

**AAPA 2020 Communication Award Program
Port of Vancouver USA**

Classification: Periodicals
Entry title: Community Report

Summary

The Port of Vancouver USA (POV) is a major economic engine for Washington State. Like many ports, much of POV's key operations take place behind secured areas, making it difficult for the general public to see the important work taking place. It is thus a challenge to demonstrate the benefits we provide to Southwest Washington and beyond.

We view our biannual *Community Report* newsletter as a prime opportunity to showcase our mission-driven policies and activities, marine and industrial development, job creation, environmental stewardship and industry and community leadership efforts that help our region thrive.

The *Community Report* newsletter is printed and mailed to all property owners in the port district, is available online and is emailed to a growing list of subscribers. It is an invaluable tool for raising awareness about the port and giving residents and taxpayers a strong sense of the value they receive from their investments in the port.



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Community Report

A NEWS UPDATE FROM THE
 Port of Vancouver USA

MAY 2019

 Julianna Marler
CEO

Regional freight mobility matters

Growing up in Vancouver, I never would have pegged us as a hub in the broad sweep of international trade. But we are. In fact, Vancouver and its port are major players in this sector. In a state where 40% of jobs are tied to international trade, the Port of Vancouver USA moves more than 8 million


Terminal 1 landing rendering

Terminal 1 project receives \$4.7

1. Challenges and opportunities

Like many ports, the Port of Vancouver faces a general lack of awareness about what the port does and why it matters to the community. The *Community Report* enables us to deliver comprehensive information about the port's marine, industrial, environmental and community initiatives and programs in a neighborly storytelling format. Each issue also includes an infographic that highlights key economic and stewardship results in an eye-catching and memorable way.

Although the port has a robust community outreach program that gets us face-to-face with hundreds of people each year, most port district residents and taxpayers never attend a port-related meeting or event. The *Community Report* offers us a way to share news about the important work taking place at the port and demonstrate to taxpayers the value they get from their investments in the port.

The *Community Report* has evolved over the years as the port's brand has changed and people's consumption habits have shifted. We updated to a cleaner, more dynamic design and now incorporate more images, captions and infographics to enhance engagement and scalability. We also write shorter stories with web links where readers can go for more information.

More than 93,000 port district property owners receive a printed copy in the mail. Each biannual issue is also available for download on the port's website. In addition, we recently introduced an email version that we send to a growing list of subscribers.

2. Incorporation of mission

The port's mission is to provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and waterfront development.

In each issue of the *Community Report*, we share interesting stories, engaging images, informative graphics and other information that quickly demonstrate how the Port of Vancouver delivers on this mission day in and day out. The newsletter is the port's primary opportunity to connect with community members in their homes and businesses and let them know about the myriad ways that the port offers opportunities for businesses, supports job creation and growth, enhances the local quality of life, and provides economic benefit to the entire region.

3. Planning and programming components

The *Community Report* is designed for the primary audience of port district property owners and taxpayers with additional secondary audiences including partner organizations, elected officials, local businesses and the rest of the general public.

Our goals for the *Community Report* include:

- Being transparent and accountable to our citizens
- Communicating how the economic development we facilitate directly benefits the region
- Raising awareness of and support for the port and its activities

We achieve these goals by presenting the content in a friendly, easy-to-understand way, and giving the community a look into what the port does, how we go about it and why we do what we do. When a member of the public thinks about the port, we want them to think about more than ships, trains and trucks. We want them to better understand the breadth of work taking place at the port and that the port is key to economic prosperity in our region.



4. Actions and communication outputs

Strategies

The Port of Vancouver's *Community Report* is produced every six months with content focused on telling the audience about issues, activities and accomplishments that demonstrate the port delivering on its mission.

We craft the stories and content to provide clear and transparent information in interesting and engaging ways. We highlight information about major initiatives and projects that could impact citizens and the community and try to include content that addresses each part of our mission.

Tactics

Every year, the port commissions a community survey to gauge current opinions, beliefs and the level of awareness the public holds about the port and its activities. We analyze this survey to gain a better understanding of what's important to the community and identify topics that warrant greater coverage or explanation in the *Community Report*.

The External Affairs team develops a content plan for each issue that highlights important work that has recently taken place while also previewing what's ahead. We then gather input and buy-in from port leadership and internal stakeholders to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the content and to gather additional insights, context and details that the audience will find of interest.

Implementation

The External Affairs team develops a six-week plan that includes time to hear from leadership; create and revise content; and to design, edit, print and mail the *Community Report*. All writing, content creation and editing is performed by the External Affairs team. Graphic design, printing and mailing is handled by external vendors.

Each biannual *Community Report* costs approximately \$28,000 to design, print and mail to the audience of more than 93,000 port district property owners. The issues are printed on newsprint to control costs and to support the local newspaper.

In 2019, we also introduced an email version of the *Community Report* that we are able to send out to a growing list of subscribers. This allows us to increase the reach of our newsletter without significantly increasing costs. In 2020, we plan to expand the reach of the *Community Report* by sharing it on our social media channels.



Community Newsletter

Twice a year, our community newsletter lands in the mailboxes of port district residents. This November, we are proud to highlight our updated economic impact numbers, record wind blade shipments, port tours, and much more! To see the latest, click [here!](#)

5. Communications outcomes and evaluation methods

For the print version of the *Community Report*, we measure success by the comments we receive from citizens, staff, commissioners and other stakeholders. For the online version, we also collect the number of downloads on the website. The new email version offers us a range of new metrics such as email open rates for the relatively small but growing subscriber list.

In addition, we analyze the annual community survey for feedback on the newsletter and general awareness trends regarding the port. The *Community Report* is consistently one of the most requested pieces of content by citizens and staff. We print a few hundred extra copies of each edition to ensure that we have plenty to hand out to elected officials, citizens, partners and others who wish to keep up to date on our activities. When we staff a port table at community events, we also take extra copies to hand to the public.

The annual community survey continues to show increased awareness of the port. Our 2018 survey of 600 port district residents showed that 56 percent of those surveyed were familiar with the Port of Vancouver, up from 41 percent in 2016. The 2019 survey shows public awareness is holding steady.

“The Port of Vancouver is a major economic engine for our region, and because much of its work goes on behind secured areas, the public cannot always see our industrial and maritime work taking place,” said port Commission President Don Orange. “The *Community Report* helps us share the port’s activity with the public.”

Supporting documents

- *May 2019* https://www.portvanusa.com/assets/PORT_Spring-community-newsletter-2019_web-2.pdf
- *November 2019* https://www.portvanusa.com/assets/2019_Fall_POV_Newsletter_Web-1.pdf