

# *AAPA 2009 Environmental Awards*

*Stakeholder Awareness, Education & Involvement*

## **“The Port’s Pledge for Growth”**



**PORTCHARLESTON**

**South Carolina State Ports Authority**

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## **“The Port’s Pledge for Growth”**

The South Carolina State Ports Authority (Ports Authority) has many new and on-going environmental initiatives, and believes strongly that economic growth and a healthy environment are mutually attainable goals. In order to communicate the Ports Authority’s commitment to environmental stewardship to a broader audience, the Pledge for Growth Campaign was developed.

This campaign encompasses all of the Ports Authority’s environmental initiatives in the areas of air, land, water, and people into one “environmental brand”. The interactive website [www.PledgeforGrowth.com](http://www.PledgeforGrowth.com) encourages individuals and entities alike within the community to join together with the Ports Authority to “Take the Pledge” and provide detailed information regarding their commitment to improving the environment. The website also provides additional detailed information on all of the Ports Authority’s environmental initiatives in each of the four areas.

Some of these initiatives include: reducing diesel emissions and improving air quality, funding aerial surveys for endangered right whales, and restoring tidal marsh and preserving other environmentally sensitive lands. In addition, the Ports Authority was one of the first in the country to consider impacts on neighboring communities during the permitting process for a new container terminal. The Ports Authority created a long-term partnership with the City of North Charleston and the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities to develop a community mitigation plan that provides funding for things such as an affordable housing trust, a Maritime Training Institute, and improved fitness amenities.

Additionally, the Ports Authority not only contributes to a cleaner environment through its organizational practices, it also emphasizes the importance of a clean community through the volunteer efforts of its employees. The Ports Authority takes an active role in the local community, participating in North Charleston’s Clean Cities Sweep, Trident United Way’s Day of Caring, and the South Carolina Oyster Reef Enhancement program. Volunteers wear t-shirts emblazoned with the Pledge for Growth logo to further aid in increasing visibility of the Ports Authority’s environmental brand.

Through effective partnerships with environmental groups, preservationists, regulatory agencies, and other maritime industry firms, a number of programs have been put into place that clearly demonstrate that the Port’s growth benefits the environment, as well as the economy and the community.

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## **Introduction**

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The South Carolina State Ports Authority (the Ports Authority) was created by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1942. It is authorized and charged with promoting, developing, constructing, equipping, maintaining and operating the harbors and seaports within the State, namely Charleston and Georgetown. The Ports Authority owns and operates seven marine terminals in two seaports with more than 15,000 linear feet of berthing space, more than 1.6 million square feet of warehouse and transit shed space and more than 475 acres of outdoor storage space. Each year, an average of more than 2,500 deep-draft ships and barges call the Ports Authority's terminals, representing contractual arrangements with more than 30 ocean carriers who provide direct service to ports in 39 nations across the globe.

The Ports Authority's new and on-going efforts display its commitment to environmental stewardship and demonstrate that the Port's growth benefits the environment, as well as the economy and the community. While a vocal minority in the Charleston area seeks to portray economic growth and the environment as an "either-or" scenario, the Ports Authority has shown that a cleaner environment and a growing economy are mutually attainable goals.

This has been accomplished through effective partnerships with environmental groups, preservationists, regulatory agencies and other maritime industry firms, as well as through the Ports Authority's own internal environmental programs. In the summer of 2008, the Ports Authority launched a statewide effort, known as the "Pledge for Growth," to educate the public on these efforts and encourage others in the business community to get involved.

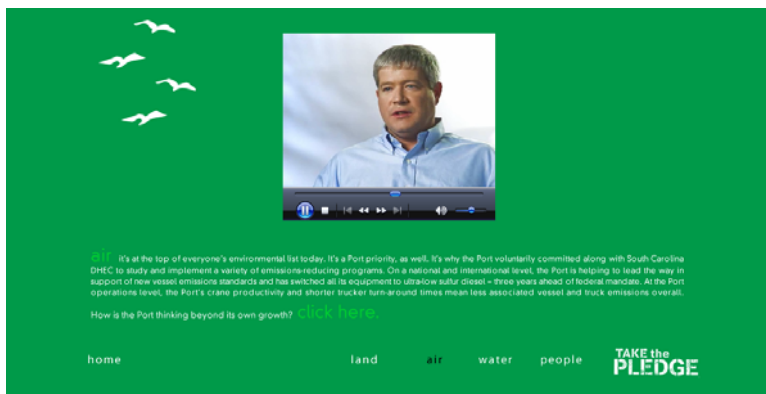


## Goals & Objectives

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The Ports Authority's goal is to establish itself as a leader in environmental stewardship while clearly demonstrating to the community that growth can mean great things for the community, including quality jobs along with a cleaner, healthier environment.

