

AAPA 2010 Environmental Awards

Stakeholder Awareness, Education & Involvement

Camp SeaPort®

Port of Port Arthur Navigation District



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C. Introduction- Paper Highlights

The Port of Port Arthur is applying for the *AAPA 2010 Environmental Award for Stakeholder Awareness, Education & Involvement* for Camp SeaPort, a community involvement program of the Port of Port Arthur Navigation District. The function of Camp SeaPort is to provide local youth a weeklong camp to explore career and educational opportunities in the maritime industry while learning about our coastal environment. Camp SeaPort is entering its third year and continues to grow. This application addresses the required content as found at the AAPA's webpage 2010 AAPA Environmental Award Guidelines.¹ The application explicitly addresses the award criteria while providing an overview of the Camp SeaPort program. Additional materials are included as a guideline for other member ports to initiate their own program. The Port of Port Arthur encourages the port community to utilize the name Camp SeaPort.

D. Goals and Objective

Camp SeaPort's Mission: Provide opportunities for youth to explore maritime careers. To borrow a common concept of thinking globally and acting locally Camp SeaPort's program is highly transferable. The concepts, content and resources to support a community program such as Camp SeaPort are readily available. The content of the AAPA application itself provides a good user roadmap. One of the goals of the application and hopefully the award is to "spread the word" and foster similar programs among port communities and AAPA's membership. The port and Camp SeaPort volunteers offer assistance to any port considering a youth involvement program. The Port of Port Arthur asks to be favorably considered for the *2010 Environmental Award for Stakeholder Awareness, Education and Involvement*.

To properly evaluate the success of Camp SeaPort, the quality of the application and the conformance to the six award criteria it is important to place Camp SeaPort into the context of the port community.

E. Discussion

¹ AAPA 2010 Guidelines <http://aapa.files.cms-plus.com/2010%20Environmental%20Awards%20Application.pdf>

The Port of Port Arthur is located proximate to the city of Port Arthur on the upper Texas Gulf Coast. Often considered a small to medium sized deepwater port we are located along a section of the Sabine-Neches Waterway and Intracoastal Waterway, ICWW. With less than a two hour sea transit to the Gulf, the Port of Port Arthur is a modern breakbulk facility with excellent connections to road and rail. The port is economically viable and has remained stable throughout the most recent period of global economic downturn. With the ship channel and intracoastal waterway paralleling the southeast side of the city, the waterway is an important part of the community. The Sabine-Neches waterway supports one of the highest tonnage volumes² serving major petroleum refiners and is one of the busiest waterways in the US³.

E.i. Background

The history of the port and the city are tied to the history of the Kansas City Southern railroad, KCS. Most of the lands surrounding the area were platted before the turn of the century as the terminus of a railroad, a planned city and a port. KCS founder Arthur Stillwell envisioned Port Arthur as a major US seaport and a metropolitan city, this was not to be. On January 10, 1901 the area and the world was forever changed when the largest, at the time, commercial discovery of oil gushing in a new era just a few miles north at Spindletop. After the discovery at Spindletop, Port Arthur became a boomtown and the birthplace number of refiners including Gulf and Texaco. The community prospered throughout most of the 20th century. In addition to refining and related ocean shipping, the area had a robust shipbuilding industry. In the last quarter of the century due to plant downsizings and shipyard closures the area experienced a significant economic downturn and high rates of employment. Even today a number of challenges face our community with an unemployment rate of 15.1%, significantly higher than the region, state and national rates.⁴ Other challenges include high school completion rates,

² USACE, 2007 combined tonnages of C2395 and C2416 comprising Sabine Neches Waterway.

³ USCG, Port Arthur Vessel Traffic Service, VTS, State of the Waterway 2009, SETWAC, March 18, 2010

⁴ Texas Workforce Commission, <http://www.tracer2.com/cgi/dataAnalysis/AreaSelection.asp?tableName=Labforce>

declining tax base, high poverty rates and declining population. Present population for the city of Port Arthur is approximately 57,000.⁵

Aside from current economic externalities, the area boasts a rich, diverse, cultural heritage. A number of past and current professional athletes, musicians and other notable personalities hail from the community. For the most part, what attracted initial settlement of the area including abundant land, plentiful water and other natural resources still exist today. Still today, petroleum refining is the prevalent industry with strong ties to the maritime community.

