Descriptive Summary

In July 2016, after extensive planning, preparation and a multi-faceted communications effort, the Port of Everett successfully relocated its iconic Weyerhaeuser Building from its South Marina to its new 2-acre Boxcar Park. This building move was and is a major element of the Port’s new $550 million, mixed-use Waterfront Place Central development, that when fully realized, is expected to support 2,075 family-wage jobs and generate $8.6 million annually in state and local sales tax.

The historic Weyerhaeuser building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was relocated to become the feature attraction at the Port’s new Boxcar Park. Future plans for this historic asset include re-opening for public use as a marine clubhouse and performance venue in the second phase of the Port’s Waterfront Place development.

Watch the story @ https://youtu.be/HWgw1j1lql0

Additional information available at www.portofeverett.com/historyonthemove
Background

The historic Weyerhaeuser Office Building’s ornate Gothic-style structure was erected in 1923 at the Weyerhaeuser Company’s first Everett plant. Architect Carl Gould was commissioned by the Weyerhaeuser Company to design a 6,000 square foot, one-and-a-half story building that would showcase local wood species such as fir, cedar and hemlock. The Weyerhaeuser Company was Everett’s largest employer for decades, and the structure resided at two of its largest plants.

The Weyerhaeuser building was originally located at Weyerhaeuser’s Mill A plant, about one mile south of Waterfront Place in today’s international Seaport. In 1938, after Mill A was converted to a pulp mill, the building was moved to Mill B located on the Snohomish River on the east side of Everett. It served as office space until that mill closed in 1979. In 1983, the structure was donated to the Port of Everett and barged back down the river to its third location on the waterfront at the Port’s South Marina. The Weyerhaeuser Office Building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

The building’s two voyages made it a point of public interest and affection. Today, the building serves as a reminder of the once abundant and productive lumber and shingle industry that contributed to the evolution of the vibrant Everett waterfront.

In 2014, the Port proposed moving the building (hopefully for the final time) to a new location, Boxcar Park, to be the centerpiece of the Port’s new $550 million Waterfront Place Central mixed-use development to serve as a future marine clubhouse and performance venue. In 2016, after extensive engineering and planning, along with close coordination with the historical community, the Port of Everett awarded a nearly $1.1 million contract to Everett-based Nickel Bros to relocate the historic building. Nickel Bros is the largest house moving company in the Pacific Northwest, having moved nearly 300 historic buildings in the U.S. and Canada.

1. Communications Challenges/Opportunities

The historic Weyerhaeuser building was, and is, a beloved icon on the Everett waterfront. It was important that we honor the buildings rich heritage at the Port, while also promoting the future. A building relocation of this magnitude inherently comes with a lot of challenges and opportunities, both from a logistics and communications standpoint.

The building is 6,000 square feet; one-and-a-half stories, weighing in at approximately 350-ton. A unique feature of the building is the 160-ton concrete and steel safe that was used to store money from lumber purchases. Relocation of the 85-foot X 65-foot building would require critical coordination with various community partners on the timing, route planning and preparation. Beyond the logistical challenges, the Port knew there would be communications opportunities and challenges. This would be the third move and the fourth location for the historic structure (see left). The Port saw this as a great opportunity to engage the community in its Waterfront Place Central
development plan and visually show its commitment to historic preservation. The Port of Everett had some relationship rebuilding to do with the historical community after it deconstructed a historic waterfront building in 2010. The first communication opportunity was to engage the historical community, along with the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation and the State’s Archeology and Historical Preservation office to talk through the merits of the move, and how the Port planned to be good stewards of this historic resource and put it back into productive use. After several meetings and discussions about the safe-guards the Port would put in place during the move, the relocation earned the blessing of the historical community.

Another communication challenge the Port faced as a public agency that collects tax dollars, albeit the smallest taxing district in the county, was the perception of the unnecessary cost to relocate the building less than ¾ of a mile to be used as a non-revenue asset of a new waterfront park. We saw the opportunity to address this challenge head on by reaching out to the project critics and giving them the budget information on the move, explain the vision of the new public space and how moving this historic building would replace the need for building a new building on the site to house our boating clubs that are being displaced as part of this development. To ensure accurate information was getting out, we reached out to the local newspaper and created a project webpage and fact sheets. Once general consensus and excitement about the building move was established, the communication challenge of getting national coverage of the move also became the project’s greatest opportunity.

