

2008 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

10. SPECIAL EVENTS

Entries should clearly identify goals/objectives of event, target audiences, evaluation of success, and include all program books, publicity materials, audio/visual materials, photographs or other supporting documentation for the submitted event. *You must complete the questions on this page for each entry and include a high-resolution electronic image (see Electronic Images for details) that best depicts it for publicity purposes. Please be brief, but use as many pages as you feel is necessary to answer the questions.*

CATEGORY 1 CATEGORY 2

Entry Title: "Groundbreaking for New Terminal Unites Community"

Port Name: S.C. State Ports Authority - Port of Charleston

1) Was this event planned in-house? by an agency/firm? or a combination?

2 Number of staff _____ Number of volunteers

2) What was the overall goal/objective of this event, who was the target audience(s) and what were the key messages you intended to communicate to your target audiences? (Attach separate write-up if necessary.)

Please see attached page.

3) Thoroughly describe the event in terms of research, planning, promotion/advertising, implementation, attendance and evaluation of success, and provide an analysis of the event's success in meeting the overall objective.

Please see attached page.

4) If your Special Event submission is in a language other than English, please briefly describe the major points of this entry in English.

Not Applicable.

Award of Excellence

AAPA 2008 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM: (10) SPECIAL EVENTS

S.C. State Ports Authority – Port of Charleston “Groundbreaking for New Terminal Unites Community” May 7, 2007

1. Was this event planned in-house?

The groundbreaking event itself was planned in-house utilizing our two public relations staff members. The event branding (shovel logo) and printed invitation were designed by Charleston advertising firm Rawle Murdy Associates, Inc.

2. What was the overall goal/objective of this event, who was the target audience(s) and what were the messages you intended to communicate to your target audiences?

The **goals** of the groundbreaking event, an important milestone in the Port of Charleston's history, were two-fold:

- To bring together all the many stakeholders who were involved in the permitting process for the new terminal and who ultimately united for port development.
- To broadly spread the message that expansion at the Port of Charleston is moving forward. This message would need to be relayed beyond attendees at the groundbreaking event itself, to all the port's stakeholders.

Our communications **messages**:

- Reinforce that the port is vital to the local and statewide economy and competitive profile for future opportunities and jobs
- Reinforce that the port is a good neighbor and steward of the community as well as the environment

Our **target audiences** were several diverse groups. These included:

- The general public – We needed to demonstrate that port development at the former Navy Base is a positive for the local and state communities in terms of good paying jobs, ancillary business development as well as opportunities and benefits stemming specifically from the mitigation package. And also we needed to communicate that the project belongs to the people of South Carolina, and convey that sense of public ownership.
- Port customers and vendors (ocean carriers, shippers, international trade community) - We needed to communicate that the Port of Charleston is growing and will be prepared to handle their growth through at least the next 20 years.
- Elected officials – Although the S.C. State Ports Authority does not receive taxpayer subsidy for operating or capital expenses, the support of elected officials is critical, especially since the state legislature would fund the needed Port Access Road tied to the terminal.

- Local print and broadcast, and trade media – through the media, our messages could be broadcast beyond the event attendees to a broader local, statewide and national audience.

3. Thoroughly describe the event in terms of research, planning, promotion/advertising, implementation, attendance and evaluation of success, and provide an analysis of the event’s success in meeting the overall objective.

Situation & Research:

After four years, \$5 million and 5,000 pages of studies in the permitting and environmental justice process for a new container terminal in North Charleston, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit to the South Carolina State Ports Authority (SCSPA) for a 280-acre facility on the former Charleston Navy Base on April 26, 2007. Through the permitting process, the new development was simultaneously met with enthusiastic support from the state’s business community and resistance from some local environmental and community groups.

The SCSPA worked with several key ally groups in order to gain community support for the new terminal, which would not only drive economic development and create new jobs, but would also provide opportunities to improve the surrounding community and environment. The Authority met on an on-going basis with a newly created organization, the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC), a consortium of neighborhoods surrounding the former Navy Base in North Charleston. This area can be classified as lower income, with the local elementary school reporting that 96% of its students qualified for free or assisted lunch. The community was concerned that the terminal would bring increased noise, traffic and other impacts to the area.

