



Alliance of the Ports of Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America and the United States

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Minutes

AAPA Public Relations Committee Meeting

March 31, 2008, 9am – 11am

Willard Intercontinental Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Attending (in alpha order by last name):

** No conference call used at this meeting*

1. **Patricia Cardenas**, Community Relations Manager, Port of Corpus Christi
2. **Spencer Chambers**, Government Affairs Manager, Port of Houston Authority
3. **Aaron Ellis**, Communications Director, AAPA (*Committee liaison*)
4. **Argentina James**, Public Relations Director, Port of Houston Authority
5. **Lisa Langone**, Media Relations Manager, Massachusetts Port Authority
6. **Lisa Mandt Lefeber**, Communications Administrator, Port of Everett
7. **Irene McCormick**, Communications/Community Services Director, Port of San Diego
8. **Robert Morris**, Director of External Affairs, Georgia Ports Authority
9. **Vered Nohi-Becker**, Marketing Services Coordinator, Port of Wilmington, Delaware
10. **Jody Peacock**, Director of Corporate Affairs, Ports of Indiana
11. **Paula Schouest**, Public Relations Coordinator, Port Fourchon
12. **Cheryl Solomon**, Marketing Director, Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority
13. **Capt. Alwyn Soppitt**, President/CEO, Saint John Port Authority (New Brunswick, Canada)
14. **John Valls**, Marketing Manager, Port of Corpus Christi (*Committee Vice-Chair*)
15. **Ray Venturino**, Publisher, Seaports Publications Group, Commonwealth Business Media
16. **Betty Ann White**, Manager, Government Affairs & Public Relations, Port of Pascagoula
17. **Lisa Whitlock**, Communications Manager, Port of Houston Authority

Call To Order

In the absence of PR Committee Chairman Joe Menta, Aaron Ellis opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m., welcomed committee members and then displayed and passed around the room three port-generic environmental ads for review that Mr. Menta had created in his role as chair of the Generic Ad Development Subcommittee. Mr. Ellis asked meeting participants to carefully review the ads and then jot down on the back of them any feedback or comments they had to pass along to Mr. Menta. Mr. Ellis further explained that individual ports could easily insert their logo and address information next to AAPA's at the bottom of each of the ads and use the ads to help raise awareness for their own and the overall port industry's environmental agenda.

After passing around the generic ads, Mr. Ellis asked meeting participants to write down the directions for accessing AAPA's e-Communities web pages on the AAPA web site. He noted that each of AAPA's 12 technical committees, including the PR Committee, have their own e-Communities web site area, and each web site area is full of valuable resources that only AAPA members are able to access. He said access requires using the member's work email address (in the "Member Login" box) and the member's password (in the "Password" box), and that if members forget or otherwise don't know their password, all they have to do is click in the "Forgot Password" box.

Self Introductions

After an oral review of the "Members Only" section of AAPA's web site, each of the 17 meeting participants took turns introducing themselves.

"Show & Tell"

Mr. Ellis explained that, rather than immediately go into the usual business of explaining what AAPA has been

doing for members since the last committee meeting, that committee members had indicated they would rather first give meeting participants time to share their recent communications successes in a “Show & Tell” session, and then if time permitted afterward, go into other business matters.

****Port of Houston Authority** -- The first “Show & Tell” discussion centered around the Port of Houston Authority’s “Clean & Green” environmental program. Argentina James and Lisa Whitlock began with an explanation of the program’s genesis, and proceeded to show a PowerPoint presentation detailing the many aspects of the port’s extensive and comprehensive undertaking.

Ms. James explained that the port’s environmental program is public-private partnership that is working to keep Houston’s Buffalo Bayou clean and green. She said the year-round endeavor, which was spearheaded by Port Commissioner Elyse Lanier, is an environmental initiative that uses community service workers through the Harris County Supervision and Corrections Department to clean up litter and debris. Five days a week, a land-based crew collects litter and debris from the banks of the waterway, while a waterborne crew works from a skimmer boat to clean storm drains, banks and other natural collection areas. Aiming to collect more than 10 cubic yards of debris a day over the next year — enough to fill 83 garbage trucks — the program focuses on a seven-mile stretch of the bayou.

Shell Oil Company anchors the port’s “Clean & Green” as major corporate partner. The port’s public agency partner includes Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Greater East End Management District, Harris County Constable Precinct 6, Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department and the Harris County Flood Control District. Other program partners are The Ogg Law Firm, Vista Fibers Company and Williams Brothers Construction Company.

In addition to their PowerPoint presentation, Ms. James and Ms. Whitlock showed the group a set of television and print advertisements related to the “Clean & Green” program, passed around coloring books developed for grade school children based on characters in the television and print ads to parlay the port’s environmental messages, and displayed items such as logo-emblazoned hand sanitizer spray tubes, shopping bags and water bottles made from recycled plastics such as the litter picked up around Buffalo Bayou. According to Ms. James, the overall message of the campaign is that those who trash the bayou trash the homes of the animals that live there, and, “how would you like it if they trashed YOUR home?”

