

AAPA 2020 Communications Award

Port of New Orleans

Entry Category: Special Event

Truck Driver Appreciation Week

Summary: Port NOLA held its annual Truck Driver Appreciation Week from Oct. 28 to Nov. 1 to celebrate professional truck drivers who service Port NOLA for their many contributions to the maritime industry. National Truck Driver Appreciation Week which takes place in September is an opportunity for the trucking industry and the business community to make special efforts to formally recognize professional truck drivers. Port NOLA holds its annual appreciation in October when it is a little cooler and less humid in New Orleans. To show their appreciation, Port staff, tenants and community partners volunteered to serve more than 300 breakfasts and 300 lunches at the Port's Nashville Avenue Circle Building.

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

Challenges:

- Notification – Outreach and notification to the hundreds of independent owner/operator drivers who access Port NOLA daily is a challenge. Port NOLA staff began outreach three weeks prior to the event, distributing fliers at our Circle Building (a rest area and stop for our truckers in the terminal) and terminal check-in gates and posting banners/roadside signs throughout the terminal complex as the event dates neared.
- Weather – National Truck Driver Appreciation Week is celebrated each year in September; however, Port NOLA held its annual event later in the fall due to the anticipation of hot weather conditions and the potential for interruption from hurricane season.
- Truck Drivers are often overlooked and difficult to engage since they work such diverse hours and spend most of their time on the road. We wanted to make a deliberate effort to engage this valuable group of people in our supply chain on their own time and terms by stretching activities out over a period of time and at varying times.


Opportunities:

- Unique opportunity to target an often-overlooked part of the Port NOLA supply chain—our truck drivers!
- Opportunity to promote highway safety themed messaging on Port NOLA social media platforms prior to the busy holiday travel season.
- Raise stakeholder awareness and appreciation in the community for the truck drivers who service Port NOLA and the trucking industry as a whole.

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

The Port of New Orleans mission is to drive regional economic prosperity by maximizing the flow of international trade and commerce as a modern gateway.

Truck drivers are a critical part of the international supply chain and play a key role in first and last mile delivery of cargo. According to American Trucking Associations, the largest national trade association for the trucking industry, truck drivers deliver 71.4% of the country's total freight tonnage, and more than 80% of U.S. communities rely exclusively on



TRUCK DRIVER APPRECIATION WEEK

PORT NOLA
THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS

OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 1, 2019

mon 28 7:30-9:30 AM: Breakfast at the Circle Building.

Wednesday's luncheon rescheduled to Friday due to weather.

fri 1 7:30-9:30 AM: Hot breakfast at the Circle Building.
11 AM-1:30 PM: Jambalaya and Hamburgers at the Circle Building.

*Drivers will receive food tickets at Felicity entrance.

Partner Sponsors:

BIS, Folgers, GIS, PERSKE, TCI, PORTS AMERICA, The City of New Orleans



truck drivers to deliver their goods and commodities. Port NOLA saw significant double-digit growth in container volume for two consecutive years. Port NOLA looks to truck drivers to efficiently and safely tackle one of our economy's most demanding and vital jobs.

Truck Driver Appreciation Week is an opportunity for the trucking industry and the business community to make special efforts to formally recognize professional truck drivers.

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

Goals/Objectives:

- Celebrate professional truck drivers who service Port NOLA for their many contributions to the maritime industry
 - Serve 300 hot, to-go breakfasts (Menu – sausage & cheese biscuits, bacon & cheese biscuits, fried chicken biscuits, donuts, fruit, coffee, juice, bottled water)
 - Serve 300 hot, to-go lunches (Menu – hamburgers/cheeseburgers, jambalaya, chips, fruit, sodas, bottled water, cookies)
 - Distribute 300 appreciation gift bags to truck drivers (Content – Port NOLA bag, shirt, cup, pen; assortment of snacks)
- Raise stakeholder awareness and appreciation for the truck drivers who service Port NOLA and the trucking industry as a whole
- Measurable milestones include: headcount of attendees; breakfast/lunch items distributed; social media platform impressions, shares, likes

Target Audience:

- Truck Drivers
- Community Partners
- General Public (via social media posting)

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

Port NOLA Communications and Commercial teams worked together to coordinate favorable dates for the events, logistics of people and assets (tents, tables, chairs, signage, etc.) for each event, and handling of donations (chips, sodas, cookies, etc) from the business community. Port NOLA partnered with tenants, as well as business and community sponsors including BIS Construction and Ship Services, Crescent Transport, Folgers, Gulf Intermodal Services, New Orleans Terminal, Penske, Ports America and TCI Transportation Consultants.

Appreciation breakfasts were served twice during the week, and a jambalaya and hamburger lunch was held at the conclusion of the week. Volunteers were recruited from Port NOLA, terminal operators, and community groups to handle food service at each event. Much to the amusement of the truck drivers, several volunteers turned out in their Halloween costumes, with a special appearance from the Super Mario Brothers cast of characters.

Timeline:

- Brainstorming sessions with Communications and Commercial staff took place in August
- Outreach to trucking industry and business community requesting participation in event took place in September
- Design process for fliers and signage began in late September
- Final products were completed and sent to print the last week of September
- Distribution of printed materials began the first week of October
- Solicitation for volunteers began (via Google doc) the second week of October
- Banners and roadside signage were posted throughout the terminal complex the third week of October
- Set up, execution, and breakdown took place as a single-day evolution for each event (Oct. 28 and Nov. 1)
- Social media posts were published the day of event
- A feature article on the week's events was published in the [November/December Port Record](#) in late November

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

Response from the truck drivers was overwhelmingly positive. Time is money and drivers were anxious to get back on the road so drivers were particularly grateful for the expedited “to-go” service provided at both breakfast and lunch.

The neon “safety green” shirts given to each trucker and can still be spotted around the terminal complex eight months later—proof of a great color choice on the part of the Port NOLA team!

Twitter analytics track 1,437 impressions and 13 total engagements. Facebook analytics track 895 reaches, 132 engagements, and 2 shares.

A curation of twelve photos taken at the events can be viewed [here \(https://portno.canto.com/b/RVI8R\)](https://portno.canto.com/b/RVI8R).

Tweet Analytics

Port of New Orleans @PortNOLA
We had a successful first day of Port NOLA's official celebration of National Truck Driver Appreciation Week! Thanks to all our truckers for the work they do to drive our economy. Look forward to continuing celebrating Friday! #portnolagateway #yourportyournola pic.twitter.com/innN8pwVGh

Impressions	1,437
times people saw this Tweet on Twitter	
Total engagements	13
times people interacted with this Tweet	

[View all engagements](#)

Port of New Orleans
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895 People Reached **132** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

 37 2 Shares

