

# 2013 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION ENTRY FORM

(Please copy and complete this form for each entry)

Check only ONE entry classification below:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. AAPA Awareness Initiative Messaging _____ | 8. Overall Campaign _____               |
| 2. Advertisements – Single _____             | 9. Periodicals _____                    |
| 3. Advertisements – Series _____             | 10. Promotional/Advocacy Material _____ |
| 4. Annual Reports _____                      | 11. Social/Web-Based Media _____        |
| 5. Audio-Only Presentations _____            | 12. Special Events _____                |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks _____               | 13. Videos _____                        |
| 7. Miscellaneous <b>XXX</b> _____            | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____                      |

CATEGORY 1

CATEGORY 2

Entry Title: The Port of Cleveland: Following the Freight, a 3-part series \_\_\_\_\_

Port Name: The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority \_\_\_\_\_

Port Address: 1375 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 2300, Cleveland Ohio 44114 \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name/Title: Sandra Livingston, Vice President of External Affairs \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: 216-377-1341 \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: [Sandra.Livingston@portofcleveland.com](mailto:Sandra.Livingston@portofcleveland.com) \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate precisely how your port's name should be listed on any award(s) it may win:

Name: Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority \_\_\_\_\_

Being as precise as possible, attach a separate entry statement, in English, that includes a descriptive summary of your entry and lists answers to each of the following four key questions:

**1. What are/were the specific communications challenges or opportunities?**

- Describe in specific & measurable terms the situation leading up to creation of this entry.
- Analyze the major internal and external factors needing to be addressed.

**2. What were your communications planning and programming components?**

- Describe your overall goals (desired results).
- Describe your objectives (identify specific, measurable milestones needed to reach your goals).
- Identify your target publics (list primary, secondary and tertiary audiences in order of importance).

**3. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were used?**

- Explain your strategies (e.g., identify media, timing & venue choices requiring tactics to complete).
- Specify your tactics (actions used to carry out your strategies).
- Map out your implementation plan (include timelines, staffing and budget).

**4. What were your your evaluation methods and communications outcomes?**

- Describe formal or informal surveys, or anecdotal audience feedback, used to evaluate success.
- Determine communications outcomes by assessing changed opinions, behaviors and attitudes.

**The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority**

**2013 AAPA Communications Awards**

**Category: Miscellaneous**

**Title: The Port of Cleveland: Following the Freight, a 3-part series**

<http://www.portofcleveland.com/category/newsletter/october/>

<http://www.portofcleveland.com/category/newsletter/november/>

<http://www.portofcleveland.com/category/newsletter/december-2012/>



*The Port's follow-the-freight series took readers up the twisting Cuyahoga River in an iron-ore freighter, into a local steel mill, and then to a local manufacturer that produces snow plows*

**Challenges and Opportunities**

In recent years the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority has stepped up with new, targeted and innovative initiatives to maximize its benefit to the community – and with this historic pivot has come a more energized and strategic approach to communications, public outreach, and community engagement.

The Port does face communications challenges. While it has strong working relationships with private and public stakeholders, the general public is far less familiar with the Port, its value to the community, and the importance of waterborne transportation to the regional economy.

This lack of knowledge results in part from two facts: First, the general public typically does not experience the Port directly or frequent; and second, many people are not aware that the Port and the companies that depend on Cleveland Harbor connect with people in important ways that are not obvious.

Cleveland Harbor consists of the Lake Erie downtown shoreline and the Cuyahoga River ship channel. Nearly 18,000 jobs and \$1.8 billion in annual economic activity are tied to the roughly 13 million tons of cargo that move through the Port-and-River system on average each year. Moreover Cleveland's waterways provide critical and competitive connections for regionally that ship and receive cargo from the Great Lakes and the global economy.

In 2011 the Port adopted a Strategic Action Plan that identified communicating for "transparency, public engagement, and accountability" as one of its seven strategic policies. In 2012, the Port created a

Strategic Communications Plan to better execute on communications that target key messages and priorities. The communications plan sets out goals for building more awareness in the community about the importance of the maritime sector to the Greater Cleveland region and the Port's role in global supply chains. It also states that the Port will upgrade and expand its communications initiatives, and as part of that effort launch an electronic newsletter.

