

# 2011 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS ENTRY FORM

(Please copy and complete this form for each entry)

Check only ONE entry classification below:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. AAPA Awareness Initiative Messaging _____ | 8. Overall Campaign _____               |
| 2. Advertisements – Single _____             | 9. Periodicals _____                    |
| 3. Advertisements – Series _____             | 10. Promotional/Advocacy Material _____ |
| 4. Annual Reports _____                      | 11. Social/Web-Based Media _____        |
| 5. Audio-Only Presentations _____            | 12. Special Events _____                |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks _____               | 13. Videos _____                        |
| 7. Miscellaneous _____                       | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____ <u>X</u>             |

CATEGORY 1

CATEGORY 2

Entry Title OurNCPorts.com

Port Name North Carolina State Ports Authority

Port Address 2202 Burnett Boulevard, Wilmington, NC 28402

Contact Name/Title Mary Cole Allen/Project Coordinator

Telephone (919) 882-1927 Email Address mallen@capstrat.com

Please indicate precisely how your port's name should be listed on any award(s) it may win:

Name North Carolina State Ports Authority

Being as precise as possible, please attach a separate entry statement, in English, that:

• **Defines the Communications Challenge or Opportunity**

- Situation Analysis (*assess major internal and external factors*)
- Problem Statement (*briefly describe in specific & measurable terms*)

• **Summarizes Planning and Programming**

- Goals (*summarize desired outcome or end result*)
- Target Publics (*be specific; list primary and secondary audiences if appropriate*)
- Objectives (*identify specific and measurable milestones needed to reach goal*)

• **Identifies Actions Taken and Communication Outputs**

- Strategies (*identify media choices, etc., that require tactics to complete*)
- Tactics (*specify actions used to carry out strategies*)
- Implementation Plan (*include timelines, staffing and budget*)

• **Summarizes Evaluation Methods and Communications Outcomes**

- Evaluation Methods (*describe either formal surveys or anecdotal audience feedback used*)
- Communications Outcomes (*isolate PR impacts to assess changed opinions, attitudes, behaviors*)

**AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

OurNCPorts.com

### **Communications Challenge/Opportunity**

The North Carolina State Ports Authority (NCSPA) encompasses the seaports of Wilmington and Morehead City, plus inland terminals in Charlotte and the Piedmont Triad. Our mission is to enhance the economy of North Carolina by providing access to the global shipping marketplace.

Business leaders and associations throughout North Carolina know little about the benefits they can reap by using the NCSPA ports and underestimate the value they bring to the state's economy. Also, many North Carolina businesses may use competing ports in other states. When businesses use competing ports they take tax revenue, jobs and economic development opportunities from North Carolina. To be successful, we must continue to increase businesses and create jobs throughout the state.

Our old website, ncports.com, caters mainly to logistics providers and shippers and does not focus on business leaders and other stakeholders across the state. To increase support among this audience, but continue to provide valuable logistics and shipping information, we created a microsite, ourncports.com, to tell the story of how NC Ports positively impact the state as a whole. The microsite is linked to our old site, which continues to serve logistics managers and shippers.

### **Planning and Programming**

**Goal:** To increase awareness and support for the NCSPA among business leaders and economic developers throughout North Carolina.

**Target Audiences:** Economic developers, business owners, chambers of commerce and legislators.

#### **Objectives:**

- To increase web traffic in target areas across the state (Raleigh, Charlotte, Greensboro, Asheville).
- To increase in-state shipping through Wilmington and Morehead City Ports.
- To raise awareness of the ports as valuable economic engines that benefit the entire state, not just the port cities.
- To show the ports of Wilmington and Morehead City as valuable resources for the entire state of North Carolina.

### **Communication Outputs**

Prior to developing the microsite, we conducted research to learn more about how our customers view our ports and how they make shipping decisions. The result: our customers make decisions based solely on what is fastest and most cost-effective. The new website would need to change the conversation about the ports – urging them to choose the state first – and infuse a sense of pride linked to the ports at Morehead City and Wilmington.

Our signature feature on ourncports.com is disruptive imagery. We wanted to promote the idea that when businesses use and promote NCSPA ports, they help shape the future of our state. This was communicated by creating images of inland areas such as Charlotte, Raleigh, Asheville and rural Duplin County as actual working ports. These images rotate on the homepage of ourncports.com.

To reach economic developers, we placed a tab for economic regions on the homepage that shows an interactive map of the state. The map is divided to show the seven economic development regions. Once a region is clicked, the number of jobs and tax revenue the NCSPA ports provide in that region and a brief

description of how the ports impact that area appears. Top customers for each area are also featured on these pages.

To reach business leaders, we compiled "Real Port Perspectives." These videos feature NCSPA ports customers sharing their perspectives on the economic value of our ports and how they impact their respective businesses. We also interviewed some of our highly-recognizable customers and compiled brief success stories of how the ports positively impact their ability to do business in our state.

All of the features on ourncports.com work in tandem to promote the concept that NCSPA's ports belong to all citizens of the state – not just those in our port cities. By providing relevant information – jobs and economic impact – to our target audience, our new website allowed us to have a conversation that we weren't able to have on our previous website. OurNCPorts.com still allows visitors to easily access our old site and find more information about our operations, news releases, harbor improvements and other initiatives.

### **Implementation Plan**

The OurNCPorts.com microsite was designed and maintained by our outside public relations agency, Capstrat, in Raleigh, NC. Our content will be updated as new information on economic impact becomes available and we plan to add new case studies and videos as we identify opportunities within our customer base. In the web design phase, we worked to ensure the site had appropriate content and keywords to get maximum Search Engine Optimization.

To promote and drive traffic to the site, we placed banner ads on sites where we knew economic developers and business owners were visiting regularly, which included online business journals and major news sites throughout the state. We also used city-centric videos for each site. For example, the Port of Raleigh banner was placed on Raleigh's large newspaper's online homepage. We used a disruptive visual medium and put ports where they didn't belong, ultimately providing people on the web with an interesting option to click on.

We also share the OurNCPorts.com URL in our presentations to stakeholders across the state and all new marketing and communications materials we distribute. Through advertising, word of mouth and direct communications with our audience, our website allows us to better share our message that NCSPA ports belong to all citizens of North Carolina.

### **Evaluation Methods and Communications Outcomes**

We continue to work with Capstrat to measure traffic to the site since its launch on February 7, 2011 and there have been more than 10,000 visits so far. Since launch, we continue to tweak and update the site to optimize visits and get viewers to watch videos and read case studies from our customers. Our site traffic continues to be driven by our banner ads on various business journal and news sites across the state.

Our customers were pleased with the videos and case studies and we hope to feature more of our shipping partners in the future. Our new website allows us to tell these stories in a concise, easy-to-understand way that we could not do before with our previous site. It allows us to reach new audiences and serves as the information one-stop-shop as we move forward with statewide business education about our value to North Carolinians.