E.ii. Objectives and Methodology

Most career empowerment efforts for area youth are focused on the petrochemical and service industries, with minimal efforts to stimulate interest in the maritime industry. From the absence of any other programCamp SeaPort was born. In 2008, Port Commissioner, Linda Turner Spears envisioned Camp SeaPort as a community outreach program to encourage local youth to explore career opportunities in the maritime industry. Now in its third year, the program continues to improve and is recognized by the local maritime community. Until Camp SeaPort, very little organized effort was made to educate local high school youth on the importance or availability of maritime careers in our area. The maritime industry today is still a significant local employer and a source for future economic diversification. It is estimated that the region directly employs almost 15,000 workers connected to the local waterway, depending on the categorization, making it actually the largest regional employer.⁶ Camp SeaPort is a community program designed to assist in bridging the educational gap for high school students regarding the vitality of our waterway.

The concept of the program was approved by commissioners in early 2008. Port staff was tasked with organizing, planning and funding the project. While the port has plays a yeoman's role to sustain

⁵ US Census Bureau, Quickfacts, 2006 estimate.

⁶ Source: Economic Impact of the Sabine Neches Waterway, 2008, Martin Associates

Camp SeaPort clearly a key to continued success are the slate of presenters, industry contributions and the compassion of volunteers. In Camp SeaPort speak volunteers are considered crewmembers.

E.iii. How the project fulfills the Award Criteria

The following content will explicitly address the six award criteria while providing a good program overview. The previous description placed the Camp SeaPort program into a context that forms a basis to address the following criteria.

1. *To address the nature of benefits to environmental quality, beautification or community involvement.*

As previously mentioned, Camp SeaPort was envisioned by Port Commissioner Linda Turner Spears. A public educator and active member of the community, Commissioner Spears was the catalyst to start the community involvement program. She solicited fellow commissioners and staff to support an educational outreach program. With commissioner's approval, port staff is tasked with planning, organizing, funding and recruiting presenters. Clearly port staff alone cannot successfully carry out the program. While achieving the mission of fostering youth education in maritime careers, along the way there have been a number of favorable unintended consequences, for the most part tied to volunteerism.

Camp SeaPort stays true to its mission while bringing together the marine industry's stakeholders through volunteerism. While focused on youth career education, another unintended consequence is enhanced stakeholder relations. For example the program has segments that include the USCG, surveyors, longshoremen, divers, stevedores, pilots, tug/tow operators and civic volunteers. All are stakeholders to the port. On the typical day, the other 51 weeks of the year, most interactions with the various stakeholders are in the business setting. Stakeholders are part of the program, at least during their one element or presentation there is no common business problem that needs to be solved

or conflicts resolved. The program provides a good opportunity to engage the stakeholder and for the host namely the port a chance to listen to trends and changes in their corner of the world.

A key stakeholder partner is the United States Coast Guard, USCG. Critical to the success of the program is USCG's participation. One day of the week long program is devoted to the USCG to provide power demonstrations, overview of the life and career of USCG personnel, their role in the port community and career opportunities. On its own, the Coast Guard has community involvement requirements and Camp SeaPort serves as one of these programs for their benefit. Camp SeaPort has participation from federal, state and local government plus various public educational institutions, port chaplains, mariner outreach programs and the marine industry all in an effort to educate local youth about maritime careers. The level of participation is a good indicator of compliance with the criteria of community involvement.

Local educational institutions specifically counselors are contacted in advance to recruit students and solicit their participation. In general, school districts follow community boundaries. Camp SeaPort encompasses the communities of Port Arthur, Nederland, Port Neches and Sabine Pass. Most of the Camp SeaPort volunteers are retired or current professional educators from the local school districts. An important aspect of Camp SeaPort is the experience provided to professional educators. Every volunteer educator has commented about how much they have learned by participating in Camp SeaPort and plan to take it back to the classroom. An unintended consequence involves teaching the teacher with the desire that it does make it back into the classroom. This is a function that port staff cannot perform.

The local community college, Lamar University – Port Arthur, LUPA, offers Associate and certificate programs in various support fields including: accounting, welding, office administration, and information technology. Additionally, for Camp SeaPort 2010 one of the event days will be hosted at the campus conference center, which has a unique vantage point to observe all waterway traffic. The venue makes for a great backdrop for the program. On that day presenters include the “waterside” portion of

the maritime business, ie. pilots, merchant mariners, tow/tug and divers, etc. In partnership with Lamar University, LU located in Beaumont, Texas which offers bachelors, master and doctoral programs in fields including engineering, sciences, business, computer science and liberal arts. A Lamar University career placement professional addresses the group about resume preparation and interviewing skills.