The eNewsletter began in September. The following month the Port launched a three-part, follow-the-freight series.

### **Communications Planning and Programming**

The overall goal of the three-part series was to show members of the public the importance of a strong port and maritime commerce to the local economy by telling the story of the movement of iron ore upriver, its transformation into steel, and that steel's local use in consumer-and-industrial products. The stories were written in an engaging style and augmented with pictures to draw in readers and show how the local maritime sector does indeed connect to them.

The objectives were to: write three separate stories that would stand alone but at the same time tell an overarching story; work collaboratively with stakeholders to tell their stories; tell the stories in words and pictures; take readers to places they've never been – from a giant freighter to a steel mill; and, seek to reach a broader audience than the Port typically reaches.

The target audiences were the same as they are for all eNewsletter stories:

- Members of the general public
- Stakeholders in the Port's three focus areas
- Non-profit organizations (general community, civic organizations, environmental organizations, recreational organizations, economic development organizations)
- Government (local, state, and federal officials & agencies)
- Local, state, and national media outlets and trade publications
- Internal stakeholders (board, staff, terminal operators, terminal workers)

### **Actions and Communications Outputs**

The Port worked with the strategic communications consulting firm that writes the eNewsletter to strategically develop a clear storyline that would carry across the three-part series. The team also needed to work closely with numerous people to arrange for a writer and photographer to ride a 635-foot freighter up the Cuyahoga River, and then for the writer to tour the ArcelorMittal Cleveland integrated steel complex and visit several steel users and manufacturers, including a local company that produces snowplows shipped to customers around the United States and in 23 countries across five continents.

Planning for the series began in August, and the stories ran in the October, November, and December issues. The Port hired a professional photographer for the freighter story to take readers on a fascinating visual journey, providing the general public views they might not otherwise see. The Port used 20 of the photos in the online album.

To increase the distribution of the freighter story, the Port successfully pitched the story to an online publication called Fresh Water Cleveland, a weekly that focuses on innovative ideas, people, and organizations. Fresh Water "re-printed" the story, giving byline credit to the Port, which is also a Fresh Water sponsor and benefits from having its logo on several landing pages. Fresh Water's readership is large – 118,652 page views in the fourth quarter of 2012 – and as a result, the Port was able to tell the freighter story to a much wider audience.

The consulting firm also showcased the stories on the Port's Twitter and Facebook pages as a way to broaden the audience beyond the Port's eNewsletter distribution list.

The Port's Vice President for External Affairs was the organization's point person on the project, working with the consulting firm from story conception to final editing. Other Port staff compiled the three photo albums posted with the stories on the Port's website. The costs for the photographer and consulting firm's research, writing, photography, and social-media dissemination of the stories were approximately \$4,150.

#### **Evaluation methods and communications outcomes:**

The overall goal of the three-part series was to tell the story of the movement of cargo and its transformation into consumer-and-industrial products in an engaging way that would draw readers in and show them their important and close connections to maritime commerce and the Port.

The stories clearly generated interest.

The stories generated wider readership than initially anticipated. Separate links to the freighter story entitled "Navigating the narrow, twisting river to fuel the economy," and to the accompanying photo album were among the Port's most clicked on tweets in October. The third story entitled "Steel made in Cleveland has a global reach," was one of the most clicked on Tweets in December.

In addition Fresh Water reported that its re-print of the freighter story had 571 unique readers, which the publisher described as "pretty impressive."

The Port recently conducted an online survey about the eNewsletter and received more than 100 responses. While the responses certainly were not limited to reactions to the three-part series, they do show that the Port is educating people with its stories. Just over 95 percent found value in the content; nearly 92 percent learned something about the Port and its work, with 37 percent reporting they had learned quite a bit; 85 percent reported they had a more favorable view of the Port; and about 60 percent shared stories with others, the vast majority by email.

The Port also received positive feedback from readers and all of the companies highlighted in the series on the three stories and the photos.

For example the individual who arranged for the writer and photographer to ride up the Cuyahoga River on the freighter, later wrote: "Thank you for the wonderful article about shipping in the Cuyahoga. You put the reader right in the pilot house and captured the essence of being on a shuttle. Great Job! I'll be looking forward to reading the follow up articles."