The advent of smart phones and social media since the last time the building move created unique opportunities to get additional coverage of the move, but also posed some concern in the event that the move didn’t go smoothly -- or worst case, the building was damaged in transit. We worked to mitigate this by learning from the contractor what the most ‘risky’ part of the move – lifting the building off its foundation – and trying to limit coverage and exposure to this activity. We did this by lifting the building off the foundation a couple hours before all the media, VIP and press events. There were no problems. Further related to the challenge of earning media coverage was that the move needed to occur at night because it had to be moved down a state highway that serves Naval Station Everett and the Port of Everett international seaport. We could only close West Marine View Drive (a main thoroughfare in Everett) for a two-hour block of time from midnight to 2 a.m.

As for opportunities, they were endless. Like usual, we were working on a tight budget with limited staffing resources. We would have to work closely with our contractor, partners and media outlets to earn as much national, regional, and local attention as was practical. Our top goal was to use the visual story of the building move to catapult our Waterfront Place Central project into mainstream media. We capitalized on the opportunities of this event by developing an overall communications campaign as laid out in the tactics and implementation sections.

2. Complement to Overall Mission

The mission of the Port of Everett reads: “The Port of Everett is an Economic Development Enterprise carrying out the public’s trust to manage and develop resources, transportation facilities and supporting infrastructure to enable community opportunity.”

Relocation of the historic building complements the Port’s mission as it is a major part of the Port’s $550 million, mixed-use development project known as Waterfront Place Central. This major recapitalization effort is more than just a large scale real estate venture for the Port. The intent of the project is to provide jobs and access to the waterfront. The strategy is to unify the marina and surrounding property as one economic unit to create a sustainable and unique commercial, recreation and residential community. When fully realized, the Waterfront Place Development is expected to support 2,075 family-wage jobs. The project’s private development will generate $8.6 million annually in state and local sales taxes; in addition to the temporary construction jobs, sales tax and building permit revenues.
The iconic Weyerhaeuser Building will be the featured attraction at the new Boxcar Park, located within the Esplanade District of the development at the water's edge. Considered a jewel of the development, this relocation brings history to life, re-opening the building for community use in the 2020 timeframe. The plan calls to utilize the historic structure as a marina clubhouse and a new outdoor performance venue.

3. Planning & Programming Components

GOALS
The Port of Everett’s goals for the Historic Weyerhaeuser Building Relocation were to:
• Successfully relocate the mega structure from the Port’s South Marina to the new Boxcar Park in one piece (and live to tell about it)
• Build momentum for the Waterfront Place Central project as it relates to the development community
• Build goodwill with the historical community
• Cultivate community interest and excitement for the new Waterfront Place Central Development
• Keep our audiences informed every step of the way

OBJECTIVES
When the Port set out to initiate communications related to the historic building relocation, staff identified what success would look like. The set objectives were to achieve the following:
• Earn prominent coverage with 6 local and 3 national media outlets
• Attendance by a minimum of 5 media outlets at the press conference
• Attendance by a minimum of 75 people at the community viewing event and 150 at the VIP viewing event
• A total of 300 social media mentions (half community and half media)
• A total of 500 website views
• A total of 150 views on the video news release

AUDIENCES

Primary Audiences
• Private development community
• Everett residents
• Business leaders
• Historical community

Secondary Audiences
• Port District residents/tenants
• Internal project partners

4. Actions & Outputs

STRATEGIES
The strategies put in place for communications related to the historic move were to:
• Work with our well-known house moving contractor Nickel Bros on communications to reach as much of our target audience as possible
• Tie all Weyerhaeuser Relocation messaging to the Waterfront Place Central development
• Engage our historical partners in the move events

TACTICS
Once we had our goals, objectives and strategies set, the Port team identified the specific steps to take:
• Create a brand campaign for the historic move with new creative material specific to the relocation project
• Incorporate Weyerhaeuser Move promotion into all regular Port community outreach (i.e. neighborhood meetings, key communicator meetings, bus tours, etc.)
• Create a digital presence for the move that includes a social media campaign (#historyonthemove) and website landing page
• Develop interpretive signage at the current and future building sites explaining the project
• Get authorization for this special project to boost a social posts for the first time
• Incorporate Facebook Live coverage for the first time
• Attend construction meetings and keep in close communication with project partners to ensure consistent messaging; update messaging often
• Work with contractor to get a time-lapse video of move preparations
• Host a press conference and other press related events to encourage prominent coverage
• Host a community viewing event
• Integrate video into Sail-in Cinema Outdoor Movie Series
• Direct outreach with the historical community
• Design and fabricate banners to place on the building during the move
• Create commemorative items: 1.) a green race flag to signal the ‘start’ of the building move, 2.) branded flags to commemorate the historic milestone for community
• Develop VIP and community passes that served as not only for admittance, but also as a commemorative item
• Create a video news release to reach audiences that may not be able to attend in person or send a news crew; pay to have it published on the AP newswire
• Have a video crew on-site the day of the event to capture all the activities; get key interviews with leaders such as Port Commissioners, the Mayor, County Executive and the historical community
• Create a communications plan that ensured a Port
Commissioner or our CEO was on-site and available for media interviews from 10 a.m. the day of the move, and throughout the night until the building moves off the main interstate and back onto port property.