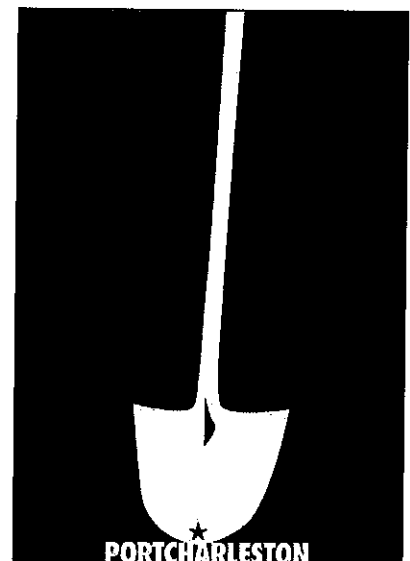
The SCSPA also worked with environmental interests, including Wildlife Trust and the Trust for Public Land, to address the impacts of the new terminal to land and aquatic resources. These discussions led to the announcement of an unprecedented \$12-million mitigation program, thought to be the largest such program in South Carolina history, and one of the only port-expansion related mitigation programs nationwide that includes direct funding for “people” impacts.

The business community recognized the absolute necessity of port expansion to the state’s economy and competitive profile, while the local residents wanted to ensure that quality of life issues were fairly considered and addressed in the port’s plans. Ultimately, through its extensive community relations efforts, the South Carolina State Ports Authority was able to create community buy-in and balance the interests of the business community along with the interests of the local community.

Planning, Promotion & Execution:

Once the permit was issued on April 26, 2007, we wanted to quickly break ground on the facility and signal to the community and stakeholders that we were ready to move the project forward. We selected May 7, 2007 as our event date, merely 11 days from the date the permit was issued.

Local advertising agency Rawle Murdy Associates, Inc. was contracted to design a printed invitation that would also serve as an overarching event brand. The resulting design was a white shovel against a blue background, tying in the same blue color as the Authority’s “SC Ports” logo (see at right).



Internally, our team developed an invitation list of key stakeholders, which included:

- U.S. Congressional Delegation and staff
- S.C. General Assembly and constitutional officers
- North Charleston government and community leaders
- Local maritime community leaders
- Statewide business leaders
- Key port customers and service providers
- Ports Authority Board of Directors and employees

Approximately 700 printed invitations were mailed in all.

For the event itself, we chose a location within the footprint of the new terminal, the parking lot of an abandoned bank, which had shuttered its doors with the closing of the Base in 1996. The bank building itself was hardly visible through the cover of weeds and overgrowth. We felt that what could be considered an "eyesore" would provide an illustrative backdrop to the ceremony, demonstrating that an area that had been largely vacant, even neglected, since the Navy Base's closure ten years earlier was about to be revitalized through the new port facility.

Staff developed a conservative working budget of \$6,630 to cover event rentals, AV services, catering, invitations, promotional items and signage.

The roster of speakers (listed on a fan program) reflected the various stakeholder groups. Representing the Ports Authority were Bernie Groseclose (President & CEO) and Bill Stern (Board Chairman). BMW's Bobby Hitt and Lewis Gossett of the S.C. Manufacturers Alliance spoke on behalf of the port's customer community. Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce Chairman Tom Hood represented the business community, and Michael Brown (LAMC President) spoke on behalf of the North Charleston community.



After their remarks, the speakers, elected officials and community leaders were each invited to grab a shovel for the traditional groundbreaking photo op. Different soils, sand and clay were used to represent the different regions of the state – from the mountains to the sea, underscoring the fact that port development is vital to both the local and statewide community.

Following the ceremony, guests enjoyed a barbecue buffet lunch and fellowship. As souvenirs, guests

received ceramic coasters branded with the port's official seal and groundbreaking date.

The total cost of the event came in a little above our working budget, at \$7,036.76.

After the event, we mailed a follow-up package of news clippings and an editorial to 550 targeted leaders in statewide business and trading community as well as political leaders. This further broadened the total number of impressions by sharing the news with those who did not attend the event itself.

Evaluation:

The nature of our event, a ceremonial groundbreaking, did not lend itself to formal evaluation measures like a satisfaction survey. We based the event's success chiefly on two measures: (1) the number of attendees who came out to support the Port of Charleston, and (2) earned media and resulting media impressions.

We received 102 affirmative responses for the groundbreaking ceremony and another 75 responses of regrets. On May 7, more than 100 guests, including several state senators and representatives and local elected officials, as well as members of LAMC, attended the groundbreaking.

The event garnered coverage in several local and national trade media outlets, resulting in an estimated **424,916** impressions.

Media Coverage:

Journal of Commerce

American Journal of Transportation

Post and Courier

Charleston Regional Business Journal

Business Advocate (Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce)

WCBD – Channel 2

WCIV – Channel 4

WCSC – Channel 5

In all, the event drew positive attention to the issue of port expansion and to the productive relationships forged between the Ports Authority and an initially reluctant community.

4. If your Special Event submission is in a language other than English, please briefly describe the major points of this entry in English.

Not Applicable.