In order to achieve this goal, the Ports Authority utilized various ways to communicate its positive environmental and community efforts to key stakeholders, including employees, the media, customers, vendors, and the greater Charleston and South Carolina communities.



In June 2008, the Ports Authority launched the “Pledge for Growth,” and a new Web site ([www.PledgeForGrowth.com](http://www.PledgeForGrowth.com)) that provides detailed information and testimonial videos about the port's efforts to enhance Air, Land, Water and People. The website also includes

a way for area businesses and organizations to join the effort and “Take the Pledge.” The objective of the website, which is truly the cornerstone of the Pledge for Growth campaign, is to engage the community in the Ports Authority's efforts . The Ports Authority has sought to make environmental stewardship truly a community wide effort.



## Discussion

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*Background* – The Ports Authority is currently in the process of constructing a new container terminal on the site of the former Navy Base in North Charleston. The plan for the new terminal was specifically developed to include measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impacts. In 2007, the Ports Authority effectively addressed the concerns of nine state and federal environmental resource agencies, resulting in the issuance of permits for a new terminal at the former Navy Base in North Charleston. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said in a formal consultation letter that the public interest review and design of the new terminal “should serve as excellent templates for similar port projects in the Southeast.”



The Ports Authority has effectively made the case that the construction of a new port terminal at the former Navy Base is a victory for our community, the environment and the state’s business community. This plan itself represents the culmination of four years of thorough planning, public involvement and environmental review. To deal with environmental impacts that could not be avoided or minimized, the Ports Authority is carrying out what is believed to be the state’s largest and most comprehensive environmental mitigation package, totaling \$12.2 million. In addition, the South Carolina Department of Transportation has a thorough mitigation package for impacts associated with the Port Access Road. The components of the Ports Authority’s mitigation plan include initiatives in four separate areas: air, land, water, and people. These components have been encapsulated into the Ports Authority’s environmental brand, the “Pledge for Growth” campaign.

*Objectives & Methodology* – The Ports Authority organized the components of its mitigation plan under four general areas: air, land, water, and people. Within each component, the Ports Authority has undertaken collaborative efforts with agencies, non-profit organizations, and the community at large in order to achieve its goals of the “Pledge for Growth” campaign.

## **Air Efforts: Setting the Standard for Reducing Port-Related Air Emissions**

The Port of Charleston is taking a proactive role in improving air quality in the region. Through partnerships with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the Charleston Harbor Pilots, the South Carolina Public Railways, the Charleston Motor Carriers Association as well as additional initiatives, the Ports Authority is striving to reduce air emissions around the new terminal, at existing port terminals and across the Charleston area. In March 2007, the Ports Authority signed an agreement with DHEC, creating a partnership to reduce port-related air impacts. This voluntary, proactive agreement is separate from the mitigation activities specifically tied to the new terminal.

### ***Switching to Cleaner Fuels***

As part of the voluntary agreement to reduce air emissions, the Ports Authority agreed to evaluate the use of cleaner fuels, such as biodiesel and ultra-low sulfur diesel. The Ports Authority, of its own accord, **has already switched to ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD)**—three years ahead of federal mandate. Seven tenants on port facilities have also made the switch to ULSD. The Ports



Authority also worked with on-site partners, including the Charleston Harbor Pilots and South Carolina Public Railways, to switch to ULSD. This move to cleaner fuel will cut **air emissions levels from affected equipment by 10 percent**, two to four years ahead of the federal mandate.

## ***Replacing and Updating Equipment to Meet or Exceed Emissions Standards***

To further reduce air emissions on its terminals, the Ports Authority has just recently **replaced four diesel-electric container cranes with all-electric models and has retired older equipment.** As additional equipment is replaced and added (as needed and for the new terminal), all equipment will meet or exceed the federal emissions standards. Equipment retired in the past five years includes ten yard trucks, four container cranes, three rubber-tired gantries, two additional gantry cranes and seven full container handlers.

In addition to upgrading its own equipment fleet, the Ports Authority, the Charleston Motor Carriers Association, the South Carolina Trucking Association, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, DHEC and the American Lung Association jointly applied for grant funding through EPA to improve trucks in the private sector truck fleet. The **\$1.7 million project**, announced in September 2008, will be allocated toward retrofitting over-the-road trucks with new equipment that will reduce air emissions and increase fuel efficiency, as well as replacing on-terminal equipment with cleaner diesel engines.