Another Camp SeaPort partner, Texas A&M – Galveston, TAMUG The Texas Maritime Academy a part of Texas A&M University at Galveston, is an ocean oriented branch campus of Texas A&M University. TAMUG offers degrees in science, business, engineering, transportation and liberal arts. Cadets seeking the Texas Maritime Academy U.S. Merchant Marine officer licensing may choose to major in Marine Transportation, Marine Engineering, Marine Biology License Option or Marine Sciences License Option. Navy ROTC Midshipmen may choose any major offered at Texas A&M University at Galveston. TAMUG has hosted overnight and day trips for Camp SeaPort including hands on activities in the school's ship simulator.

Most important to the future success of Camp SeaPort is the ability to “give it away”. While the port will continue to be the principle sponsor and an active participant an important point relates to fostering future growth. In 2009 Camp SeaPort was approached by a new partner that is helping Camp SeaPort to grow and refine the program's transferability. The port has partnered with Texas AgriLife, Marine Texas Cooperative Extension for Jefferson and Chambers counties. Texas AgriLife⁷ is now a major participant and Mrs. Terrie Looney, County Extension Agent, CEA has assumed an active role as co-director. Mrs. Looney ,a former professional educator has arranged additional support of her time through Sea Grant-Texas. Additional support is made available through Sea Grant-Texas which is sponsored through NOAA. Sea Grant is directly involved in environmental stewardship, long-term economic development and responsible use of America's coasts, oceans and Great Lakes.⁸ Sea Grant-Texas is administered through Texas A&M University. Texas AgriLife/Sea Grant provides much of the

⁷ Texas AgriLife is a component of the Texas A&M system, serving the agricultural extension needs of Texas

⁸ NOAA, National Sea Grant, <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/>

activity content, history, nautical terminology, knot tying, geospatial and map reading work. On Day Four (Thursday) the students board a waterborne education vessel and participate in an ecological tour and hands-on activities regarding coastal resource management.

Another partner to Camp Sea Grant is Apostleship of the Sea, AOS – Proximate to the port is the Seafarers Center. The recently completed facility was built to resemble the old KCS passenger terminal at the Port of Port Arthur. The Seaman's Center is filled with naval art, ship relics and marine nostalgia. The center, as in most port communities exists to serve the needs of transient mariners. Lead by Father Sinclair Oubre and Director Doreen Badeaux the Apostleship of the Sea provides support to various foreign and domestic crewmember needs. The Seafarer Center also serves as the location for the Camp SeaPort graduation ceremony. Fr. Oubre is a licensed mariner and the area's leading advocate for mariner rights. Fr. Oubre addresses the students on maritime tradition and addresses the question of "How do I become a mariner?" Fr. Oubre's also advocates the need for local maritime training. Presently, merchant mariner candidates must leave the area to obtain training and licensing. By developing local training, better opportunities exist to retain mariners in the local community.

Industry participation – Representatives of various maritime industries make presentations to the students. Typically on day one (Monday) the topics include traditional "landside" related careers including longshore labor, port operations, crane operators, engineering, agents and federal inspectors. Day two (Tuesday) is the merchant mariners, pilots, port, tug and tow industry, divers and surveyors representing the "waterside".

Industry stakeholder participation represents the path or the "means to an end". The path of stakeholder participation in the community involvement program is a secondary benefit to the port community. This secondary benefit or unintended consequence produces enhanced relationships and improved networking opportunities among stakeholders. The primary benefit of the community involvement effort is achieving Camp SeaPort's Mission: *Providing opportunities for youth to explore maritime careers.*

2. *The level of independent involvement and effort by the port.*

Camp SeaPort is supported by the Port Commissioners through budget approval, use of facilities and in many cases their personal time. Port Operations and Administrative Staff provide organizational support, presentations, arrange transportation, solicit sponsorship and secure camp related supplies, T-shirts, lunches and educational materials. The marketing materials, applications, etc., are developed in conjunction with Texas AgriLife. As a relatively small port with approximately 14 permanent employees, members of the staff wear a lot of different hats, including Camp SeaPort speakers and occasional pinch hitters.