The \$200,000 program kicked off in September 2007 as part of the port’s public outreach campaign that includes environmental and security messages, public service advertisements and paid placements.

****Port of Wilmington (Delaware)** – Vered Nohi-Becker followed the Port of Houston’s presentation with an oral recap of her port’s participation in the “Thank You Delaware Bay” campaign, whose slogan is: “Delaware Bay takes care of us. Let’s return the favor.” She said her port participated in the “Thank You Delaware Bay” promotional campaign, which was very well received in the local media. The port’s participation included print ads and public service announcements where one of the port’s employees is seen saying, “Thank you for the job!” The web site address is: www.tydb.org

****Georgia Ports Authority** – Robert Morris spoke next, extolling the positive press coverage that GPA has received for doing things like electrifying its container cranes, thus saving 1.5 million gallons of diesel fuel annually. He said the port has recently held press conferences on the positive environmental aspects of rebuilding its terminals, such as reuse of concrete and significant emissions reductions.

Public Relations Subcommittee Reports

Following the *Show & Tell* portion of the meeting, Mr. Ellis asked for progress reports from each of the various subcommittee chairs.

- **Key Media Messaging Subcommittee, chaired by Argentina James.** Ms. James noted that she has not received input from member ports on the list of key issues she developed and distributed at last Public Relations Committee meeting in Norfolk, Va., last September. She said that it takes a lot of time and energy to develop media messages and she wanted to make sure any media messages she and her

subcommittee develop will be useful to and used by the member ports. Mr. Ellis mentioned that AAPA is working with Edelman Public Relations as part of its port industry Awareness Initiative, and that Ms. James' participation in a May 28 "Messaging Session" will help the association develop the key messages it will use to promote the port industry. He stressed the value of exchanging "emerging" news and information relevant to the port industry and using AAPA's e-Communities web pages to share committee members' questions and answers about any topic they consider relevant.

ACTION ITEM: Prior to the Public Relations Committee Mid-Year Meeting in Corpus Christi starting on June 11, 2008, Ms. James and AAPA will hold a conference call with the PR Committee to get member feedback as to what are the priority issues and "key media messages" that member ports are grappling with and using. From that call, the subcommittee and AAPA will develop a revised list of key port issues and media messages that will be shared with the rest of the committee, via email and via an upcoming PR Committee meeting.

- **Generic Ad Development Subcommittee, chaired by Joe Menta.** As reported by Mr. Ellis, Mr. Menta—through his port's advertising agency—has developed three new generic port-related environmental ads that all members may use, and he will incorporate relevant feedback provided by the committee into the final version of each of the ads and distribute them electronically for everyone's use.
- **Projects & Publications Committee liaison, served by John Valls.** Mr. Valls, who attended the wrap-up of the concurrent Projects & Publications Committee meeting, reported that the committee had turned down the PR Committee's request that Sustaining members be allowed to submit entries into AAPA's annual Communications Awards Program. He cited the Project and Publications Committee's concerns as related to the logistical difficulties of separating the contest into sections for the two types of entrants and concerns over potentially overwhelming AAPA's limited staff resources with scores of additional submissions. An additional concern was that, in many cases, corporate members utilize the resources of Sustaining members in developing their AAPA Communications Award program submissions. If both the Corporate member and the Sustaining member were to submit work from the same program or project that they worked on together, that raises the potential for AAPA getting similar or duplicate entries, making them difficult to judge. Mr. Valls added that he didn't hear anything related to the Projects and Publications Committee's decision to approve the Public Relations Committee's request to hold its 2009 Public Relations Seminar in Detroit, Mich., next June, which Mr. Ellis stated was the same as hearing that the group had no objections.
- **Communications Program Awards Subcommittee, chaired by Marilyn Sandifur.** As reported by Mr. Ellis, Ms. Sandifur wrote a report for the committee that highlighted the changes to the 2008 AAPA Communications Awards Program. In her report, she noted that the guidelines have been changed to reflect the following:
 - The classification for "Audio/Visual Communications" has been renamed "Videos" to avoid any confusion between the "Audio/Visual Communications" and the "Audio or Visual Communications" classifications.
 - The "Direct Mail" classification has been combined into the "Promotional Literature" classification, which includes an explanation of the merged classification.
 - The rules have been changed to allow communications submissions (except for the entry form portion) to be in a language other than English, with the intent of encouraging more entries from Spanish-speaking members.
 - The guidelines now encourage program applicants to submit briefer accounts of their award submissions by limiting binder weights to 5 lbs. to make the judge's jobs easier (and likely increase submitters' scores!).
 - The part of the guidelines that ask applicants to detail the cost of developing their submission(s) has been eliminated because judges have said that cost accountings are irrelevant because most ports don't account for their own staff's time and internal material expenses.
 - The guidelines now indicate the importance of including how submitters determine the degree of success (or failure) of their communications project(s). In other words, the guidelines instruct submitters to detail the feedback they get from their communications' target audiences to determine if the project was worth the time and expense.