- Identify a safety officer to escort media within the ‘work’ zone to get better, and more exclusive, footage of the move; provide protective gear and host a safety meeting for select media pre-move.

IMPLEMENTATION
Due to the complexity of this project, we developed an overall communication plan and strategy that took into consideration pre-move, during move and post-move communications to maximize coverage and visibility and generate goodwill and buzz for the Port and the new Waterfront Place project.

Pre-Move
Promotion of the move was incorporated into all the Port’s communications outreach to keep our audiences informed prior to the move. The Port developed new creative materials to support project promotion including a project fact sheet, website landing page, #historyonthemove social media campaign, installation of interpretive signs at the building’s current and future sites, a construction newsletter, a frequently asked questions sheet, press kit, press briefings, building banners, commemorative flags and talking points. We also incorporated promotion into our standard outreach including bus and harbor tours, community presentations, social media, press interactions, newsletters, webpage and press releases. We worked with Nickel Bros and our Waterfront Place marketing firm Cord Media on media outreach, and coordinated a time-lapse video of all the various move preparation and activities in advance of the move to build excitement.

The move itself required the closure of West Marine View Drive, a main arterial in Everett that supports the U.S. Navy Base, which required the move having to occur at night. It also required removal of power lines, fire hydrants and trees, as well as temporary utility shutdowns. Pre-move coordination with various partners was critical. This included continuous and direct communication with the U.S. Navy, City of Everett, Police and Fire, WSDOT, BNSF Railways, Snohomish County PUD, Port tenants, Port security and more. We reserved rooms at the Inn @ Port Gardner, a hotel that overlooks the marina and the Weyerhaeuser Building (at its pre-move site) to offer alternative viewing points for media coverage and video footage. We also reserved hotel rooms for out-of-state and out-of-country media.
to ensure their availability on the move date if they hadn’t pre-planned. The hotel was fully booked by community members wanting to get a good view.

**During the Move**

The Port hosted two major events: 1.) a kick-off press conference the morning of the move with photo and video opportunities for the media to capture the repositioning of the building, and 2.) viewing events that offered a media and VIP location alongside the relocation route, and a community viewing area at a local park overlooking the route. The planning and logistics of these events were particularly difficult, as we balanced the risk of something going wrong while the building was first moved off its foundation for the first time, with ensuring we had the media and the community on-site to capture and witness the historic move. One of the ways we worked to mitigate the risks and to ensure positive coverage was to move the building slightly off its foundation in advance of the media events.

During the 12-hour nighttime move, the Port provided continuous social media coverage with real-time posts and media shares. We completed the Port’s first-ever live stream coverage via Facebook Live, coordinated photo and video footage to document the move (including drone footage) and worked with media outlets throughout the night, even doing CEO interviews as late (or as early) as 3 a.m. Rewind back to the date of the move, Pokemon Go was all the rage. The Pokemon Go trend created extra excitement at our community viewing area.

**Post-Move**

Promotion of the move continued after the building made it safely to its final destination. The Port issued its first-ever video news release to the AP newswire to reach media that could not attend the event and to ensure broad range media coverage. Further, we continued our social media coverage and used all our other traditional outlets to promote the uniqueness of this move. The Port even applied for a Guinness Book of World Records for the most times a historic building was moved. There is no category established for this type of activity, so no record could be given.

Since the move, the Port has continued to work with the media on coverage opportunities and used the footage to develop videos and other creative materials for the continued promotion of the Waterfront Place Development. We used the video footage, photos and coverage of this project to establish credibility for the Waterfront Place project in the development community. We were able to successfully recruit a housing developer, along with our hotel and retail developers (currently under negotiations) we believe, in large part, due to this high-visibility coverage.
We also integrated the move coverage into the kick-off of our new Sail-in Cinema outdoor movie series. The first movie was set to run the Friday following the move, providing only 24 hours to get the building set and secured, and the park into tip-top shape. We used the building as a backdrop to the new venue and played the video news release before the first movie.

