



2019 AAPA Communications Competition

Entry Classification:

Videos

Entry:

**Port of Tacoma
1918: A Year of Destiny**

Category 3

The Port of Tacoma's Centennial Video

The Port of Tacoma celebrated its centennial year in 2018. The Port was voted into existence by the citizens of Pierce County on Nov. 5, 1918

To celebrate that milestone, the Port launched a 100-day celebration in July to celebrate “100 years in 100 days.” The video was one of more than 20 different communications and outreach products and programs the Port used to highlight its centennial and connect with its citizens.

The video highlights the development of the Port of Tacoma and the important role it plays—both historically and currently—in being a catalyst for jobs and economic vitality in our region and an environmental steward.

The name of the video is “1918: A Year of Destiny.” The title was chosen to fit into the theme of the event where the video debuted—the Tacoma Historical Society’s annual Destiny Dinner held in October 2018. The Port was the lead sponsor of this event.

Here is a [link \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BRuKlbtIPc\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BRuKlbtIPc) to the centennial video. The video is 4 minutes, 11 seconds long.

1. What were the entry’s specific communications challenges or opportunities?

When the Port started planning its centennial celebration in 2016, it identified video as one of the many ways to tell its story. The Port uses video in many other communications and outreach efforts.

For example, for its 75th anniversary celebration in 1993, the Port produced a 15-minute historical video, which was the major component of its Port speaker’s bureau that year. That video featured some rare movie footage shot in the 1920s showing early cargo handling techniques at Port facilities—including a monorail crane that moved cargo between warehouse and shipside. Some of that same historical footage was used again in this project.

One of the challenges for the video project was figuring out exactly **when** it should debut. Many of the Port’s centennial “products” (e.g., Port timeline panels, Centennial Container, centennial magazine, etc.) were launched in late July—at the start of the Port’s 100-day centennial celebration. Since the Port had already produced a PowerPoint show highlighting the Port’s history for use in its speakers bureau throughout the 100-day celebration, Port staff decided to debut the video towards the end of its centennial celebration cycle.

Since one of the Port’s overall goals for the centennial was to strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones—Port staff worked to include “other voices” in the video, including Gary Locke, former U.S. Ambassador to China and former governor of Washington state. Given Mr. Locke’s extremely busy business and travel schedule, getting on his calendar for a brief interview with him at his Seattle office was a major challenge—and a major accomplishment. That interview was conducted Oct. 2, 2018.

Additional video interviews with key individuals were also conducted in early October. Interview questions were developed to ensure each “voice” focused on different key area that would help the Port tell its story. The script was finalized once the “rough cut” of the video and interviews was completed. Post-production work was completed the week before its debut at the Destiny Dinner.

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

The Port of Tacoma's mission is to "Deliver prosperity by connecting customers, cargo and community with the world." The Port's centennial video gives the viewer insights into how the Port has been working to do exactly that for the last 100 years.

The video also helped the Port achieve four of the major goals it set for the entire centennial celebration:

1. Celebrate the Port's past achievements and highlight our future opportunities and challenges.
2. Increase our community's understanding and appreciation of the Port's historical milestones, evolution, current operations and future plans.
3. Strengthen our Port's existing community partnerships and create new ones.
4. Highlight the many ways the Port creates jobs and economic vitality throughout our region (historically and currently).

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

The Port had originally budgeted about \$30,000 to hold its own gala centennial celebration near its 100th anniversary milestone. But in late 2017, the possibility of co-sponsoring a large celebration that would also highlight the Port's centennial emerged. After initial discussions with the Tacoma Historical Society in early 2018, the Port solidified its plans to partner with them and be the major sponsor of the Tacoma Historical Society's annual Destiny Dinner event on Oct. 20, 2018. The theme of that event was "*1918: A Year of Destiny.*"

The sponsorship cost the Port \$15,000. Not only did it offer a cost-effective alternative to the Port's original stand-alone gala celebration idea, it also gave the Port the opportunity to tell its story to a broad range of community members.

The Tacoma Historical Society's plan for the event was to highlight a number of key events that happened in 1918—the end of World War I, the opening of two major theaters in Tacoma, the creation of the Port of Tacoma and more—all in the evening's program. Given that focus, the Port offered to produce a short historical video that could be used as part of the program. The event planning committee agreed with the idea. Rod Koon and Port commissioner Clare Petrich served on the 10-person event planning committee and Rod served as the MC for the event.

Fitting the video into the Destiny Dinner's hour-long program also presented a challenge. For one, it meant the video needed to be short—just a few minutes long. But it also meant the video would be a good length for use on YouTube, social media, etc.

The Port also wanted to include other key historical developments that were going on in the region in 1918—so the viewer would have a better context for what was going on in their community and in the world at the time the Port was created.

