

Port of Corpus Christi
Communications
Year in Review:
2017-2018





The Port of Corpus Christi in Summary

The Port of Corpus Christi

The Port of Corpus Christi has quickly become the nation's leader in energy exports, poised at the critical juncture of American global energy leadership and delivering benefits to its community, Texas, and the entire nation. The Port is ready to lead, but needs continued infrastructure investment from the federal government to realize its full potential. As the maritime industry has evolved, many newer vessels for energy transport are too large to transit existing ship channels – stifling America's ability to export energy, despite being one of the world's largest producers of oil and natural gas.

The Port of Corpus Christi



The Port is beholden to federal appropriations and the Army Corps of Engineers to deepen and widen its channel to allow access to these larger vessels. Congress and the Administration can unleash the Port's full potential to usher in a new era of American leadership – growing exports, reducing the trade deficit, bolstering national security, driving economic prosperity and promoting environmental stewardship.

The Port of Corpus Christi

Over the course of December 2017 when we ramped up our campaign to present, our digital, earned and paid messaging strategies emphasized to our local community, appropriators in Congress, industry leaders, and journalists why it is time to invest in our vital and already authorized effort and let the Port of Corpus Christi work even harder for America.



1. What are/were the entry's specific communications challenges or opportunities?

- Describe in specific and measurable terms the situation leading up to creation of this entry.
- Briefly analyze the major internal and external factors that need to be addressed.

Communications Challenges and Opportunities

Following the 40-year ban on crude oil exports, the Port Corpus of Christi handled the first shipment of U.S. crude oil abroad on December 31, 2015. Until then, Corpus Christi was perceived as a sleepy little Texas port, largely unknown in Congress outside of the Texas delegation. Its proximity to the West Texas oil and gas boom and its location on the Gulf of Mexico have led to an increase in demand and traffic at the port.

Communications Challenges and Opportunities

Three years later, in 2018, the Port of Corpus Christi went from zero crude exports to exporting \$10.8 billion worth of crude oil to U.S. trading partners contributing to the offset of the United States trade deficit. As the leading U.S. crude oil export port and a major economic engine of Texas and the nation, Port Corpus Christi is now the 4th largest port in the United States in total tonnage.

Communications Challenges and Opportunities

The consistent challenge facing this hometown port is maintaining current and developing new infrastructure that would allow it to keep up with a growing global demand for crude oil and other energy sources including wind energy components, natural gas, other petroleum products, and other products such as grain, metals and materials. Making the case for increased federal funding has been a priority for the local team, but not one that has been met without opposition. With limited federal infrastructure budgets, the Port of Corpus Christi which was not a well-known seaport to congressional appropriators or the Administration had an uphill battle of explaining its importance.

Communications Challenges and Opportunities

At home, communicating the Port's impact on the local economy and promoting its environmental stewardship, especially in times of natural disasters such as Hurricane Harvey rebuilding efforts, remains a priority for Port of Corpus Christi leadership.

Positioning the Port of Corpus Christi in Washington as a steward of increased national security, an active contributor to reducing our trade deficit, and a driver of economic development requires a coordinated campaign.



2. How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization's overall mission?

- Explain the organization's overall mission and how it influenced creation of this entry.

Representing Our Overall Mission

The Port of Corpus Christi's mission is to leverage commerce to drive prosperity so we can achieve our vision of being *the* energy port of the Americas.

The Port believes that business is built on strong connections. Logistical and personal. The Port of Corpus Christi keeps relationships at the heart of everything it does, which is why partners are investing and growing.

Representing Our Overall Mission

As the Port of Corpus Christi works with committed community members, influential policymakers and the national media, it keeps the following SEAPORT Values at the forefront: Safety, Empowerment, Accountability, Preparedness, Optimism, Respect and Teamwork.

With the strong foundation of its relationships, the Port of Corpus Christi was able to build a campaign based the SEAPORT values that would resonate with a national audience.

3. What were the communications planning and programming components used for this entry?

- Describe the entry's goals or desired results.
- Describe the entry's objectives and list specific, measurable milestones needed to reach its goals.
- Identify the entry's primary and secondary audiences in order of importance.

Programming and Planning Components: Goals



The Port of Corpus Christi needed federal funding to deepen its ship channel in order to accommodate the larger vessels to handle the increased demand.

