



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

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## Minutes

### AAPA Public Relations Committee Mid-Year Meeting

June 11-13, 2008

Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center, Corpus Christi, TX

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. **Zulma Dinelli**, Principal, Contacto Centro, Rosario, Argentina
3. **Bill Eaton**, Public Relations & Government Affairs Mgr., Saint John Port Authority
4. **Aaron Ellis**, Communications Director, AAPA (*Committee liaison*)
5. **Andy Fobes**, Public Relations Director, Tampa Port Authority
6. **Cristina Galego**, Public & Community Relations Manager, Port of Galveston
7. **Argentina James**, Public Relations Director, Port of Houston Authority
8. **Jane Kilburn**, Director of Public Affairs, Port of Seattle
9. **Rod Koon**, Director of Communications, Port of Tacoma
10. **Lisa Langone**, Media Relations Manager, Massachusetts Port Authority
11. **Steven Macias**, Special Events/Community Relations Manager, Port of Long Beach
12. **Anne McMullin**, Corp. Communications & Public Affairs Director, Port Metro Vancouver
13. **Joe Menta**, Director of Communications, Philadelphia Regional Port Authority
14. **Vicky Mercado**, Adm. Assist. To the Port Director/CEO, Port of Brownsville
15. **Byron Miller**, Public Relations Director, South Carolina State Ports Authority
16. **Grace Moolchan**, Community Relations Manager, Port of Houston Authority
17. **Julia Nagano**, Corporate Communications Director, Port of Los Angeles
18. **Ashley Opsahl-Scibelli**, Communications & Public Affairs Manager, Port of Longview
19. **Anne O'Roake**, Communications Specialist, Port Manatee
20. **Marilyn Sandifur**, Port Spokesperson (Public Affairs Division), Port of Oakland
21. **Duane Sandul**, Public Relations Consultant, Port of Redwood City
22. **Richard Scher**, Communications Director, Maryland Port Administration (Port of Baltimore)
23. **Paula Schouest**, Public Relations Coordinator, Port Fourchon
24. **Paula Small**, Exec. Assist., Corp. Secretary & Public Relations, Saint John Port Authority
25. **Cheryl Solomon**, Marketing Director, Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority
26. **John Valls**, Marketing Manager, Port of Corpus Christi (*Committee Vice-Chair*)
27. **Lisa Whitlock**, Communications Manager, Port of Houston Authority

#### Wednesday, June 11 Activity

6:15 – From lobby of Omni Marina Hotel, board open-air tram for transportation to Whataburger Field (hosted by Port of Corpus Christi)

7:05 – Gather in private suite for food, beverages and baseball game between Corpus Christi Hooks and San Antonio Missions (hosted by Port of Corpus Christi)

#### Thursday, June 12 Meeting

##### **Call To Order**

At 8:20am, after a continental breakfast hosted by the Port of Corpus Christi, PR Committee Chairman Joe Menta called the meeting to order, introduced John Valls and asked Mr. Valls to introduce the morning's welcoming speakers.

Mr. Valls introduced himself, thanked everyone for coming, and then introduced Port of Corpus Christi Commissioner Judy Hawley and Keith Arnold, chief executive officer for the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Ms. Hawley talked about the port, its key strengths, and mentioned that it is recapturing its roots as a cotton exporting port, although 95% of its cargoes are petrochemicals. Mr. Arnold talked about the value of port as a generator of trade and tourism, and how the port has made it possible to attract large business groups to the area and to the Ortiz Center. He further noted that Corpus Christi has 103 miles of beach and the largest string of barrier islands in the U.S. He quipped that "everything in brush country either fits, sticks or bites you," and to beware of snakes.

### **Committee Business - Overview**

At about 8:45am, Mr. Menta asked Aaron Ellis, AAPA's communications director, to provide a brief update on recent and upcoming AAPA activities. Mr. Ellis asked participants to refer to their committee folders, in which a host of AAPA materials was located, including AAPA's quarterly Performance Report. In the Performance Report, Mr. Ellis discussed some of the presentations and news releases that the association had recently generated, as well as holding a communications "Messaging Session" at the offices of Edelman Public Relations in Washington, D.C.