The Ports Authority also put together a multi-faceted project aimed at reducing diesel emissions that leveraged extensive public/private partnerships to apply for grant funding under the stimulus package. The \$3.56 million project, which was selected by the EPA for grant funding in May 2008 will retrofit a local drayage fleet with diesel multi-stage filters, as well as providing for the repowering of on-terminal container handlers, two local tug boats, and a dredge. For these two (2) grant projects alone, total emissions reductions over the life of the projects will be: 2,135.68 tons of NO<sub>x</sub>, 97.8 tons of PM, 52.28 tons of HC and 309.56 tons of CO.

## **Land Efforts: Helping to Preserve and Maintain Quality Land in the Lowcountry**

Through efforts with the Trust for Public Land, Clemson University, and the Cooper River Initiative, the Ports Authority is ensuring that land affected by the new terminal and land beyond the port's footprint is protected and maintained.



### ***Restoring Marshlands***

To offset the direct impacts to aquatic resources and wetlands, the Ports Authority is contributing **\$3 million to restore 22 acres of tidal marsh** along the southern tip of Drum Island in lower Charleston Harbor. While the state requires a ratio of 1:1 for the replacement of filled marsh, this project will restore more than double the acreage that will be affected by development of the new terminal. For the project, the existing dredge spoil and vegetation will be removed and the site flushed and replanted as a functioning *Spartina alterniflora* marsh ecosystem. The project offers the rare opportunity to create new tidal marsh in the middle of Charleston Harbor, invigorating the area with indigenous plants and creating a critical marsh ecosystem.

### ***Helping Preserve Morris Island***



To help offset indirect environmental impacts, the Ports Authority has incorporated other means of mitigation to provide an environmental benefit as well as serve the public interest. Recognizing that Charleston’s history is a large part of the city’s present, the port community is participating in preserving a major historic landmark in the Lowcountry.

The Ports Authority has contributed **\$1 million** to assist the Trust for Public Land (TPL) in **preserving Morris Island**, the site of a major battle in the Civil War. TPL reached an agreement with Ginn Clubs & Resorts for the purchase of Morris Island. The entire purchase price for the 126-acre tract is \$3 million, and the contribution by the Ports Authority was a critical piece needed to complete the purchase.

### ***Conserving Local Land***

In addition, the Ports Authority is contributing **\$1 million** to help the Cooper River Initiative, which is seeking to **protect more than 15,000 acres of land**. The Cooper River Initiative was established in response to the overwhelming concern regarding potential development within the East Branch area of the Cooper River. Led by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), the consortium includes The Nature

Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and the Coastal Conservation League, among other groups. The land within the Initiative's focus is vital to the water quality and overall quality and value of the entire Cooper River Watershed. The connection of these properties to other protected properties, notably the Francis Marion Forest, makes them a cornerstone to the long-term protection and management of the region.

## **Water Efforts: Enhancing and Protecting Water Quality and Marine Life**

Working hand-in-hand with organizations like Wildlife Trust and the SCDNR, the Ports Authority's water-related environmental efforts include measures to protect aquatic life and the quality of public waterways.

### ***Protecting Right Whales***

In order to reduce the risk of ship strikes along the migratory path of an endangered whale species, the Ports Authority is donating up to **\$1 million** for a five-year agreement with Wildlife Trust to **protect the Northern right whale**. Now in its second year, the funds contribute to additional aerial surveys along the South Carolina coast to spot, track and alert mariners of the location of



the whales. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an estimated 350 whales remain in existence. Each year, female whales migrate southward more than 1,000 miles from the New England region to the area along the coasts of Georgia and Florida, where there are known calving grounds for the right whale. The aerial surveys coincide with the whale's calving season, which runs from approximately November 15 to April 15 annually. Several dozen groupings of whales have been spotted and tracked by Wildlife Trust scientists during the two seasons of flights.

### ***Enhancing Aquatic Ecosystems***

In order to mitigate the impacts to aquatic resources at the new terminal, including impacts to the estuarine water column habitat, the Ports Authority is contributing **\$1 million to restore and enhance more than five**

**acres of self-sustaining oyster reefs** in and around Charleston Harbor. The reefs improve water quality, protect and substantially increase the productivity of estuarine species and aid in erosion reduction. This project is being coordinated through the SCDNR's South Carolina Oyster Restoration and Enhancement Program (SCORE).