The program began with the port and continues to have direct involvement and coordination by port commissioners and staff. Key to the success and sustainability of the program is increased volunteer involvement of the maritime and educational community. While Camp SeaPort is supported by the port's board and staff through budget, planning and participation the community outreach program's success is clearly by the spirit of the volunteerism. The Port has committed modest funding to host Camp SeaPort. The program is cost effective through the generous donations of both time and money of local maritime related businesses. One of the cornerstones of the program is the involvement between industry, public education and local, state federal partners. Performance evaluation by the port, partners and volunteers of Camp SeaPort is a critical function and changes are made from year to year.

3. *The creativity of the solution or programs.*

Camp SeaPort is designed to solicit youth from local schools and organizations to participate. The maritime industry is one of the more stable areas in the local employment base. Most local students are not aware that maritime career opportunities exist. Camp SeaPort was created to establish an educational platform for students to meet various career professionals and learn about the areas vast coastal resources. Some of the Camp SeaPort students will be preparing to enter the workforce

immediately after high school others will pursue vocational training and some are on college tracks. Most youth are undecided about a career at this age. The innovation of Camp SeaPort attempts to present as many career options as possible in the span of a week long course.

For 2010, students will be selected from incoming sophomores/juniors for the 2010-2011 school year. Previous years the students were incoming juniors/seniors. A number of the professional educators encouraged the program to “get them in earlier”. Contacts with school counselors, boy/girl scouts, church youth groups are a common method to solicit applicants. Admittance to Camp SeaPort is competitive and some general allocations are made for students residing in each of the school districts. For 2010, Camp SeaPort will allocate class space for USCG and Longshore dependents regardless of local residency.

Keeping 15-20 students ages 15-17 can be challenging. The program itself is organized in a course syllabus and agenda. In general, the course follows formal instructional techniques and embraces the concept of building blocks of learning. Aside from incremental improvements to course content one of the significant breakthroughs in course design is the shift to presenting a big picture approach and developing course content to support how all the pieces (jobs) relate. Sounds easier than in practice. The task involves balancing the need to explain fundamental job elements: knowledge, skills and abilities, KSA's without “getting in the weeds”. Camp SeaPort values the volunteer presenters. From the lessons learned file, Camp SeaPort planners have learned to establish time limits and provide general content requirements or pre-approve powerpoint presentations.

With limited funding support and the need to keep 20 youth engaged in maritime career opportunities, significant pressure exists to “Be Creative!”. The dynamic of the maritime industry, soliciting speakers that are often leaving the job to make a presentation leaves lots of improvisational opportunities. Many of the activities are outdoors and subject to incimate weather. The proverbial back-up plan is a must. As previously indicated, there is a venue change each day. A key concept of

Camp SeaPort is to get out of the classroom. For example, on Day One after introductions and a camp overview, when a presenter is introduced the class moves to the point of work. I.e., longshore labor, the class loads up in the vans and goes to the dock. To hear about the crane operator the class meets at Big Arthur.

A key partner and volunteer to Camp SeaPort is Ms. Vivian Bobb. Ms. Bobb is a retired professional educator and an inspiration to the students. Ms. Bobb's career in the classroom and now as a volunteer brings an important element to Camp SeaPort that port staff cannot perform. She has an innovative approach to maintaining order, not necessarily discipline but order. While there is a host of presenters and different skill activities, Ms. Bobb plays a role that brings the youth together and keeps them engaged. Throughout this application most of the content relatively easy to explain. This element is probably one of the most important and difficult to convey. If a port wants a Camp SeaPort...first go get a Ms. Bobb. This is conveyed with brevity, although there is a significant point to be made. Several examples include: her ability to ask leading questions for the students during various points of a presentation, "Helping" students eliminate unnecessary distractions, and probably the most important point her knowledge of various student interests and working with presenters to establish common ground. Using Ms. Bobb as an example, any program that other ports develop will need to identify a volunteer in the group to serve as facilitator, time keeper, chaperone and for lack of a better term "den mother". Very important roles to be performed and better served by dedicated volunteers than port staff.

Independently and collectively Camp SeaPort, its volunteers, presenters and partners work hard to keep the program interesting, creative and a suitable learning environment.