Programming and Planning Components: Milestones

The Port of Corpus Christi first needed to increase its visibility outside of South Texas, and then explain the importance of competing for federal funds. These objectives needed a strong campaign leading up to these significant milestones:

- Each spring the President of the United States releases a proposed budget;
- Congress follows up with their appropriations of federal funds;
- The Army Corps of Engineers must then release their work plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

Programming and Planning Components: Audience

Primary audiences reached through our communications efforts:

- Congress and Congressional Staff
- The White House
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- The Office of Management and Budget

Secondary audiences:

- Wall Street
- Oil and gas industry
- International markets

4. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were employed in this entry?

- Explain what strategies were developed to achieve success and why these strategies were chosen.
- Specify the tactics used (i.e., actions used to carry out strategies).
- Detail the entry's implementation plan by including timeline, staffing and outsourcing used.

Actions and Outputs

The Port of Corpus Christi implemented a comprehensive media strategy from late 2017 to the present to position itself as the top energy port of the Americas. The following slides outline the messaging strategy that ultimately led to three times more funding in the President's proposed FY20 budget.

Actions and Outputs: Top-Tier Executives

Leaders from the Port of Corpus Christi engaged in more than 20 one-on-one briefings with top-tier national reporters, offering up pitches tailored to their previous reporting of the crude export ban, energy infrastructure, congressional and appropriations. These national and Inside the Beltway reporters included:

- Rebecca Elliott, Wall Street Journal
- Michael Laris, Washington Post
- Justin Worland, TIME Magazine
- Lydia DePillis, CNN
- Mary Catherine Wellons, CNBC
- Stephen Cunningham, Bloomberg

Actions and Outputs: Op-Eds

In 2017 and 2018, the Port of Corpus Christi placed six op-eds in Inside the Beltway (Washington, D.C.) outlets as well as national and key industry trade publications.

- **Ban Lift Anniversary Op-eds:** Wrote at least two op-ed detailing the gains made by the United States towards realizing its energy independence in the years since the ban was lifted; how the Port has contributed to this growth; the need for continued federal investment in critical infrastructure to help America become a net exporter of energy; and guidance for how to address these funding challenges. These were published in both *The Hill* and *Morning Consult*.

Actions and Outputs: Media Sponsorship



Leading up to the two-year anniversary of the crude oil export ban, Port of Corpus Christi launched a sponsorship of the Morning Consult's energy newsletter with a message about leading the way on crude exports.