Rod Koon and Argentina James, who participated in the Messaging Session, recounted their experiences in helping to identify the seaport industry's top three audience segments, relevant industry themes and positioning statements, and supporting message "proof points."

Mr. Ellis finished with a quick run-through of the other documents in the committee folders, which included: the meeting agenda; PR Committee roster; PR Committee Subcommittees roster and activities; Minutes from the March 31, 2008 PR Committee meeting in Washington, D.C.; report detailing themes and stories to be included in upcoming 2008 issues of AAPA Seaports Magazine; the 2008 Communications Awards Program entry guidelines; three full-color generic environmental ads for the port industry (created by Joe Menta and Philadelphia Regional Port Authority's advertising agency); a one-page "Committee Web Resources and Tools" sheet; and a copy of the children's educational workbook, "Discover Ports and Harbors."

### **Self Introductions**

After an a brief review of the three generic ads he and advertising agency had created for the PR Committee, Mr. Menta asked each of the 27 meeting participants to introduce themselves and say a little about what they do for their port.

### **Featured Speaker**

At about 9am, Mr. Valls introduced the morning's featured speaker, Kailo Communications principal Ms. Carol Scott, who gave an approximately one-hour presentation on developing, writing and evaluating communications plans. In the Q&A that followed, Ms. Scott fielded numerous questions about measuring the effectiveness of public relations communications, making particular note that the best measures are not the outcomes of a communications effort (e.g., earned media, Web site "hits" or audience attendance at events), but rather the impact the communications actually had on the target audience. She recommended paying close attention to what target audiences say about a communications effort because that is the true measure of its effectiveness. Measuring only outcomes can be misleading because outside factors besides the communications effort may skew results one way or another, potentially giving a false impression of the impact of the communications.

### **Committee Business - Subcommittee Reports**

After the mid-morning break, Mr. Ellis asked each of the Subcommittee chairs to provide a report on the activities and plans for each of their respective subcommittees.

Argentina James – Key Messaging Subcommittee: Ms. James handed out a document titled "AAPA Key Media Messaging Working List." After going over the 17 seaport-related issues on the printed list, she added two additional items; 1) Ballast water; and 2) Port trucking. In a follow-up committee tally of the issues that participants felt were the most relevant to their port, 10 issues were identified as having the highest priority for continued monitoring and for sharing individual ports' talking points. They were (in order of number of votes): 1) Port security funding; 2) Green port initiatives; 3) Air emissions reductions; 4) TWIC implementation; 5) Economic impacts of ports; 6) Port infrastructure financing; 7) Labor relations; 8) Port trucking (goods

movement); 9) China trade; and, 10) Protecting ports from gentrification. Each of these 10 issues received three or more votes, while the other nine issues received two or fewer committee votes.

Marilyn Sandifur – Communications Awards Program Subcommittee: Ms. Sandifur reported that she and her subcommittee recommended five changes to the AAPA Communications Awards Program for 2009. The recommendations include: 1) Delete the question asking entry submitters if the entry was produced in-house or by an agency or contractor; 2) Radio advertisements should be submitted in the “Audio Only” category rather than the “Advertisements - Single” or “Advertisements – Series” categories; 3) Include a session at the next Washington, D.C., PR Committee meeting where one or more Communications Awards Program judges talk about factors that earn certain entries high scores; 4) Require that video entries not only indicate the duration of the video, but if it is more than 10 minutes long, require the entry to indicate which segment or segments the judges should view that totals no more than 10 minutes; and, 5) Require the guidelines to specify what the minimum and maximum resolution should be for images to illustrate the entry for use in AAPA’s awards video, and that audio entries be submitted on CDs and not cassette tapes. **The subcommittee withheld recommendations on the following AAPA proposals:** 1) Increase the submission fee to \$80 per entry (from \$65) to offset the high cost of producing the awards video; 2) Require that all print ads used in magazines, newspapers, etc., include a full-page tear sheet showing the placement of the ad or ads in context with the publication; 3) Disqualify any entry that scores a 0 (zero) in one or more measurement areas; 4) Change the “Visual Only” category to be the “Internet Social Networks” category to better capture communications through on-line social networks, such as blogs; and, 5) Seek out an AAPA member port or an individual within a member port willing to voluntarily translate the Communications Awards Program guidelines into Spanish each year to encourage more Latin American entries (although AAPA voiced concern that entry forms mistakenly submitted in Spanish would be ineligible for judging because most awards program judges would be unable to read them).