**BUDGET & STAFFING**

The communication budget for this project was $12,200. This included all collateral material, consultant fees and production costs. The most costly part of this effort was the video news release and video documentation of the move. The cost to bring the community into the event was pretty modest with just $500 in food and supplies. The VIP and press conference events came in at $1,500, but we received sponsorship by a local engineering firm, PND, to cover those costs.

All communications efforts were pulled together by the Port’s public affairs team of two, in partnership with our move contractor Nickel Bros and marketing consultant Cord Media.

5.) Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

On July 13, the Port’s 98th birthday, Nickel Bros spent nearly six hours getting the building into the right position to ensure a smooth move. After approximately 12-hours and no major incidents during the move, the task of relocating the historic structure and the communication about the move was deemed a success.

Today, the building sits at Boxcar Park and serves as a reminder of the once abundant and productive lumber and shingle industry that contributed to the evolution of the vibrant Everett waterfront.

The following is a list of successes as a direct result of the communication effort for the project:

**ATTENDANCE**

We had strong attendance at both events. More than 200 VIPs attended, along with all major local TV, radio and print news outlets. We also had two national publications and the Vancouver B.C. Discovery Channel come to cover the move. At the community viewing area at the park, more than 300 community members viewed the building move (which began promptly at midnight).

**EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE**

The mega move earned approximately 134 separate news mentions/coverage. Working with our contractor, Nickel Bros, we were able to earn an entire segment on the complexities and uniqueness of this move on Discovery Channel’s Daily Planet.
SOCIAL MEDIA

Our efforts generated an approximate 10-percent increase in new followers across our social media accounts. At the time of the move, the Port social media policy did not allow for boosting of posts. We received authorization to boost one post to promote the community viewing event, which was successful based on the approximate 300 attendees that came out to join us at midnight to watch the move. Engagement on social media related to the move was the highest we have ever experienced on our social channels and was very positive. This gave people the opportunity to follow every step of the move, from the planning phase to completion. We completed our first Facebook Live video of the press conference, which had 309 views.

HISTORICAL COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Involving the historical community in the relocation effort and the eventual plan for the building at Boxcar Park has gone a long way in developing a stronger relationship and building goodwill with the local historical community. A direct result of that was the willingness of Historic Everett to participate as a speaker at our press conference, and to communicate to the media and business leaders about the project and how much it means to our community.

DEVELOPMENT CREDIBILITY

We used the video footage, photos and media coverage of this project to establish credibility for the Waterfront Place project in the development community. We were able to successfully recruit a housing developer for the first phase of the project, along with hotel and retail developers (currently under negotiations). Gaining attention by these quality private developers, we believe in large part, was due to high-visibility coverage related to the move.

SITE VISITS

Following the move, Boxcar Park was flooded with visitors who followed the move on the news or on our feeds. They came to take pictures of and with the building, and verbally expressed their appreciation of the work the Port put in to include the building in the Waterfront Place development plans and re-open the building for community use.

VIDEO VIEWS

To date, our Weyerhaeuser videos (3) on YouTube have a collective view total of 1,850. We also showed the move footage at all six of the Port’s Sail-In Cinema movies with attendance for all movies reaching approximately 2,400. The video footage has also been incorporated into our marketing and community outreach presentations.

WEBSITE VIEWS

The Port of Everett’s History on the Move webpage was viewed 350 times.
Tying success back to our project communication objectives:

- We earned prominent local and national media coverage, well exceeding our goal of 6 local and 3 national media features
- We had attendance by more than 5 media outlets at the press conference
- We well exceeded our goal 75 people at the community viewing event, totalling approximately 300. We also exceeded our goal of 150 attendees at the VIP viewing event, hosting approximately 200
- Although hard to track, we reached our goal of 300 social media mentions (half community and half media)
- We didn’t quite hit our goal 500 website views, but came close at 350
- We exceeded our goal of 150 views on the video news release, with 730 views

Summary
In summary, the Port of Everett’s overall communications campaign for the Historic Weyerhaeuser Move was a success. On a minimal budget and with lean staffing, we were able to keep our community informed and engaged in a variety of ways throughout the planning and execution of the move. We were able to successfully engage our community and local historical agencies to experience this historic milestone and build on the excitement of what’s to come of the Everett waterfront.