

Tenant Spotlight: Florida Sugar & Molasses Exchange

AAPA 2020 Communications Awards Program, Classification 4- Community/
Educational Outreach

Summary:

The Port of Palm Beach has begun to highlight its tenants in a new educational video series called “Tenant Spotlight.” The Port of Palm Beach’s “Tenant Spotlight” is designed to help the community understand the different businesses operating at the Port, the types of cargo the port handles and the economic impact our Port has on the local and state economies. The educational video was entirely produced in house by Public Information Officer Yaremi Farinas. She received videography assistance from the Director of Planning and Development, Carl Baker.

This particular “Tenant Spotlight” features a cooperative called Florida Sugar and Molasses Exchange. The cooperative is responsible for selling and shipping locally harvested raw sugar and molasses for its members. The video shows where the sugar and molasses come from, transportation to the port, how it’s handled when it arrives and how it’s moved from land to sea. Our “Tenant Spotlight” is posted on our YouTube channel, then uploaded on our website, published in our monthly e-newsletter and shared on all social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Our hope is to continue this community outreach initiative so the public knows we are a worthy neighbor.

Watch video here.

Time: 2:30-7:30

1. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES OR OPPORTUNITIES

Port of Palm Beach Executive Director Manuel Almira announced the start of our “Tenant Spotlight” late last summer during a quarterly tenant meeting. His goal was to showcase the wide range of operations that depend on the Port.

While port staff conducts presentations and tours to members of the public, our new “Tenant Spotlight” gives the public an inside look at our world, without physically being present on port property. For this particular video, we focused on an operation that generates more than 3,000 direct and indirect jobs through harvesting, processing, transporting, selling and shipping bulk sugar and molasses.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES:

With this video, we had the opportunity to showcase the bulk cargo that’s unique to our port. The Port of Palm Beach is the only port in Florida that currently handles raw sugar and molasses, in large part because of our prime location.

We also got a chance to teach the community about the many facets of the sugarcane industry by securing a tour of a sugar mill.

In addition, we had the opportunity to provide the viewers with numerous visual perspectives by shooting drone video of the sugarcane fields, using a go-pro to videotape the sugar mill and we obtained photos and videos from Florida Sugar and Molasses Exchange. Furthermore, this project gave us the opportunity to provide the community with an understanding of where the locally harvested raw sugar ends up. The photos we gathered of the refined sugar helped build a personal connection, since it’s an item many people purchase at grocery stores.

While working on this project, we faced a few challenges that dealt mainly with timing. It took us multiple calls, emails and a good two months to gain access to the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative sugar mill in Belle Glade. The delay was due to slow response from the cooperatives and because of the holiday season.

Once they gave us the green light, we spent an entire day in Belle Glade, Florida located 50 miles west of the Port of Palm Beach. There we had the opportunity to shoot drone video in one of the harvested fields, we received a tour of the mill and conducted interviews with the operations manager and the Senior Vice President of Government & Grower Relations. Being present at the mill gave us the opportunity to shoot video of the trucks hauling the sugar and molasses from the mills to the Port.

Another challenge we faced was keeping track of when the sugar barges, molasses tankers and trucks were arriving in port, in order to shoot video needed for the project.

Lastly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it took an additional month to get approval from the two cooperatives who participated in the video.

2. Complementing the Overall Mission

Port of Palm Beach's mission is to sustain world-class port operations and serve as a catalyst for the regional economy and a pillar for the local community. We made sure this project showcased how the sugar and molasses operations are exclusive to our port and how they are responsible for employing thousands of people in our neighboring communities.

3. Planning and Programming Components

Our goal was to provide the public a unique way to learn about a business that is dependent on our seaport and the impact it has on fueling our local economy.

Key Objectives:

- Create an educational video that is not time sensitive and can be used anytime in the future
- Show cargo operations beginning to end

- Effective use of video
- Capture distinct footage
- Showcase the port's unique bulk cargo operation
- Use natural sound to help tell the story
- Display the different jobs associated with Port tenant
- Educate the public on the amount of sugar and molasses shipped from Port
- Reach at least 1,500 people using our website and social media

Audience:

- Primary- The public
- Secondary--Port of Palm Beach tenants, commissioners, employees, customers and stakeholders

4. Actions and Outputs

This project took months of planning and developing strategies to achieve our goals.

Strategies:

- Constant communication with FSME to secure interviews
- Close contact with Port Duty Officer for vessel scheduling
- Requested video and photos that displayed a perspective we were unable to capture
- Know what video to shoot and questions to ask
- Transcribe all video before writing and editing

Timeline:

September 23rd -Contacted Vice President of Florida Sugar and Molasses Exchange about project

Oct. 8th- FSME VP responded and said he would contact its other cooperatives

Oct. 14th- Created video and interview list

Oct. 24th- Received vessel schedule from FSME

Oct. 25th- Shot video of sugar being loaded onto barge in port

Oct. 28th- Shot video of molasses tanker in port

November 6th- Meet FSME VP at office to discuss project proposal

November 14th- Interview with FSME VP at sugar and molasses terminals and received some video and photos

November 14th- Videotaped sugar and molasses trucks arriving at port

November 26th- Contacted FSME for update on sugar mill tour

Dec. 10th- Scheduled sugar mill tour shoot date for Jan. 7th

Jan 3rd- Created list of questions, interviews and video for upcoming shoot

Jan 7th - Toured sugar mill in Belle Glade, conducted interviews & shot drone video

Feb 3rd- 10th- Transcribed interviews

Feb 18th-25th – Wrote script

March 2nd- 9th- Edit

March 11th- Shot standups

March 12th- Shared video with FSME

March 18th- Made small editing changes

March 19th- March 31st- Waited for refined sugar photos

April 1st- Received refined sugar photos

April 2nd- Incorporated photos to video

April 3rd- April 15th- Waited for approval

April 16th- Tenant Spotlight approved by Executive Director and FSME

April 22nd- Project posted on port website, YouTube and social media pages

5. Communication Outcomes

We published our Florida Sugar and Molasses Exchange “Tenant Spotlight” on our website, YouTube channel and social media pages on April 22, 2020. We received the most views on Facebook with more than 700 video views in just one month. We reached more than 2,300 people and had 287 post engagements. The feedback was positive with almost 50 likes and several shares. FSME was thankful and proud to share the video with their stakeholders. We believe our “Tenant Spotlight” project continues to educate our community and it created a strong rapport between our tenant and Public Information Officer.