Joe Menta – Generic Ad Development Subcommittee: Mr. Menta referred to the generic environmental advertisements in participants’ file folders, noting that individual ports could insert their logo and contact information in the lower left corner of the advertisements, next to AAPA’s. He further noted that his advertising agency could, within limits, customize any of the generic ads to fit a particular port’s needs. He concluded by noting that his subcommittee will be working on the next series of generic ads, featuring the quality of life benefits that ports provide.

Duane Sandul – AAPA Seaports Magazine Advisory Subcommittee: Mr. Sandul referred to the written report he and his subcommittee developed that was inserted into each participant’s committee folder. The written report laid out the recommended themes and stories for the Fall 2008 and Winter 2008-2009 issues of the magazine, and recapped the results of the 2008 AAPA Seaports Magazine Readership Survey.

Cheryl Solomon – PR Planning Subcommittee: Ms. Solomon passed around a draft agenda for the 2009 AAPA Public Relations Seminar, to be held in Detroit, Michigan, June 23-25, including a PR Committee meeting in the late afternoon of Monday, June 22. The proposed theme of the seminar is Strategic Communications Planning. Among the proposed session topics are: a presentation by a leading PR practitioner on strategic communications planning and execution; a team exercise about writing a strategic communications plan for a successful port community event; a discussion on community image and perception polling; a discussion on various media and publicity alternatives; a panel review on sample communications tactics that could be employed for a successful event; a discussion on inexpensive ways to get target audience feedback to measure the impact of the communications effort; and a presentation on developing benchmark and follow-up formal surveys. Ms. Solomon followed by giving all participants a Motown music CD to get them thinking about their upcoming visit to Detroit.

### **Lunch**

Between about 11:45am and 1:10pm, meeting participants dined at Brewster Street Icehouse, with the Port of Corpus Christi hosting the meal and transportation.

### **Show ‘n Tell – Part 1**

Meeting participants who had signed up in advance each gave a presentation, up to 10 minutes in length, on a particular communications aspect at their port that they wanted to share. The following committee members made Show ‘n Tell presentations:

## Part I, 1:00pm – 2:20pm

- **Marilyn Sandifur, Port of Oakland:** discussing environmental and health strategic communications issues, with a focus on her port's health risk assessment.
- **Paula Schouest, Port Fourchon (La.):** discussing the successful release of her port's Economic Impacts Analysis, including holding a press event (PowerPoint slides included).
- **Julia Nagano, Port of Los Angeles:** discussing the communications success of the "LA by Design" fashion show held by the Port of Los Angeles to celebrate its Centennial anniversary.
- **Duane Sandul, Port of Redwood City (Calif.):** discussing "Lo n' Behold, the Federal Government Wants Our Dredge Materials -- But There Are Still Problems. A Great Paradox," focusing on his port's desire to beneficially use dredged materials to restore a 3,000-acre wildlife refuge, and the challenge of getting the work done when the low bid was \$1 million higher than the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had budgeted.
- **Jane Kilburn, Port of Seattle:** discussing Washington's State Performance Audit and how it impacts the Port of Seattle.
- **Steven Macias, Port of Long Beach:** discussing an education outreach effort, titled "Port of Long Beach Classroom," that included numerous scholarships and designing and employing a mobile classroom.