During Mr. Ellis' summary of the revised Communications Awards Program guidelines, Argentina James recommended that AAPA consider devoting a portion of next year's Spring Conference Public Relations Committee meeting to having one or more awards program judges provide insight on how to write a successful award entry. Mr. Ellis agreed that this would be possible and said he would look into it.

ACTION ITEM: AAPA will attempt to recruit one or more Communications Awards Program judges to give a presentation at the 2009 Spring Conference Public Relations Committee meeting on how to write a successful award entry.

- **Seaports Magazine Editorial Advisory Panel, chaired by Duane Sandul.** Absent a report from the subcommittee chair, AAPA Seaports Magazine Publisher Ray Venturino used the time to report on the results of the magazine's just-completed annual readership survey. He noted that the readership assessment began in November and ended in February, with 1,721 subscribers (out of a total of 4,500 circulation) receiving offers to complete the survey. Five percent of the 1,721 completed the survey, with 67 percent of those being AAPA members. Mr. Venturino invited meeting participants to view the survey results first-hand by going to www.aapaseaports.com and clicking on the 2007 AAPA Survey Results. In short, he said the survey indicated that the magazine is valued by the marketplace and those looking to enter it. He said it has a high pass-along rate and survey respondents provided exceptional feedback on current editorial sections, as well as future editorial areas of interest. He then discussed the themes and focus for the next three issues of the magazine (June 2008, September 2008 and December 2008) and Mr. Ellis added that current and past issues of the magazine, as well as the bi-monthly *AAPA Seaports Press Review* newsletter, are also available on-line, either accessible from AAPA's web site from the "Publications and Resources" tab, or by going directly to www.aapaseaports.com.
- **PR Planning Subcommittee, chaired by John Valls.** Mr. Valls followed Mr. Venturino by going over the draft agenda of the upcoming AAPA Public Relations Committee Mid-Year Meeting in Corpus Christi, June 11-13. He pointed out that he would like to get responses from everybody who will be attending the meeting because his port is sponsoring several of the activities and needs to get an accurate head count. Port of Corpus Christi-hosted activities include a suite, with complimentary food and beverages, at Whataburger Field to watch a baseball game between the Corpus Christi Hooks vs. the San Antonio Missions (evening of June 11), two continental breakfasts during the 1½-day meeting (June 12 and June 13), a Texas-style barbeque at Winwood Ranch (evening of June 12), and bus transportation between the meeting hotel and the convention center where the meetings will take place. During his presentation, Mr. Valls also asked for a volunteer to moderate a media panel on June 12, and Lisa Whitlock (Port of Houston Authority) offered to serve in that capacity. Mr. Valls also asked meeting participants to get back to him as soon as possible with their preference for the focus of public relations professional Carol Scott's remarks on the morning of June 12 (9:15am – 10am). Finally, Mr. Valls asked that anyone wanting to make a presentation, up to 10 minutes in length, during either of the two *Show & Tell* sessions of the meeting on June 12 (1pm – 2:30pm and 3:30pm – 4:20pm), to please fill out the *Show & Tell* schedule and return it to Mr. Ellis with the topic of their presentation.

2009 AAPA Public Relations Seminar

For the final item of the meeting, Cheryl Solomon, representing the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, together with a representative from Detroit's Visitors and Convention Bureau, provided meeting participants with a host of visitor amenities that they can look forward to when they come to the next 2½-day AAPA Public Relations Seminar, which will be held in Detroit at an as-yet unspecified date in June 2009. Ms. Solomon mentioned that Detroit has three casinos, a renowned ice hockey team, the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village (America's largest indoor/outdoor museum, which presents exhibits reflecting the change and innovation in American life), as well as access to nearby Windsor, Ontario, whose AAPA-member port will be invited to partner with Port of Detroit in sponsoring the Public Relations Seminar. Ms. Solomon also noted that Detroit's airport is easily reached by most major airlines, especially Northwest Airlines, which uses Detroit as a hub.

PR Committee Folders

Meeting participants all received committee folders at the beginning of the meeting, the contents of which included:

- Meeting agenda
- Public Relations Committee roster

- Public Relations Subcommittees roster
- AAPA Performance Report (September 2007 – February 2008)
- The updated AAPA 8-page brochure, titled “America’s Ports Today”
- Updated AAPA “U.S. Port Facts” handout (one page, both sides)
- A sheet titled “Committee Web Resources and Tools,” detailing such things as committee descriptions and leadership, committee web pages, member rosters, seminar planning guidelines and other resources.

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