



E-Anchorage

Summary

Georgia Ports Authority's AnchorAge magazine communicates with current and potential clients about GPA's commercial advantages, while highlighting customer service, economic development, and sustainable practices, with an eye toward winning new business.

Since 1959, AnchorAge has been a magazine printed and mailed quarterly. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred GPA to create a new model, one that is distributed more often and electronically.

E-AnchorAge still focuses on relevant industry information and dramatic photographs that illustrate the scope and grandeur of port infrastructure, but now provides more timely information for industry experts with no contact.

Find the series on the right of the page [here](#).

Individual issues can be found here:

[April 6, 2020](#)

[April 22, 2020](#)

[May 6, 2020](#)

[May 20, 2020](#)

[June 3, 2020](#)



Communications challenges and opportunities

The Georgia Ports Authority is one reason the state of Georgia has been named the top state for business five years in a row. Fostering international trade and industry for state and local communities, the Georgia Ports Authority operates deepwater ports in Savannah and Brunswick. The Port of Savannah is the fourth busiest port in the U.S. GPA's deepwater ports support more than 440,000 jobs in Georgia and contribute \$25 billion in income.

The challenge is to constantly create an inspiring and useable tool for the GPA to communicate business trends and other relevant information, to support the mission of increasing cargo movement through Georgia and supporting economic development throughout the state.

In addition to the constant challenge, 2020 provided a new challenge to communication with COVID-19. Overnight the communications team was tasked with figuring out how to communicate with audiences without contact. One of several solutions the Corporate Communications team came up with was a virtual edition of our historic magazine. When creating this new product, the team focused on being a source of timely news for stakeholders and customers. Considering the speed of turn-around for an electronic publication we had the opportunity to direct the story as it developed, instead of report months after it was over.

E-Anchorage focuses on informing customers and stakeholders of positive industry stories.

Overall Mission

The mission of Georgia's deepwater ports is to support economic development in Georgia. The stories highlighted in AnchorAge demonstrate to business and government leaders in each region the vital role the ports play in the state's economy.



By highlighting the success of businesses that partner with GPA and the jobs they provided, AnchorAge helps to share the message of GPA as a statewide economic engine and acts as a sales tool for GPA, in demand by GPA's Trade Development staff.

AnchorAge instills confidence in customers and potential customers by focusing on infrastructure investment, business growth across Georgia, available land, as well as GPA's decisions to operate in a sustainable way.

Planning and Programming

Overall Goal: To grow the movement of cargo through Georgia's ports and support economic development.

Objectives:

- Inform current and potential clients that GPA remains open and moving cargo during a pandemic.
- Communicate positive industry stories to stakeholders and media.

Audience: AnchorAge's primary audience includes more than 19,000 subscribers worldwide including current and future GPA clients and economic development officials who receive E-AnchorAge via email.

Secondary audience includes the media, federal, state and local legislative officials, along with community leaders and business partners.

Actions and Outputs

Soon after the GPA communications team was sent off to work from home, they brainstormed ways to communicate with stakeholders in a timely way. E-Anchorage was one tool that the team came up with.



Drawing from several employees' experience in journalism and at newspapers, the team decided something more timely than each quarter would be of value in leading the news voice, so bi-weekly was decided. The team then brainstormed story ideas and assigned photos and stories. One team member who used to design for *USA Today* headed the effort and currently designs the publication.

E-AnchorAge was created in-house so there was no additional cost associated with its production. It had a net positive effect on the budget because the thousands of dollars spent designing, printing and mailing the quarterly publication has been saved.

Timeline:

March 2020: Printing of the traditional hard-copy AnchorAge magazine was halted, and the Corporate Communications team was tasked with finding new ways to communicate with stakeholders in a timely manner.

April 2020: Ideas were considered, and the new electronic AnchorAge was approved for distribution bi-weekly. Story planning and development were assigned, and drafts were perfected. The first issue was emailed on April 6.

April-present 2020: E-Anchorage is distributed every other week to a list of nearly 20,000 stakeholders.

Outcomes

Objective: Inform current and potential clients that GPA remains open and moving cargo during a pandemic.

Result: The average open rate is around 20 percent. They went to just under 19,000 email addresses.

Objective: Communicate positive industry stories to stakeholders and media.



Result: Further publication of the stories first published in E-AnchorAge amplified GPA's message to both customers and the community. Stories written by the Corporate Communications team were picked up by dozens of publications, including the following examples:

- **Business Facilities:** "Georgia Ports handles medical supplies"
- **DC Velocity:** "Georgia Peanut outlook positive"
- **Expansion Solutions:** "Georgia producers working to meet toilet paper demand"
- **RISI Techonology:** "Forest products see increase"
- **Global Atlanta:** "Kaolin an important export for Middle Georgia"
- **American Journal of Transportation:** "GPA partners with Second Harvest to serve Georgia communities"
- **Freight Waves:** "Modern-day heroes: Trucking community keeps supply chain moving"
- **Journal of Commerce:** "Poultry growers tap Savannah to keep exports moving"
- **Freight Business Journal North America:** "GPA launches live chat feature"
- **Asian Cargo News:** "Trend toward e-commerce accelerating"

Overall:

The production and distribution of E-AnchorAge saved Georgia Ports money, reached almost double the audience of the print version and allowed the Corporate Communications team to share newsworthy stories with customers, stakeholders and the media in a timely manner.

The Corporate Communications team received the following email GPA's Latin America & Caribbean Trade Representative Ariel Canzani, based in South America who uses it as another tool to reach out to customers. "I support, by far, the e-Anchorage. When you send e-AnchorAge, you can send it to several persons in the same office. If you send only one hard copy per office (I have this policy in my territory) you do not know if the person rotates the magazine among the rest of the persons of the same office."