## **Media Panel**

After the six Show 'n Tell presentations and a short break, a group of three Corpus Christi journalists, representing a television station, radio station and the city's daily newspaper, assembled as a panel to discuss how to get favorable coverage and respond to questions about how they might cover particular port developments. The panel comprised:

- *Richard Longoria – news director for KIII-TV 3, an ABC affiliate;*
- *Elvia Aguilar – business reporter for Corpus Christi Caller-Times;*
- *Jim Lago – a local radio personality featured on Lago in the Morning.*

Mr. Longoria noted that he was always looking for strong visuals to complement any television story, so being able to offer him good visuals is a strong selling point when pitching him any kind of port feature to cover. He also recommended that any story the port is pitching have some entertainment or amusement value, since most viewers don't understand, nor really care, about complex port operations. They want to see stories about people.

Ms. Aguilar said that stories featuring education, jobs, technology and innovations are the most compelling to cover, and anything that generally affects residents in the local community. She recommended three simple steps for favorable feature coverage: 1) keep it simple; 2) make sure it's timely; and, 3) make sure it's local. For simplicity's sake, she recommended the port provide all necessary clearances in advance so she can cover a story without having to get access permission every step of the way. She also recommended that press releases be free of industry jargon and acronyms.

Mr. Lago said that he tried to use his radio show to amuse, entertain, and to a lesser extent, educate his listeners. Feature stories about tourism, events and other aspects where typical residents might interact with the port were the most likely to get his attention.

## **Show 'n Tell – Part 2**

- **Argentina James, Port of Houston Authority:** discussing the Port of Houston Authority's Secure District project, which is a public/private partnership to secure the Port of Houston Ship Channel against crime and terrorism. Ms. James also handed out a brochure titled, "Houston Ship Channel Security District."
- **Anne O'Roake, Port Manatee (FL):** discussing Port Manatee's pocket sized Quick Reference and Media Guide.
- **Richard Scher, Port of Baltimore:** discussing Port of Baltimore's spot radio ad campaign and how they are using anecdotal customer success stories to explain the benefits of their port to the public.
- **Joe Menta, Philadelphia Regional Port Authority:** discussing the value of producing printed port magazines in an Internet world, and how the print articles can be re-purposed for use on the Web.
- **Byron Miller, South Carolina State Ports Authority:** discussing his port's new environmental initiatives, specifically titled "Pledge for Growth," which uses interviews with community and environmental leaders to tell the port's story and encourage other community organizations to make pledges to reduce air emissions.

- **Patricia Cardenas, Port of Corpus Christi:** discussing her port's approach to integrating a sustainability regime into its corporate culture.

At about 4:30pm, the meeting was adjourned for the day and participants were shuttled back to their respective hotels (Omni Bayfront and Omni Marina) and instructed to assemble in their hotel's lobby for bus transportation to the evening event, about 30 miles outside of Corpus Christi.

### **Friday, June 13 Meeting**

#### **Call to Order**

At 8:20am, after a continental breakfast hosted by the Corpus Christi CVB, Aaron Ellis asked everyone to take their seats and Mr. Ellis noted that the morning's seven speakers would each be giving an approximately 30-minute presentation on his or her topic.

#### **Speaker #1: Patricia Cardenas, Port of Corpus Christi Authority**

Ms. Cardenas' topic was titled, "Providing Maintenance To Your Brand." She said she got the idea for her project after watching a branding presentation by Canaveral Port Authority Communications Director Rosalind Postell-Harvey at the AAPA PR Seminar in Canaveral last summer. Mr. Cardenas discussed how the Port of Corpus Christi needed to simply update and "tweak" the graphical images their organization used in the marketplace, without doing a complete overhaul. She said the \$35,000 project was called "Channeling Excellence" and she outlined how the port used the Mastermind Team concept to get internal staff buy-in for the various brand maintenance efforts, including creating a set of branding standards and transitioning the changes in over time.

#### **Speaker #2: Andy Fobes, Tampa Port Authority**

Mr. Fobes' presentation was titled, "Working With AAPA To Get Favorable Media Coverage." The session highlighted how, working with AAPA, Mr. Fobes and the Tampa Port Authority successfully attracted and coordinated multiple media coverage opportunities when it hosted the AAPA Panama Canal Expansion Workshop in January 2008. The workshop drew a large port-related audience, and thanks to the proactive efforts by Mr. Fobes, received extensive and favorable media attention for the workshop and the port. The workshop also spawned coverage for the port only tangentially related to the workshop, including favorable editorials for dredging Tampa's entrance channel to accommodate bigger ships.

