

North Carolina Cranes

*North Carolina State Ports Authority
2020 AAPA Communications Awards
Classification 7: Overall Campaign*

Campaign Summary

North Carolina Cranes

North Carolina Ports developed a multi-faceted campaign aimed at informing North Carolinians of the important role NC Ports plays in the state's economy. NC Ports chose to center the campaign around a sports theme as a fun and nontraditional way to introduce and educate NC communities about the Ports Authority. The North Carolina Cranes campaign featured outdoor boards, radio ads, print ads and a microsite. Additionally, it featured an internal roll out to familiarize employees with and build excitement about the campaign.

What is NC Ports trying to achieve?

Create pride in, and support for, the role North Carolina Ports plays in the economic vitality of the state.

What message does NC Ports want to convey?

North Carolina Ports is good for me and it's good for North Carolina.

Meet the North Carolina Cranes

North Carolina Cranes

Introducing the North Carolina Cranes, North Carolina's "ports team," the team that represents the hardworking people who run our ports and the beating heart of everyone who cheers for our state's economy.

[MEET THE NC CRANES](#)



A Closer Look at the North Carolina Cranes Campaign



Print

Carteret News Times
Our State



Outdoor

11 billboard
locations across
North Carolina



Radio

129 Stations
Reaches all 100
counties in NC



NORTH CAROLINA, THIS IS YOUR PORTS TEAM



2018
SEASON
STATS

\$15.4 BILLION
PUT ON THE BOARD

OUR PORTS CONTRIBUTED
\$15.4 BILLION TO OUR
STATE'S ECONOMY.

87,700
JOBS SCORED

WE DIRECTLY AND
INDIRECTLY SUPPORTED
87,700 JOBS ACROSS OUR STATE.

322,391
TOUCHDOWNS

WE PASSED MORE THAN
300,000 20-FT CONTAINERS
FROM SHIPS TO SHORE.

As the fastest ports team on the East Coast, we don't just play hard for local and regional businesses. We do it for every North Carolinian. Because the bigger our team spirit is, the stronger our state can be. Cheer us on at NCcranes.com.

**NORTH
CAROLINA
PORTS**

Statewide Ad
Carteret News Times
Our State



**SCORING
87,700 JOBS**
FOR OUR STATE

**North Carolina
Cranes**
NORTH CAROLINA PORTS

CHEER ON YOUR PORTS TEAM AT NCCRANES.COM



**WINNING
\$15.4 BILLION**
FOR OUR STATE

**North Carolina
Cranes**
NORTH CAROLINA PORTS

CHEER ON YOUR PORTS TEAM AT NCCRANES.COM

Billboards

- Alamance County - I-85/40
- Brunswick County - US 74/76 W
- Charlotte - I-77, US 74, I-85
- Johnston County - I-40
- Mecklenburg County - I-77
- Robeson County - I-95, I-85/40
- Rockingham County - US 74 Bypass
- Wake County - I-440/40

Get Hyped

Hype Man: Introducing...
From Wilmington and Morehead City
North Carolina...
The delivery dominators...
The supply chain champions...
It's the line up that scored \$15.4 billion for
our state's economy

Fan: Woo!

Hype Man: And Supported more than 87,700 jobs...
Your very own ports team...
The NORTH CAROLINA...CRANES!

Announcer: At North Carolina Ports, we play hard for
our state's economy. Now that's something
to cheer about. Check out our season
highlights at nccranes.com.

Radio

Two 30 second ads featured
on 129 stations across
North Carolina for a
total of 434 spots



[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

Halftime

Coach: Alright, everyone. It's a hard hat game out there. But we're the North Carolina Cranes.

Player 1: Woo! Yeah!

Coach: And this is our shipyard.

Player 2: That's right.

Coach: We support more than 87,700 jobs in North Carolina.

Player 1: Oh yeah!

Coach: And last year, we put up \$15.4 billion to the state's economy.

Player 2: That's nine zeroes, coach!

Coach: It sure is! So let's get back out there and MOVE! THAT! CARGO!

Announcer: At North Carolina Ports, we play hard for our state's economy. Now that's something to cheer about. Check out our season highlights at nccranes.com.

Radio

Two 30 second ads featured
on 129 stations across
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[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



NORTH CAROLINA, THIS IS YOUR PORTS TEAM

We're a state-focused, globally connected team of transportation and logistics all-stars. With home fields in Wilmington and Morehead City, along with an inland location in Charlotte, we play hard for our state's economy every day. It's a tough schedule, but it's worth it. Because our state is worth it.

SEASON STATS

As the fastest ports team on the East Coast, we don't just play hard for local and regional businesses. We do it for the entire state's economy.

2018

Our ports contributed \$15.4 billion to our state's economy.