SCDNR will identify suitable sites in the harbor and tributaries for the restoration project. Once identified, these sites will be planted with natural shell or other suitable material to provide substrate, known as cultch, for recruitment of juvenile oysters. Where there is adequate water access at the selected sites, the shell will be placed in bands 10 to 15 feet wide and five to six inches deep along the intertidal shoreline. The planting of oyster shells began in the summer of 2008 and will occur over a five-year period.

### **Community Efforts: Leading the Way Among Ports Nationwide**

The Port of Charleston is **one of the first port authorities in the country to consider “people” impacts** in a formal mitigation arrangement. Through a more than \$4 million community mitigation plan, the Ports Authority has created a long-term partnership with North Charleston leadership and the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC). LAMC, which represents several neighborhoods within the City of North Charleston including Union Heights, Accabee, Five Mile, Chicora-Cherokee, Liberty Hill, Windsor and Howard Heights communities, actively participated in the permitting process for the Port terminal expansion, resulting in the collaboration with Port leadership.

On April 20, 2006, North Charleston Councilman and President of LAMC Michael Brown submitted a letter to the Ports Authority supporting the community mitigation plan, including the mitigation activities and funding levels. The Port's first monetary contribution of \$750,000 related to these efforts was presented on December 5, 2007. Additional contributions are being made on an annual basis.

### ***Developing a Community Vision***



To ensure that the community can effectively leverage new economic opportunities related to the terminal expansion and through the partnership, the Ports Authority has committed **\$300,000 toward the development of a master plan/community vision** for the surrounding community. The master plan will identify specific needs and

property uses, including landscaping, beautification and enhancement of areas surrounding the Port expansion and in the community.

### ***Establishing Opportunities for Affordable Housing***

The Ports Authority will contribute **\$1 million to help establish a housing trust** for the creation of affordable housing. This funding will assist residents in handling potential tax and property value losses.

### ***Supporting Educational Attainment and Job Training***

Through a **commitment of \$250,000**, the Ports Authority is **supporting educational attainment** around the terminal expansion area. The funding will support community assistance programs, including childhood education vouchers, enhanced after-school programs, tuition assistance, GED classes and college scholarships. LAMC has already awarded more than \$14,000 in college scholarships and pre-K tuition vouchers to residents in the impacted neighborhoods. A contribution of **\$600,000 will support the establishment of a Maritime Training Institute (Career Center)**, which will provide educational and employment assistance, such as entrepreneurial training, van pools and other opportunities.



### ***Fostering Economic Development and Growth in the Impacted Area***

The Ports Authority has committed **\$350,000 to support economic development and growth** around the terminal expansion. The funds will establish or support programs that assist qualified local vendors in securing new business, such as bid package assistance programs, funding for contractor/subcontractor bonding, vendor assistance, insurance and workmen's compensation assistance, loan servicing fees assistance, revolving loan funds and more.

### ***Enhancing the Strength of the Communities***

To address healthcare concerns related to construction and operation of the terminal expansion, the Ports Authority will contribute **\$500,000 to provide fitness amenities** in a community center or a local health care facility. To foster the community's strength and growth, the Ports Authority will provide **\$300,000 to improve existing community centers**, which will enhance opportunities for community interaction, educational enhancement, physical activity and more.

### **Additional Community Volunteer Efforts**

The Ports Authority not only contributes to a cleaner environment through its organizational practices, it also emphasizes the importance of a clean community through the volunteer efforts of its employees. The Ports Authority is an active part in the local community, participating in North Charleston's Clean Cities Sweep , Trident United Way's Day of Caring, and the SCDNR's SCORE program. Volunteers wear t-shirts



emblazoned with the Pledge for Growth logo to further aid in increasing visibility of the Ports Authority's environmental brand.

All of these environmental initiatives have been combined into the Ports Authority's Pledge for Growth campaign. The interactive website [www.PledgeforGrowth.com](http://www.PledgeforGrowth.com) serves to communicate the Ports Authority's positive environmental and community efforts to a broader audience.

In order to directly reach community members and direct visitors to the Web site, both printed and electronic mail pieces to business and community leaders, elected officials, board members of the state's prominent environmental groups, and others. Also, port management scheduled speaking engagements on the Pledge for Growth at club meetings in the tri-county region, as well as Columbia and Greenville.