In development of the Camp SeaPort program as well as in preparation of this application, research was conducted throughout the industry to determine if a similar program existed. Research included a review of various maritime trade association topics as well. Information was found supporting

classroom topics and course curriculum for K-12. Some information was found regarding career opportunities, field trips and academic programs at many of the larger US ports. With some degree of confidence, Camp SeaPort represents one of the few if not the only program focused on an important niche group of adolescent youth. The Port of Port Arthur, its partners, stakeholders and volunteers consider the program an innovative method and an important role to be involved in an essential stage of youth education and career development.

4. *Whether the project or program results are apparent (the project must be complete through some beneficial increment.*

In addition to student required daily recaps, lead by Ms. Bobb, Camp SeaPort volunteers solicit feedback from students as well as parents. The positive feedback was overwhelming for the past two camps. Similarly, key partners were asked to participate in a candid lessons learned session. This is where the recommendation to lower the age group by one year, develop a list of expectations for the presenters (which matches the course syllabus) and change venues daily. A good indicator of beneficial incremental measurement is the consistent growth by interested students, volunteers and industry supporters. Probably the best indicator follows the old adage that “imitation is a most sincere form of flattery”. SeaPort 2009 had a volunteer educator and colleague of Mrs. Terrie Looney, Ms. Rhonda Cummins CEA Calhoun County Texas AgriLife. As with many of Camp SeaPort’s volunteers Ms. Cummins is a former professional educator. Her interest in Camp SeaPort was primarily as a volunteer aiding a colleague and serving as a knowledge leader for seamanship. Ms. Cummins holds a USCG Master license and has sailed as Master on a number of historic sailing ships. After learning of Camp SeaPort Ms. Cummins volunteered with plans of developing a similar project in Port Lavaca, Texas.

5. *The cost effectiveness of the activity or the program.*

As indicated a small budget was authorized by the port commission to support Camp SeaPort. This budget partially covered transportation, meals, t-shirts and consumables. The port relied on

relationships with local longshore, stevedores, vendors, tug/tow for generous support. Facility uses were largely donated including that of the port, Seafarer Center, USCG and the local college.

The greatest return on investment, “ROI” that Camp SeaPort can make is to educate a student and that student “pay it forward”. During last year’s motivational presentation it was impressed on the students the importance of the camp and the value of the opportunity to be selected to participate. While dollar cost estimates were discussed per student a much greater point was made. Only a few students were selected to participate, 2008-15, 2009-15, 2010-20. The expectation throughout the week long course was to take what you learn and tell people about it, friends, brothers, sisters, parents, etc., to “pay it forward”. Class exercises involved recaps, summaries and small presentations to reinforce the day’s activities. On graduation, students selected two fellow classmates to make a presentation on the week’s activities. At the graduation ceremony parents and friends were encouraged to attend.

The other cost effective strategy to reach as many youth as possible is the role of active public educators in the camp. As previously indicated, teachers can get the word into the classroom.

6. *The transferability of the technology or idea to the port industry.*

The growth of Camp SeaPort organically, learning by doing and hard work has helped the program achieve a certain level of local success. The program concept is sound and easily transferable. Not all ports have the same resources some have more money, some without a USCG presence, all have water. Most all port’s share in one fashion or another similar community challenges. The key to the establishing of a program in a port community is the buy-in of the port commission and staff. Because of the level of work leading up to the event, commission and staff support is critical. While not burdensome a consistent organized effort is needed.

An important note is that the partnership with Camp SeaPort and Texas AgriLife/Sea Grant –Texas is for very purpose to enable similar youth outreach programs along the Texas Gulf Coast. The photo collection is probably the best method to convey, what is Camp SeaPort?

F. Conclusion

Throughout the body of this text the reader may have noted the spelling of the name Camp SeaPort, the rationale of the design of the name is obvious. The Port of Port Arthur has sought and registered Camp SeaPort as a trademark. The intent is to openly lend the name to similar programs throughout the national and international port community. In sum, this is a way the Port of Port Arthur can follow its own advice to “pay it forward” and “give it away”. The port’s commissioners and staff offer any form of assistance to a port willing to start a youth program to explore maritime career opportunities as well as learn about coastal communities. Perhaps a suggestion or offer for the crew of Camp SeaPort to work with AAPA to develop content suitable for the website to “spread the word”.

In conclusion, the Port of Port Arthur submits a properly completed application carefully following the guidelines as set out by AAPA. The Port of Port Arthur asks for favorable consideration for the *AAPA Environmental Award for Stakeholder Awareness, Education and Involvement*.