6, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm | Water St. **(New)**

## **Using Windows 10, Office 365, SharePoint, & OneDrive (3 hours)**

January 24, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm | OAK  
January 24, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm | OAK

## **Project Management Essentials (2 Days)**

January 30, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm | Water St.  
February 6, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm | OAK

## **Outlook 2016 Power-Up (3 hours)**

February 1, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm | Water St.

## **Prepare Your Internal Resume**

February 21, 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Water St.

## **Ace the Internal Interview**

February 28, 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Water St.

## **Ethics – Supervisory Employees (Mandatory)\***

See LearnCenter for schedule.

*\*Classes in leadership and management curriculum for directors, managers and supervisors.*

Register through the LearnCenter on the Intranet. Please obtain your supervisor's approval prior to registering for classes.



# Management Classes - Drive Results!

## **Maximizing Supervisory Skills \***

April 17, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm | Water St.

## **Getting to Great \***

May 1, 8:30 am – 12:00 pm | Water St.

## **Hiring the Best Candidate \***

July 10, 8:30 am – 12:00 pm | Water St.

## **Creating a Respectful Work Environment \***

July 10, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm | Water St.

*\*Classes in leadership and management curriculum for directors, managers and supervisors.*

Register through the LearnCenter on the Port360. Please obtain your supervisor's approval prior to registering for classes.



## EmployeeNews / Mid-day wellness breaks at OAK

July 23, 2018 - For those who want to participate in a mid-day wellness break, there are some opportunities with co-workers at Oakland International Airport:

- Interested in lunchtime Restorative Yoga and Meditation? Please contact Keonnis Taylor at [krtaylor@portoakland.com](mailto:krtaylor@portoakland.com) for more information
- Want to join a Spartacus workout? Please contact Susan Fizzell at [sfizzell@portoakland.com](mailto:sfizzell@portoakland.com) for details.

Jul 23rd, 2018 at 12:57 PM

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## EmployeeNews / Port paying for first 50 Port runners at Festival

February 20, 2019 - The Oakland Running Festival is scheduled Sunday, March 24, at Eastshore Park. The Port of Oakland Wellness Program will sponsor up to \$40 of the entry cost for the first 50 Port employees who participate. [Click here to register](#). Please register by March 1. If registering for a race that exceeds \$40, write a check to the Port of Oakland for the balance and submit it to Stacie Chestnut. If you are unable to attend after you have registered, you will be required to reimburse the Port for its payment of \$40. To register your family members or other non-Port employees, please complete a separate form for each registrant, make a check payable to the Port of Oakland and submit it to Stacie Chestnut. Registration forms will not be processed until payment is received. Please contact Cheryl Ho at x71541 for questions.

Feb 20th, 2019 at 4:10 PM

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# WOMEN MAKING HISTORY NOW



Port of Oakland Senior Managers (L to R): Pam Kershaw, Daria Edgerly, Amy Tarpe, Rebecca Haggerty, Sara Lee

### **Amy Tarpe, Social Responsibility Director:**

I'm proud to work in an organization where women contribute to our success at every level. As the Port of Oakland continues on this path, I'm excited for what the future holds.

### **Daria Edgerly, Secretary to the Port Board of Commissioners:**

As an Oakland native, I am passionate about my position as Secretary to the Port Board of Commissioners. By supporting our Board members in their duties, it allows me to give back to the city I love.

### **Pamela Kershaw, Commercial Real Estate Director:**

I am honored to work alongside such a talented group of female colleagues here at the Port.

### **Rebecca Haggerty, Chief Audit Officer:**

I am grateful to those who blazed the trail and opened opportunities in auditing to women. Today, the Port thrives by hiring people based on merit, regardless of gender.

### **Sara Lee, Chief Financial Officer:**

I enjoy working in this environment where women are well represented throughout our organization.

**WOMEN KEEP THE PORT OF OAKLAND MOVING – THANK YOU!**



**PORT OF OAKLAND**

[www.portofoakland.com](http://www.portofoakland.com)





# Port of Oakland Women's History Month



**AMY THARPE,**  
Director of Social Responsibility

**AMY THARPE**, Port of Oakland's Director of Social Responsibility, wears many hats in her line of work. She is responsible for partnering with the community and businesses to promote positive social and economic changes, and develop a social responsibility strategy that will add value to the Port's business development activities and to the communities in Oakland and throughout the region. And on any given day things and events can present different challenges.