#### **Speaker #3: Rod Koon, Port of Tacoma**

Mr. Koon's presentation was titled, "Televising Port Commission Meetings: Good or Bad Idea?" The Port of Tacoma recently began airing its commission meetings on cable television and Mr. Koon offered to make this presentation to provide insight into the development process and its outcome. Calling it "a test of will, patience and communications technology," Mr. Koon said the effort to finally get the Port of Tacoma Commission meetings on television was a five-month drama that played in the media, on Internet blogs and elsewhere. Of the 145,000 viewers of the cable station, only 81 respondents to a TNT poll said televising the port commission meetings would be a "good idea," although that represented 80 percent of the total responses, so the television station was happy to report an 80% favorable response rate to their poll. Mr. Koon said the port figured it would cost between \$150,000 and \$220,000 to purchase and create storage for the television equipment, and to pay for professional technical personnel to operate the equipment during Commission meetings for the first year. Actual costs will be more like \$170,000, he said. Overall, he summarized that televising public meetings like these are part and parcel of a public agency being "transparent," and that more transparency is in the cards for all ports. In an on-line survey that Mr. Koon sent around to AAPA member port public relations staff, he found that, out of 15 U.S. and Canadian ports that responded, 53% are televising their commission meetings. "The big value for media relations in all of this is that the media can now watch the meetings themselves" rather than attending in person, said Mr. Koon.

#### **Speaker #4: Frank Espinoza, American Electric Power**

Representing RiverWorks Discovery, Mr. Espinoza's presentation was titled, "Educating Kids & Families About Water Commerce." RiverWorks Discovery, based in St. Louis, Mo., is an educational entity offering young people and their families ways to learn about the economic, cultural and conservation issues related to navigable waterways and their watersheds. Mr. Espinoza said that RiverWorks Discovery, located on the Web at [www.riverworksdiscovery.org](http://www.riverworksdiscovery.org), provides a diverse selection of on-line programs that ports can download for free and adapt for their own use in their education and community outreach efforts.

**Speaker #5: John Valls, Port of Corpus Christi**

Mr. Valls's presentation was titled, "Responding to a Crisis Situation." He described a situation he and his port had experienced recently in which the accidental shooting death of a port deputy police officer at a non-approved firing range on port property required all the available port communications and management resources to keep the situation from turning into a media feeding frenzy. He described how keeping on message, keeping to a set menu of facts, avoiding speculation and using a single port spokesperson rather than allowing multiple "freelancers" to interact with the media with information, helped prevent a bad situation from becoming much worse.

**Speaker #6: Argentina James, Port of Houston Authority**

Reprising a presentation she had made at the March 31, 2008, AAPA Public Relations Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., Ms. James described the Port of Houston Authority's "Clean & Green" environmental program. 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. Ms. James explained that the port's environmental program is public-private partnership that is working to keep litter, trash and other debris from fouling Houston's Buffalo Bayou. She said the program uses community service workers through the Harris County Supervision and Corrections Department to clean up litter and flotsam. Five days a week, a land-based crew collects garbage 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 is major corporate partner (contributing \$100,000), while the port's public agency partners include 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.

**Speaker #7: Sarah Garza, Port of Corpus Christi Authority**

Ms. Garza provided the final presentation of the meeting, titled "Green Port: Environmental Management System." Ms. Garza explained that two years ago, the Port of Corpus Christi Authority started an Environmental Management System that was ISO 14001 certified in July 2007. She said the EMS is built on the four "Cs," which are: Comply (with applicable federal, state and local regulations and other commitments); Commit (to pollution prevention); Continually (improve); and, Communicate (our performance to the community). She then discussed how the port is reducing and/or otherwise improving air emissions, water quality, waste disposal, spill potentials, energy consumption, contractor performance, employee investment and community outreach.

The 2008 AAPA Public Relations Committee Mid-Year Meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.

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