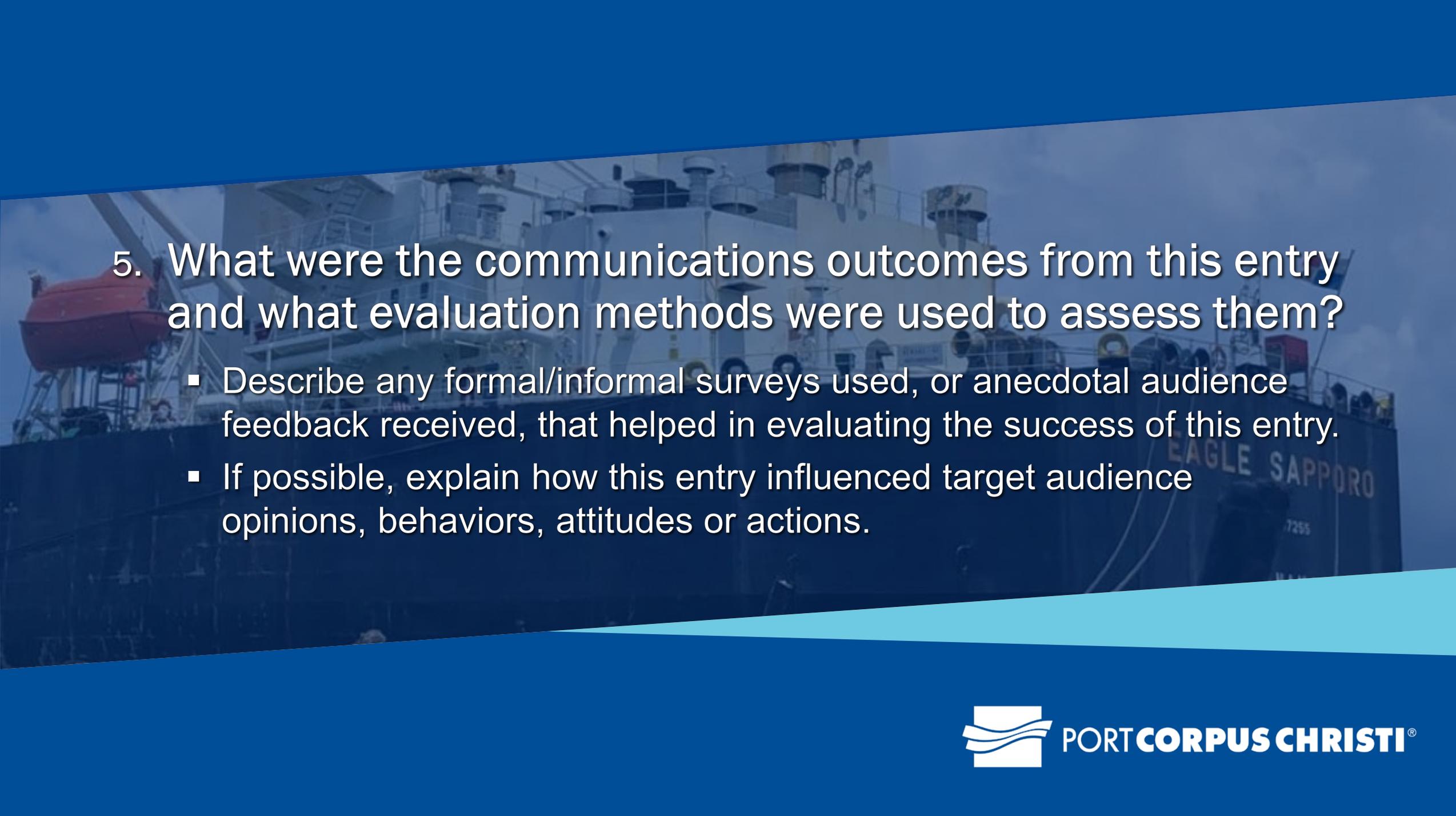
Actions and Outputs: Editorial Board Meeting

We engaged in meetings with the editorial board of relevant newspapers to brief them on the current need for infrastructure spending, the importance of Port of Corpus Christi and its benefits, and the case for establishing a fair and common-sense mechanism to fund the projects most capable of delivering return on investment.

Actions and Outputs: Port of Corpus Christi Events, Conferences and Thought Leadership Opportunities

Edelman will pitch local and relevant journalists to attend the event and participate in interviews with key spokespersons around the sidelines.

- **Targets:** Reporters for national wires and outlets based locally (e.g., The Associated Press, Reuters, USA Today, The New York Times) and prominent state outlets (e.g., the San Antonio Business Journal, Houston Chronicle and Austin American-Stateman).



5. What were the communications outcomes from this entry and what evaluation methods were used to assess them?

- Describe any formal/informal surveys used, or anecdotal audience feedback received, that helped in evaluating the success of this entry.
- If possible, explain how this entry influenced target audience opinions, behaviors, attitudes or actions.

Outcomes and Evaluation

The communications outcomes derived from this entry included three critical mentions of the Port Corpus Christi by President Donald Trump in the following: the 2018 State of the Union Address to Congress, the President's Fiscal Year 2019 proposed budget and the President's Fiscal Year 2020 budget. Additionally, during a White House press conference, the President stated the Port of Corpus Christi's role as an energy exporter for our nation.

Outcomes and Evaluation

The Port of Corpus Christi ultimately secured \$23 million in funding in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps of Engineers) FY '18 Work Plan for the Corpus Christi Channel Improvement Project, which is designed to deepen one of America's biggest waterways.