Oakland benefits from the important outcomes of Tharpe's job because she could change a local hire policy on the construction side to encourage the hiring of more residents for jobs on Port projects at the airport.

Tharpe could also be working on methods to ensure that small and local businesses are in the Port's concessions program at Oakland Airport as well. She is responsible for ensuring the Port is contributing to the community. Her mission is to make sure that the community thrives along with the Port.

The impact area for the Port includes Oakland, Alameda, San Leandro and Emeryville. Tharpe's team is also responsible for bringing in the right people to organize and give feedback on projects. They provide grants and are responsible for public-facing events like the Port's free Harbor Tours that run May through October.

Her Division makes sure that people are paid a living wage and a prevailing wage which is required on Port projects. Tharpe began working on policy issues early in her career while working on legislative issues on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. She returned to the Bay Area and worked on affordable housing policy for the Mayor of San Francisco.

Tharpe chose to focus her work on improving her community, the City of Oakland, to help make a positive impact. She wanted to work for the Port of Oakland so she could be a part of the Port's goals "to make sure that its local community benefits from the organization's success."

She's a graduate of UC Berkeley and was interested in issues

*Tharpe: "Follow your passion, work diligently to be the best at your craft or whatever you decide to pursue and always think about how you can pay it forward. Work hard, demonstrate, be committed to success and always think about how you make sure you're not the last women in the role that you work. Create a ladder for others to be able to get where you are. Everything will come your way! You can't stop success from coming."*

that impact communities both in economics as well as in social justice issues. Tharpe majored in Political Economy, which was a blend of Political Science, History and Economics, and she says it brought a clearer understanding of why the disparity in economic opportunity exists in our community and why there are systemic barriers that keep some people from progressing while others succeed.

She credits UC Berkeley for giving her a strong foundation and the Kennedy School at Harvard for giving her more focus on the need for affordable housing/community development.

Despite a successful journey in public policy, Tharpe's story is a little different from the others. She knows that if it were not for the women who came before her, she would've had a harder time getting doors opened for her.

Tharpe benefited from women who were committed to the same policy issues and social justice such as Mary Lee Widener who was the President and CEO of Neighborhood Housing Services of America and who saw something in Tharpe's potential. Widener took Tharpe under her wings as a mentee and helped train her on helping low-income families get home ownership through Widener's organization Neighborhood Housing Service of America. Working for Widener, Tharpe got exposed to the housing industry all over the country with 200 different organizations in their network that included traveling all across the United States when Tharpe was in her late 20's.

Tharpe's independence comes from being exposed early in her career to unique opportunities. She says she owes her success to women who were trailblazers in their field and created paths that supported her career. Tharpe has adopted the credo that she too must commit herself to opening doors for those who want to achieve this same success.



**KRISTI MCKINNEY,**  
Assistant Director of Aviation

**KRISTI MCKINNEY**, Port of Oakland's Assistant Director of Aviation, oversees all that the customer experiences at Oakland International Airport (OAK) with day-to-day operations. This includes security, air-side, terminal services, IT, facilities, maintenance, parking and ground transportation.

McKinney, inspired by her family's involvement in aviation, knew at an early age that she would follow a similar path. Her father worked as an aircraft mechanic at OAK. McKinney's sister was a flight attendant. When asked what she wanted to be while in elementary school, McKinney said she was going to be a pilot. But by the time she became a student at San Jose State, she realized there were more opportunities in Aviation. McKinney learned about airport management and discovered that running an airport was like managing a small city and found that fascinating.

McKinney knew in college that she'd be charting her own path because she was one of only two women in her aviation classes. She worked as an aircraft mechanic with NASA, which at the

*McKinney's advice: "Maintain confidence and connect with other women who are on the nontraditional side of Aviation. Jump at every opportunity and where you don't see opportunities don't be afraid to create one."*

time only had a men's locker room. Her NASA coworkers routinely cleared the locker room to allow her to change for her shift. McKinney had entered an area of the aviation industry where women were under-represented. She feels that a lot of progress has been made regarding women in aviation since her career began, but there's still more that can be achieved.

While at San Jose State Kristi McKinney was mentored by Chuck Foster, who once served as the Port of Oakland's Executive Director. Foster helped McKinney focus her career goals on airport management. She applied for a position at the Port of Oakland, which owns Oakland Airport. Today she oversees the airport's day-to-day operations. Her pioneering efforts will continue to open doors for other women who want to enter this field.