To reach the broader public, the Ports Authority has been able to get positive attention in the Charleston area's news media outlets about the Pledge for Growth, including the local television stations, *The Post and Courier*, *Charleston Regional Business Journal* and *Moultrie News*. *The Post and Courier* acknowledged the Ports Authority's ground-breaking efforts with a positive editorial. This results in media attention in both print and broadcast outlets and wide dissemination across the region.

*PortCharleston* magazine, which reaches a worldwide distribution of more than 4,400 customers and industry stakeholders, has included articles and columns on the Ports Authority's environmental best practices and a profile of the Ports Authority new environmental affairs manager, Jeannie Adame.

The Ports Authority also participated in the first-ever Charleston Green Fair, held in September 2008 in Marion Square. The port's Pledge for Growth booth featured an interactive contest and opportunities for visitors to ask about the port's "green" programming. The event attracted hundreds of visitors from around the region, and provided the Ports Authority another means to get in front of the public.

To keep employees informed, the Ports Authority publishes articles on its environmental initiatives and community partnerships in its employee newsletter, *The Current*.

## *Award Criteria –*

- 1) The level of benefit to environmental quality in the Charleston region from the Pledge for Growth campaign is apparent from the tons of diesel emissions reduced, the acres of tidal marsh restored, land preserved, and oyster reef created, and the funding provided to the communities in the City of North Charleston. The greater success of this project, however, is the level of community involvement. This can be seen in the number of entities that have joined with the Ports Authority, have taken the “pledge for Growth” , and have worked in a collaborative manner to improve the community and the environment.
- 2) The Pledge for Growth campaign was entirely conceived of and developed by the Ports Authority. While there are a number of public and private entities that are involved in the included environmental initiatives, the Ports Authority is involved in all of these efforts and in fact is responsible for all oversight and coordination. In addition, the [www.PledgeforGrowth.com](http://www.PledgeforGrowth.com) website is maintained entirely by the Ports Authority.
- 3) The creativity off this program lies in the development of the “environmental brand” and the Pledge for Growth logo. Many ports have environmental programs and environmental initiatives. The South Carolina State Ports Authority, however, has pulled of its environmental programs together under the Pledge for Growth campaign. The easily identified logo has become symbolic of extensive public/private partnerships and a community wide effort to have a positive impact on the environment.
- 4) The Pledge for Growth campaign results are readily apparent. The website provides detailed information on all of the Port Authority’s environmental initiatives. While many of the programs are on-going, they are all already well established. The most visible results of the Pledge for Growth campaign are the large number of agencies, organizations, and businesses that have partnered with the Ports Authority in their environmental initiatives. Some of these include: DHEC, SCDNR, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, the American Lung Association, the Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, the Coastal Conservation League, South Carolina Public Railways, Wildlife Trust, LAMC, the City of North Charleston, the Charleston Harbor Pilots, the Charleston Motor Carriers Association, the South Carolina Trucking Association, and more than a dozen private businesses.



5) Although the Ports Authority has made a significant financial contribution to the Pledge for Growth campaign, the program is very cost-effective. The primary reason for this is the extent to which the Ports Authority has embarked on collaborative partnerships. Many of the environmental initiatives included in the campaign use the Ports Authority's funds to leverage money from other entities, including private companies, non-profit organizations, and state and federal grant funding. The focus on public/private partnerships allows the Ports Authority's funds to be stretched farther accomplishing far more than could be done with just their own funds, thus making the program very cost-effective.

6) Not only is this program transferable to other ports, it should serve as a model to the entire maritime industry. Many ports have environmental programs, however, the uniqueness of this program is that it brings all of those programs together under one "environmental brand". More than that, it encourages all sectors of the community to join in the Ports Authority's efforts. This program is based on leveraging partnerships and coalitions to achieve greater results.

## Conclusion

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The Ports Authority has many new and on-going environmental initiatives, and believes that growth can benefit the community and the environment alike. In order to communicate its many beneficial environmental programs and community efforts to the public, the Ports Authority developed the [www.PledgeforGrowth.com](http://www.PledgeforGrowth.com) website. This website contains detailed information on all of the Ports Authority's environmental initiatives and serves to educate key stakeholders on the positive impact of these initiatives. Beyond that, the website encourages other members of the community to take the "Pledge for Growth" and join the Ports Authority in having a positive impact on the environment. The Pledge for Growth campaign has served to bring together regulatory agencies, non-profit organizations, citizen groups, and the larger communities of Charleston and South Carolina to make many positive changes for the community and the environment.





# Snapshots of pages from the Pledge for Growth Website



[Proceed to Pledge](#)

