



Port Stories: Finding Success Through Georgia's Ports

Summary

the summer of 2018, the Georgia Ports Authority began developing a special publication highlighting Georgia-based companies using the state's deepwater ports to reach the marketplace domestically and abroad. Today, more than 25,000 businesses move cargo through our state's ports: from globally recognized brands to small Georgia-owned and operated businesses. From auto parts and flooring manufacturers in the Northwest counties to massive poultry operations in the Northeast, from kaolin clay in Central Georgia to such global manufacturers as Kia Motors in West Point, Caterpillar in Athens, Club Car in Augusta and Rayonier Advanced Materials in Jesup, global trade touches every part of our state, fueling Georgia's economy by nearly \$129 billion annually. This publication includes a broad range of voices, from manufacturing to apparel, agriculture to autos and heavy machinery about why these industries make Georgia their port of choice.

Communications challenges and opportunities

The primary challenge for this publication was to ensure that Georgia Ports' competitive advantages were outlined, and different regions of the state were represented. GPA's Corporate Communications team began compiling a list of integral companies and industries to include beginning in May 2018. GPA's Corporate Communications team worked to ensure top commodities moving across port docks were included.

Since the individuals and companies featured in the publication maintain busy schedules, another challenge was coordinating the production schedule with those of our contributors, including setting up photo shoots. Many of the companies featured, particularly those handling agriculture products, had narrow scheduling windows because of the harvest and growing seasons.

The publication was first distributed at the Georgia Foreign Trade Conference, which attracts hundreds of industry leaders and decision-makers, from senior-level shippers to maritime executives.



Overall Mission

Georgia Ports Authority's mission is to empower entrepreneurs, strengthen industries, sustain communities and fortify families by relentlessly striving to accelerate global commerce. The GPA was founded in 1945 to promote trade and economic development for our state.

This publication worked in tandem with GPA's mission and vision by demonstrating how GPA supports Georgia's robust, diverse economy, providing opportunity for families across every corner of the state. GPA remains committed to serving as a magnet for global commerce and looks forward to increased potential to attract more investment opportunities to the Peach State.

According to a study recently released by the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business, port activity accounted for 11 percent of Georgia's total sales in FY2017, reaching \$106 billion. The report also found that maritime trade amounts to \$44 billion in state gross domestic product, or 8 percent of Georgia's total GDP. Business conducted through the ports resulted in \$5.9 billion in federal taxes, \$1.4 billion in state taxes and \$1.5 billion in local taxes, according to the report.

Since the GPA is such a large economic driver in the State of Georgia, this publication was developed to show how Georgia's deepwater ports positively impact not only the state, but also business owners, farmers and hard-working Georgians.

Planning and Programming

The GPA team decided to organize the book into geographic regions. The book highlights companies and industries in eight economic regions: Atlanta, Coastal, East Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southern, Southwest and West Central. Each region includes profiles of companies or industries with a large presence or impact in those regions.

GPA also included sections on small businesses and e-commerce to showcase the variety of companies reaching the global marketplace and how Georgia Ports services help them achieve success. This allowed GPA to feature globally renowned brands such as Kia, Caterpillar, The Home Depot and Electrolux as well as Georgia-owned companies such as 21e, Okabashi brand shoes and Rover Mobility.

The profiles focused on the background and history of companies, as well as why companies have experienced growth. Also included was which countries are the largest markets, which products move cargo through Georgia's ports, why the Southeast and Georgia are important global gateways and what factors have led to companies' success.



Several discussions focused on the cover design for this publication. Because GPA benefits the entire state, the cover incorporates an outline of the State of Georgia. Inside that outline, photos from industries and companies from across the state are featured.

GPA chose to publish the book after Georgia's 2018 gubernatorial election to include a letter from the new governor. The foreword from Gov. Brian Kemp stresses the vital role Georgia's ports play in fueling the state's economy. The book also includes commentary by a University of Georgia economist on how the ports established the state as a logistics hub.

Goal: To illustrate how Georgia Ports aids Georgia owned and operated companies in reaching the global marketplace.

Objective: To print and distribute 5,500 copies of publication, which serves to feature companies finding success in the global marketplace, aided by Georgia Ports efficient services.