Microsite

New microsite features North Carolina Ports' economic contribution numbers from its 2018 Economic Impact Study conducted by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) at North Carolina State University

[CLICK TO VIEW WEBSITE](#)

Challenges & Opportunities

Opportunities

North Carolina Ports has undergone significant growth over the past five years experiencing record revenue years in FY16 and FY18. FY20 year-to-date (July 2019-March 2020) container volume through the Port of Wilmington increased 12% over the previous year and general cargo volume increased 38% over the prior year. Refrigerated container volume through the Port of Wilmington has quadrupled from FY14 to FY19. Additionally, annual tonnage through the Port of Morehead City is up 100% from FY14 to FY19.

As the Ports Authority continues to grow, so does its economic contribution to North Carolina.

According to a 2018 Economic Contribution Study conducted by ITRE at North Carolina State University, NC Ports contributes:

- 87,700 jobs across North Carolina
- \$687.2 million in state and local tax revenue annually
- \$15.4 billion in economic output annually

As an economic engine for North Carolina, NC Ports recognized the importance of educating communities across the state regarding its important role in supporting the overall economy. The North Carolina Cranes campaign allowed NC Ports to share this information in a fun and captivating way through outdoor boards, print ads, radio ads and a new microsite.

Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges of the North Carolina Cranes campaign was measuring success due to a lack of call to action. The campaign was designed as an educational tool as opposed to a traditional marketing campaign with the goal of attracting new business. During the early stages of campaign creation, NC Ports established its primary success metrics as word-of-mouth followed by microsite visits. Overall, NC Ports was looking for good sentiment anecdotally.

The North Carolina Cranes campaign was NC Ports' first attempt at a community focused campaign compared to its traditional B2B marketing efforts. Since this was the Ports Authority's first try at a campaign solely focused on North Carolina communities, a key challenge was overcoming lack of brand recognition and knowledge of NC Ports within North Carolina. It was important North Carolina Ports found a creative and captivating way to spread its message of economic prosperity while maintaining a resemblance of the overall look and feel of the NC Ports brand.

Mission

Mission Statement

The mission of the North Carolina State Ports Authority is to enhance the economy of the state of North Carolina. The Ports Authority will be managed like a business, focused on the requirements of its customers. North Carolina's ports are recognized for self-sustaining operations, environmental stewardship, highly efficient workforce, satisfied customers, and modern, well-maintained facilities and equipment.

Support the Mission

The North Carolina Cranes campaign embodies a key component of NC Ports' mission: ***Enhance the economy of the state of North Carolina***. The campaign supports the Ports Authority's mission by highlighting its economic contributions through job creation, state and local tax revenue, overall economic output, container volume, container truck moves, vessel calls and import and export tonnage identified in its 2018 Economic Contribution Study.

[CLICK HERE FOR STUDY](#)

Planning & Programming

Goals

The North Carolina Cranes campaign focused on informing North Carolinians about the important role NC Ports plays in the state's economy. It also served to introduce and educate NC communities about the Ports Authority. The campaign was designed to feature information from NC Ports' economic contribution study. The Ports Authority wanted communities across the state to obtain a better understanding of the organization's role in supporting the economy.

Additionally, the campaign featured an internal roll out to familiarize employees with and build excitement about the campaign and the critical role they play as a North Carolina Cranes team member.



Primary Audience

Local, regional and state communities



Secondary Audience

Local, regional and state leaders



Tertiary Audience

North Carolina Ports Employees

Objectives & Milestones



Custom popcorn boxes with blue and white popcorn featured at employee events.

Increase Web Traffic

Drive traffic to the microsite via billboards, print ads, radio ads and social media posts during the campaign duration, January-June 2020.

Word-of-Mouth

Generate word-of-mouth buzz via billboards, print ads, radio ads and social media posts.

Social Media Interaction

Generate likes, comments, shares and other interactions across all social media platforms.

Employee Involvement

Host two internal events - one at each marine terminal - by the end of March to introduce the campaign to employees.

Action Steps

The North Carolina Cranes campaign was a multi-faceted campaign aimed at informing North Carolinians of the important role NC Ports plays in the state's economy. NC Ports chose to center the campaign around a sports theme as a fun and nontraditional way to introduce and educate NC communities about the Ports Authority. The campaign was designed to feature information from NC Ports' economic contribution study. The Ports Authority wanted communities across the state to obtain a better understanding of the organization's role in supporting the economy and to build goodwill.

The primary communications outlets selected for this campaign were outdoor (billboards) and radio. Complementary communications efforts included print ads, microsite and social media.

Outdoor

The Ports Authority selected out of home advertising due to its mass reach and access to 24/7 exposure. When selecting where to place each billboard, NC Ports divided the state into three regions - Central, Coastal and Piedmont - and targeted major metropolitan areas in each of those regions - Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, New Hanover/Brunswick County. Additionally, NC Ports selected major thoroughfares and highly trafficked roadways including: Interstates 95, 40, 77, 85 and Highway 74.

Action Steps

Radio

North Carolina Ports selected radio as a primary communications outlet due to its mass reach. According to research by the Infinite Dial (2019), radio is America's number one reach medium connecting with 92% of adults 18+ each week. Radio also allowed NC Ports to reach all 100 counties across North Carolina. It allowed the Ports Authority to build upon the outdoor message and dive a little deeper into its economic contributions.