Outcomes and Evaluation

In addition to the President's attention to this hometown port, the Port Corpus Christi was also engaged in the following:

- A **letter to the White House** from six energy company CEOs advocating for the Port's expansion project
- A **letter of support to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** from Texas Governor Greg Abbott
- A **letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** from a bipartisan group of Members of the Congressional Texas Delegation on behalf of the Port's Channel Improvement Project
- A **House Oversight & Government Reform Committee testimony.**

Supplemental Materials

- [America's New Energy Coast](#)
Popular Mechanics – March 19, 2019
- [The Next Permian Bottleneck: Crude Oil Export Capacity](#)
Hellenic Shipping News – March 3, 2019
- [\\$400M investment will boost Corpus Christi as top U.S. crude oil exporter](#)
Houston Chronicle – March 12, 2019
- [Permian oil headed for Corpus Christi export terminals as U.S. opens global markets](#)
Houston Chronicle – March 9, 2018
- [Houston company seeks to make Port of Corpus Christi alternative LPG export hub](#)
Houston Chronicle – February 15, 2019
- [How an Oil Boom in West Texas Is Reshaping the World](#)
Time Magazine – January 3, 2019
- [Expanded Texas shipping lane could help cut trade deficit by \\$50B](#)
UPI – December 7, 2018

Supplemental Materials

- [Q&A: Oil exports are top of mind for Corpus Christi port CEO](#)
San Antonio Express-News – December 3, 2018
- [U.S. could become net exporter of petroleum by 2022](#)
San Antonio Express-News – November 27, 2018
- [Port of Corpus Christi secures \\$59 million for ship channel project](#)
KIITV.com – November 26, 2018
- [Frackers Bet on New Terminals to Boost Oil Exports](#)
Wall Street Journal – October 21, 2018
- [Offshore Mega-Terminals Are Coming Because Oil Supertankers Are Too Big for Our Ports](#)
Popular Mechanics – September 14, 2018
- [Texas oil port to raise \\$300 million for work to handle U.S. shale export boom](#)
Reuters – June 15, 2018
- [Army Corps of Engineers Grants \\$23M to Port Corpus Christi](#)
Corpus Christi Business News – June 12, 2018

Supplemental Materials

- [How America's Shale Plays Are Turning The U.S. Into A Global Exporting Power](#)
Forbes – June 6, 2018
- [America's LNG Export Boom Hinges on Infrastructure](#)
Icons of Infrastructure – May 29, 2018
- [Lloyd's List 2018 Americas Awards - The Winners](#)
Lloyd's List – May 24, 2018
- [Texas Delegation Shows Support for the Corpus Christi Project](#)
Dredging Today – April 20, 2018
- [Panama Mission: Port working to bring business from Latin America](#)
KIITV.com – April 10, 2018
- [Port of Corpus Christi receives \\$4.2 million grant for road work from Texas Mobility Fund](#)
Corpus Christi Caller-Times – March 30, 2018
- [Port Of Corpus Christi Moves Ahead In The Face Of Congressional Inaction](#)
Forbes – March 26, 2018

Supplemental Materials

- [Foreign Trade Houses Grab Dominant Share of U.S. Crude Exports](#)
The Wall Street Journal – March 24, 2018
- [US crude exports becoming bigger presence in global oil](#)
Yahoo News – March 18, 2018
- [Sen. Ted Cruz \(R-Texas\) Advocates for Port of Corpus Christi in Senate Commerce Committee Hearing](#)
Citybizlist – March 16, 2018
- [Shale oil growth to overwhelm U.S. refiners, fuel exports: study](#)
Reuters – March 5, 2018
- [Trump Budget Boosts the Nation's Largest Port for Crude Exports](#)
Icons of Infrastructure – February 13, 2018
- [President Trump's budget includes \\$13M for Port of Corpus Christi ship channel work](#)
Corpus Christi Caller-Times – February 12, 2018
- [United States will be a net energy exporter by 2022, Energy Dept says](#)
CNBC – February 7, 2018

Supplemental Materials

- [Exporting American energy requires investing in ports](#)
The Hill – February 6, 2018
- [Leading energy companies urge President Trump to support Port Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project](#)
BIC Magazine – February 1, 2018
- [Energy Companies Urge Trump to Support Corpus Christi Dredging](#)
Dredging Today – January 31, 2018
- [Sean Strawbridge: Leading Growth at the Port of Corpus Christi](#)
Shale Magazine – January 8, 2018
- [Port of Corpus Christi Thrives with Energy Projects, Milestones](#)
Tank Terminals – January 8, 2018
- [Coastal Bend continued to lure big business as oil prices recovered](#)
Abilene Reporter News – January 2, 2018