Objective: To share testimonials of globally recognized brands, the agriculture industry and small, Georgia-owned and operated businesses.

Target Audience: State and national legislators, regional officials and potential customers.

Secondary Audience: Georgia Ports Authority stakeholders and leaders in the logistics and maritime community.

GPA's Corporate Communications team began compiling a list of companies and officials for possible inclusion in May 2018. The list was then narrowed down, making sure to highlight all sectors of business, from manufacturing to agriculture, finding success via Georgia's deepwater ports. Once the list was finalized, the GPA team began reaching out to communications representatives for the selected companies. The requests for participation were well-received, interviews were scheduled.

GPA met with a designer to ensure the publication would complement the GPA brand, providing a cohesive look. Edits were made and redesigns completed throughout December 2018, with the final product being printed in late January 2018.

This allowed GPA to distribute the book at the annual Georgia Foreign Trade Conference in early February.



Actions and Outputs

Timeline:

May 2018 to October 2018

Interviews were scheduled and conducted with the companies and industries featured. First story drafts were created.

July 2018 to October 2018

Photo shoots were scheduled; content was edited and organization of publication was finalized.

September 2018 to December 2018

Book design began, incorporating the State of Georgia and many people in various industries on the cover.

November 2018

Once the gubernatorial election results were finalized, GPA Corporate Communications team members reached out to governor-elect Brian Kemp's team to discuss a foreword for the publication.

January 2019

Publication was printed and bound

February 2019

A limited run of the publication was sent to The Cloister in Sea Island, Georgia for distribution at the Georgia Foreign Trade Conference.

March 2019

Mailing and distribution of hard bound copies and soft back copies commenced.

This publication will also be available on Georgia Ports website as an interactive flipbook, which will include embedded multimedia content. The features will also be distributed via GPA's blog and shared across GPA's social media channels.

In addition, targeted media releases are being sent to media outlets near the companies featured.

The 72-page publication provides a comprehensive overview of Georgia Ports services and the business-friendly environment in the state, reflecting ongoing investment in workforce and infrastructure.



Outcomes

Goal: To illustrate how Georgia Ports aids Georgia owned and operated companies in reaching the global marketplace.

Result: This publication was distributed to business leaders and state, regional and national legislators. Because so many businesses call Georgia home, and so much commerce flows through Georgia's ports, this book is effective in showing the importance of additional funding for infrastructure improvements such as the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project. The project, which is halfway complete, will deepen the Savannah River, allowing heavily laden vessels to call the Port of Savannah. This in turn will give GPA's customers more flexibility in making goods available in the U.S. Southeast and beyond.

Objective: To print and distribute 5,500 copies of publication, which serves to feature companies finding success in the global marketplace, aided by Georgia Ports efficient services.

Result: GPA envisioned this publication as a "coffee table" book to enhance the visual storytelling. At 12" x 11", this publication is unlike any other book previously printed by GPA. GPA printed two versions of this publication – a hard cover and soft cover. The hard cover was distributed to elected officials, legislators, customers and other dignitaries. The soft cover was distributed to GPA's other stakeholders including members of the community, business leaders and potential customers. A total of 5,500 copies (both soft covers and hard bound editions) were printed, and distribution began in March 2019. A limited number of copies (500) were printed in time for the Georgia Foreign Trade Conference in early February 2019. Because the trade conference attracts industry and logistics leaders, GPA wanted to ensure that attendees received a copy of the publication.

The remaining 5,000 copies were mailed and hand-delivered to influential legislators, GPA's stakeholders, business leaders, logistics and maritime professionals and participants in the book.

Objective: To share testimonials of globally recognized brands, the agriculture industry and small, Georgia-owned and operated businesses.

Result: Thousands of companies, large and small, call Georgia home because of the high quality of life and low cost of doing business. By featuring several of those companies, this publication helps make the case for additional companies and business owners to make Georgia their economic hub.

"This publication has been instrumental in initiating conversations about the economic impact of Georgia Ports Authority, and the ability of GPA to help Georgia-owned and operated companies reach markets around the world. GPA's role in attracting jobs and prosperity to the state helps to ensure legislators and other elected officials continue to make vital infrastructure initiatives like the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project a priority." – **Lee Beckmann, Georgia Ports Manager of Governmental Affairs**