Source: <https://www.edisonresearch.com/infinite-dial-2019/>

Print, Web and Social Media

Print ads, the microsite and social media were all chosen as complementary communications methods. NC Ports chose to scale back on print advertisements to focus on outdoor and radio which offered a greater reach. The Ports Authority selected Our State magazine due its popularity and high circulation of 221,787 while the Carteret News Times was selected due to its proximity to the Port of Morehead City and local readership. The microsite, nccranes.com, was created as a complementary tool to the outdoor, radio and print ads. Its purpose was to provide community members a place to learn more about NC Ports' economic contributions to North Carolina. Following the launch of the billboards and radio ads in February, the Ports Authority used social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) to further the campaign's reach by sharing a link to the microsite across its platforms.

Timeline & Staffing

Staffing

North Carolina Ports Senior Manager of Communications and Business Outreach worked with NC Ports' agency of record to develop, create and launch the North Carolina Cranes campaign.

August 2019

Creative concepting with agency of record.

October 2019

Finalize creative direction for microsite as well as outdoor, radio and print ads. Select locations for billboards.

December 2019

Shoot photography for billboards and microsite.

January 2020

All 11 billboards are installed across North Carolina. Microsite is launched.

February 2020

Radio spots begin to air across North Carolina. Microsite is shared on social media. First employee event held at Port of Wilmington.

March 2020

Print ad runs in Our State magazine. Second employee event held at Port of Morehead City.

April-June 2020

Outdoor ads and radio ads run through the end of Fiscal Year 2020 (June 30, 2020). Print ad runs in Our State magazine in June.

Outcomes & Evaluation Methods

Microsite Pageviews	
Month	Pageviews
January	155
February	299
March	109
Total	563

As previously stated, one of the biggest challenges of the North Carolina Cranes campaign was measuring success due to a lack of call to action. The campaign was designed as an educational tool as opposed to a traditional marketing campaign with the goal of attracting new business. During the early stages of campaign creation, NC Ports established its primary success metrics as word-of-mouth followed by microsite visits. Overall, NC Ports was looking for good sentiment anecdotally and believes it achieved this outcome.

Microsite Metrics

The microsite launched in mid-January before the billboard installments. You will notice a spike in traffic during the month of February which is when the first radio spots began to air and the microsite was shared on North Carolina Ports' social media platforms. NC Ports starts to see a decrease in March which is likely due to the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic and the NC governor's stay-at-home order which drastically reduced the number of North Carolinians traveling. This naturally impacted the number of people seeing the billboards and hearing the radio ads.

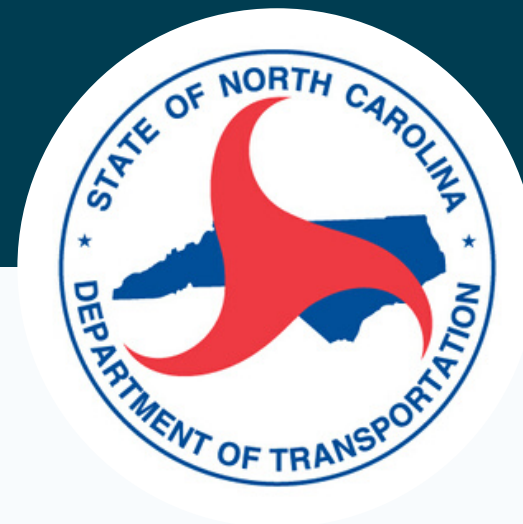
Outcomes & Evaluation Methods

In addition to the comments listed below, North Carolina Ports staff received several calls and emails about the North Carolina Cranes campaign from community members, local and state leaders as well as customers. While informal, the feedback NC Ports received regarding the campaign was a key success metric.



James Lamb
Environmental Specialist
Prestage Farms

"I just heard the NC Ports commercial on the radio, 99.9 The Fan. Awesome to hear about NC Ports' contributions. Great job!"



Dana Magliola
Sr. Analyst
Logistics & Freight
NCDOT

"I just saw your billboard in Raleigh, now I want some NC Cranes gear! Way to go!"



Jonathan Chappell, MD
Orthopedic Surgeon
Wake Orthopedics

"I was driving on I-40 and saw NC Ports' billboard. You all are doing great things in Wilmington and beyond."

Outcomes & Evaluation Methods



Twitter Metrics

Impressions: 3,931

Engagements: 102

Comments:

"North Carolina's place in the global marketplace is supported by the heavy-lifting of NC Ports. Contributing more than \$15 billion to our economy, NC Cranes is quite the all-star team."

- NC Dept. of Commerce



Instagram Metrics

Reach: 366

Impressions: 506

Comments:

"252 is proud of the NC Cranes"
- Rob Myrick



LinkedIn Metrics

Impressions: 3,569

Reactions 108

Comments:

"Congratulations!" - Tim McNamara



Facebook Metrics

Reach: 3,428

Engagement: 132

Comments:

"Exciting for North Carolina."
- Devon Query
"Great news!" - Debbie Watson

**Social Media metrics as of May 2020*



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