**MARY RICHARDSON,**  
Deputy Port Attorney

**MARY RICHARDSON**, Port of Oakland's Deputy Port Attorney, supports various Port divisions, including Maritime and Engineering. Richardson helps to manage the legal aspects of drafting contracts for moving major Port projects forward and managing legal work for some of the Port's real estate development projects. She negotiates various legal and business issues that arise from the inception of an idea for a Port project to its physical completion.

Richardson is a Bay Area native who grew up in Richmond. She attended Holy Names High School in Oakland. Richardson received her undergraduate degree in Economics from Cornell University in New York and attended law school at U.C. Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. After finishing law school, she started practicing in Las Vegas and has been a practicing attorney for 22 years.

Her "motto" has always been "to follow opportunities." Richardson's mother inspired her to pursue every opportunity and the true value of mentorship and service. Her mother worked full time, yet made the time to actively serve in the parent-teacher group at her elementary school.

Richardson pursued a different path from most of her peers. When she was not offered an opportunity to intern at a larger, more prestigious law firm, Richardson chose to go to a smaller firm in Las Vegas where she was able to do depositions, arbitrations and trials. A few years later, she returned to the Bay Area and took a job with a law firm that worked on public works construction projects with various public agencies, including the Port of Oakland.

This allowed her the opportunity to work for former Port Attorney, David Alexander, who mentored Richardson. While at the law firm, Richardson got the opportunity to work on the Terminal 2 expansion and renovation at Oakland International Airport. Over the next several years, she built her construction and development portfolio working for law firms and a local construction company. In 2008, another opportunity came with an opening for the Deputy Port Attorney position. Richardson has served as a Deputy Port Attorney for 11 years. As part of her job at the Port, Richardson

*This facility allows companies to rapidly export their products to Asia. She says, "I look for opportunities even in places where you don't think they are, even if it's not your first choice, or the traditional choice. Once you get there do your best and be your best. Because every opportunity will eventually lead to your right path."*

looks for opportunities to give back and mentor, including working with the Port interns, visiting high school students and more.

She's worked with many of the Port's departments and on special projects. One recent major project that Richardson worked on was "Cool Port Oakland", a refrigerated logistics facility that opened in November of 2018 in the heart of the seaport. Cool Port Oakland provides temperature-controlled storage and logistics for companies transporting perishable foods internationally. The 280,000-square-foot facility with 90 truck dock doors can send up to a million tons of perishable product through the Port of Oakland annually.



**LAURA ARREOLA,**  
Community Affairs Manager

**LAURA ARREOLA**, Port of Oakland's Community Affairs Manager, develops community partnerships where she facilitates creating a path for local residents to have a voice and provide feedback on the way the Port of Oakland designs a program.

One of the proudest moments for Arreola has been her involvement in helping to create an innovative "jobs policy." The policy is for implementing local job opportunities at a new, modern distribution warehouse that's going to be under construction later this year. The warehouse will be more accessible to the railroads that are near the Port's marine terminals for moving goods.

Arreola was able to help facilitate the stakeholder's voices in that process which provided a way to ensure community benefits relative to local hiring at this new facility. She is encouraged by the opportunities to provide employment for disadvantaged individuals, the formerly incarcerated and single parents who need jobs and skills training.

*She knows that creating new job policies can be complicated for some who want to do business as usual. But Arreola helps to carry the voice of the new generation. "Always be your best self and let that be your guide. Be flexible and ride out the wave. Be your best self and you'll always end up in a good place. Know your opportunity when you see it and be brave to follow through on it. Your voice matters."*

Arreola enjoys including the community's voice into many of the Port's projects.

Arreola studied at UC Santa Cruz and traveled to Costa Rica and Mexico where she increased her knowledge of global economic development through the school's abroad program. One of her first jobs was working at the U.S. Department of Commerce in San Francisco.

While there, she learned how to help create opportunities for local businesses to sell their goods in foreign markets. Even though her commerce work was mainly male-dominated, Arreola sees changes emerging that will give more women opportunities to flourish. Those opportunities have allowed her to work closely with the Port of Oakland where she continues her career that is growing and evolving daily and where she now can implement inclusive planning.

Laura Arreola cited her father's work, owning and operating a trucking company hauling cargo at Southern California ports, as a major influence in her career path and as motivation. Arreola knew she had an interest in job policy at a young age because she observed how her own family benefitted from moving cargo at seaports.

And she feels proud to be helping to create new systems while working with many partners of the Port. "Changes are continuously occurring as the Port of Oakland moves away from old traditions."