4. What actions were taken and what communications outputs were deployed?

The entire video project (with the exception of the narrator and music) was produced in house. Script writing and all videography, interviews, editing, etc. was done by the Port's communications specialists Joe Barrentine and Akiko Oda. Rod Koon also provided some assistance on the project.

Aside from the investment of staff time, the hard costs for the video were minimal: \$250 for the freelance voiceover talent and \$150 for the music and broadcast rights.

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

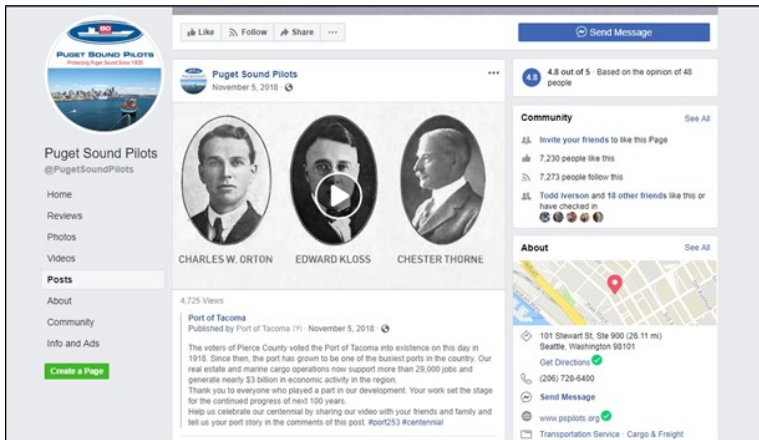
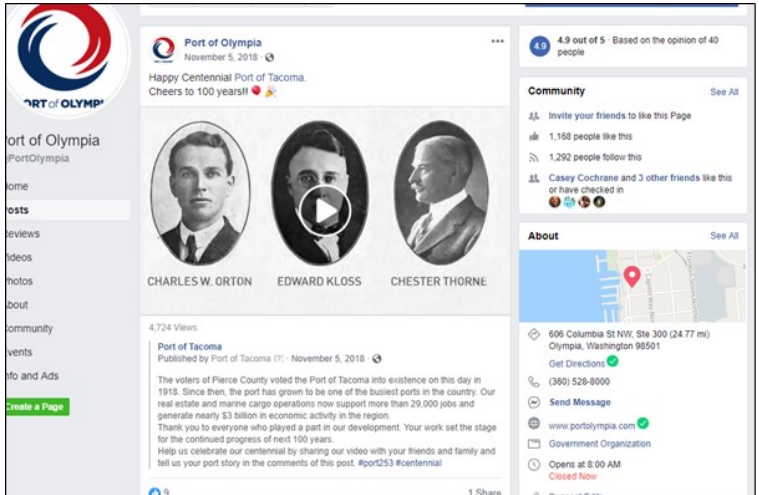
Nearly 400 people viewed the Port video at the Destiny Dinner. A post-event online survey (using SurveyMonkey) was sent to some of the attendees to get feedback on the various parts of the event. A total of 73 percent rated the video *Outstanding* and 23 percent rated it *Good*.

While the video was produced primarily for use at the Destiny Dinner, it has also proven to be an effective tool to educate a wide range of audiences about the Port and the region's history as well. Here are a few examples of its uses and results:

- The video was shown at a special centennial celebration held for Port employees on Nov. 5, 2018—the Port's actual anniversary date. More than 80 employees saw it at the event and others viewed it when a link was sent to all employees via email and the Port's monthly newsletter.
- The Port posted the video to YouTube on its 100th anniversary date—Nov. 5, 2018. In addition, the video was shared across the Port's social media channels. The video is still the Port's top-viewed video to this day.

On Facebook, the centennial video reached more than 10,000 people and garnered more than 4,700 total views and 1,700 engagements.
- The video has received nearly 8,400 impressions on Twitter and 3,000 impressions and LinkedIn.
- In addition, the Port made the video available to TV Tacoma—the City of Tacoma's government-run television station. They were impressed with both the quality and content of the short video and added it to their rotation of short "special features" that they use to round out their programming. It is estimated the video was shown more than 180 times on TV Tacoma over a three-month period.
- The Port has also incorporated the video into the orientation sessions it gives to new employees throughout the year. The video is also available for use in the Port's speaker's bureau and at other Port community outreach efforts, presentations and speeches.

Based on the quality of the video, the wide range of uses it has had and the positive feedback it has received, the Port believes it is one of the most effective (and cost-effective) components of its entire centennial celebration.



PARTNERS IN HISTORY: The Port of Olympia, the Puget Sound Pilots and ILWU Local #23 were three key groups that shared the Port's centennial video on their Facebook page.