



PORT OF STOCKTON - OWL BOX PROGRAM COIN

Miscellaneous

Started in 2006, the Port of Stockton's (Port's) successful Owl Nest Box Program (Program) produces about 120 owls per year. There are currently 20 boxes housed throughout the Port, and in 2013 the Port installed cameras inside three of them. The cameras capture unique, real-time images of the owls within their Port-manufactured and adopted homes that are then broadcast on the Port's website. These beautiful creatures are a big part of the Port because they help protect local levees without the use of toxic pesticides. On average, the Port's owl population consumes approximately 40,000 rodents per year. To celebrate the success of this program and the work that went into it, the Port wished to create a commemorative challenge coin to share with business partners, stakeholders, and Port staff.

I. WHAT ARE/WERE THE ENTRY'S SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES OR OPPORTUNITIES?

The Port seized an opportunity to celebrate the Program and congratulate the many staff and decision-makers that made it possible. Internally, the Port had to brainstorm and decide exactly what sort of souvenir they should distribute. For several years now, the Port has opted for commemorative challenge coins for these types of occasions because the maritime industry has a long history of exchanging and collecting challenge coins. They're also a unique piece that recipients tend to display, making it a great conversation piece. Externally, the Port had to coordinate with a vendor (that operates in Florida but manufactures the coins in China) to ensure the coins came out exactly as designed.

2. HOW DOES THE COMMUNICATION USED IN THIS ENTRY COMPLEMENT THE ORGANIZATION'S OVERALL MISSION?

Our overall mission is to provide excellent service to our current business partners and attract new business, all while being a positive force for the local Stockton community and an exemplary steward of the environment at large. The Owl Nest Box Program coin, and the Program itself, happens to complement every part of this mission statement. The Program is a key component in providing excellent service to our business partners because the barn owls that the boxes attract serve as a highly effective, low-cost pest control squad, keeping the warehouses and other facilities around the Port free of rodent infestation. This level of innovative problem-solving shows current business partners and prospective new ones that the Port is always seeking new, smarter, and more environmentally friendly ways of doing business. The benefits to the local community and the environment are substantial as well. Without the need for toxic pesticides to control rodent populations, the Program keeps the Delta waters and the air quality in the region much cleaner. Rodents burrow in the levees around the Port, weakening their integrity. An added benefit of the barn owls' predation of rodents is that they keep these important levees healthy and sturdy, mitigating flood risk in



nearby communities. The coin serves as a testament to our dedication to our business partners, our community, and our environment.

3. WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS USED FOR THIS ENTRY?

The goal of distributing the commemorative coins was to celebrate the Port's commitment to the Program and its success. Here are the steps we took to bring the coins to reality.

Brainstorm

Although the Port creates all kinds of memorabilia items and promotional pieces for various events and occasions, the challenge coins have been a favorite for several years. Challenge coins have a long military and maritime history, used to identify the coin-holder as a member of an elite group or organization. The choice of a coin as the item was made easily, and the next step was to brainstorm and sketch designs for both sides of the coin.

Design

A graphic designer with the Port's Communications and Public Involvement sub-contractor, HDR, sketched concepts for the front and back of the coin based on photos provided by the Port (see photos on next page). After approval from the Port, the designer digitized the sketches, recreating the artwork in a style that would be reproduced well on coins, with thick lines and solid colors. The front side of the 2"-diameter coin, with antique gold plating, features an illustration of an owl launching into flight from a nest box. In the background is a ship traveling in the Delta waters that lead to the Port with the coastal Diablo Range in the background. The surrounding text reads "Port of Stockton – Owl Box Program." On the back side of the coin is an illustrated rendition of a typical view from one of the popular "owl cams" installed in three of the nest boxes, with the mother owl and her owlets looking into the camera. Also on the back is the Port's seal with the Port's name and "1933-2019," the years the Port has been in business.

Order

The coin vendor is based in Florida, but the actual manufacturing of the coins took place in China. Since there was no specific event tied to the distribution, this was an instance where the timing of the order was not time-sensitive.

Distribute

The primary audiences for these coins are the recipients of the coins – Port staff, business partners, stakeholders, local leaders, and other members of the public.

The secondary audience is anyone else who sees the coins. Perhaps a visitor sees the coin displayed on the desk of a Port staffer. They might be curious about the Program and ask what it's about. It creates opportunities to spread awareness of the Port's innovative problem solving and commitment to sustainability.





4. WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AND WHAT COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS WERE EMPLOYED IN THIS ENTRY?

The strategy behind the coins is to spread awareness of the Program and the Port's environmental sustainability, and to encourage the recipients to show the coins to others. The strategy was carried out using the steps previously outlined in Question 3.

Timeline

Since this coin did not coincide with a particular event, it was developed intermittently over a longer period of time than some of the other coins we've developed. Brainstorming and sketches occurred in late 2018. The designs were initially digitized in January 2019, with edits made over the next several weeks. The final coin design was approved and submitted to the coin manufacturer in April 2019, and the coins were received in May.

The Port engaged its Communications and Public Involvement sub-contractor, HDR, to design and illustrate the coin artwork. HDR also coordinated with the coin vendor, Signature Coins, to ensure the manufactured coins came out exactly as designed.



5. WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS OUTCOMES FROM THIS ENTRY AND WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WERE USED TO ASSESS THEM?

Feedback on the coins has been anecdotal in nature. Like other challenge coins the Port has produced, the coins have been very well received. This coin in particular has the "cute factor" and people love it. Jeff Wingfield, the Port's Director of Environmental and Public Affairs, regularly visits Washington, D.C. and in 2019 he gave coins to Senate and Congress representatives. Taylor Seebold, Legislative Correspondent in Senator Kamala Harris' office, simply commented: "Oh my gosh, these are awesome!"



COIN FRONT



COIN BACK

