After more than two decades, Port Everglades finally received federal funding as a New Start project for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin the first phase of deepening and widening its navigational channel, the Intracoastal Waterway.

While the general public understood the necessity to dredge the channel from 42 feet to 48-50 feet to accommodate larger, deep draft vessels, they had less understanding of why the channel needed to be widened.

To announce the funding award, Port Everglades held a press conference overlooking the site of the chokepoint where the widening would take place. We highlighted a major component of the widening project that involved relocating a landmark U.S. Coast Guard facility and building a brand-new base. These visual aids helped explain the project’s necessity.
Challenge

Port Everglades’ greatest challenge was to make the business community, media and general public understand the need to widen the Intracoastal Waterway.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Port Everglades Harbor Navigation Improvement Project consists of two components – 1) deepening the channel from 42 feet to 48-50 feet and 2) widening a chokepoint that prevented cargo ships from passing docked cruise ships.

The deepening is easier to understand and therefore has received more media attention. But widening the channel is a greater priority and is the first phase of the entire Harbor Navigation Improvement Project.
Opportunity

Port Everglades used the award of $29.1 million in federal funding under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers FY 2020 Work Plan as a springboard to communicate the story of the importance of widening the Intracoastal Waterway.

For the Port, the most important part of the project is to correct a flaw in the channel that prevents ships from being able to pass one another.

For the community, the big story is that U.S. Coast Guard is getting a new home. USCG Station Fort Lauderdale is a local landmark, but it was built in the 1960s and has outlived its usefulness.

We had two “good news” stories to share.
MISSION STATEMENT: Port Everglades is Florida’s powerhouse global gateway. A respected leader in trade, travel and financial stability, we create economic and social value by working in partnership with world-class clients. We achieve advancements focusing on efficient facilities, trade and cruise expansion, jobs growth, safety, security and environmental stewardship for our customers, stakeholders and community.

The widening project helps Port Everglades create economic and social value by improving an asset that will help generate greater international trade and support more direct jobs in the community.
GOAL:
To raise awareness about the importance of widening the Port’s channel in addition to deepening.

OBJECTIVES:
To have one major article in a local newspaper
To garner attention for the project’s progress in the trade press
To have broadcast media attend the press conference and cover the story
To create a buzz using social media
To honor and recognize our elected officials
To celebrate our supporters in the business community
Strategy and Outputs

• In January, prior to the announcement, Port leaders met with the editorial board of the local newspaper, the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* to discuss the Port’s expansion efforts and the update of its 20-Year Master/Vision Plan. As a result, the editorial board became more familiar with the Harbor Navigation Improvements Project.

• Acting Chief Executive & Port Director Glenn Wiltshire submitted an op-ed to the *Sun-Sentinel* that included the need for the deepening and widening project.

• Port Everglades received news of the New Start Designation on February 10, 2020.

• That day, the communications team wrote and distributed a press release about the federal funding and posted the news on social media.

• Pitching the story to the *Sun-Sentinel* resulted in a first-hand tour of the port with a reporter and photographer who published a front page article.

• We checked the availability of key political figures including Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who has been a long-time supporter of the Port Everglades Harbor Navigational Project.
Strategy and Outputs continued

• Once the date was selected, invitations to the press conference were sent to members of the Port Everglades Association (a business organization) and members of the Port Everglades Action Team (PEAT), a grassroots committee of local business leaders who actively lobby for the dredging project and port expansion.
• A media alert was sent to members of the press.
• Follow-up calls to the media were made the day prior and on the morning of the press conference.
• The communications team wrote and distributed fact sheets at the press conference about the new Coast Guide Station, the Harbor Navigation Improvements Project and General Port “By the Numbers.”
• The press conference was held on the rooftop patio of a new cruise terminal overlooking the chokepoint and U.S. Coast Guard Station. The location was visually appealing and made the story easier to understand.
Challenge
Port Everglades' greatest challenge was to make the business community, media and general public understand the need to widen the Intracoastal Waterway.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Port Everglades Harbor Navigation Improvement Project consists of two components – 1) deepening the channel from 42 feet to 50 feet and 2) widening a chokepoint that prevented cargo ships from passing docked cruise ships. The deepening is easier to understand and therefore has received more media attention. But widening the channel is a greater priority and is the first phase of the entire Harbor Navigation Improvement Project.
HARBOR DEEPENING AND WIDENING

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is advancing efforts to deepen and widen the navigational channels and turning basins at Brevard County’s Port Everglades. This project addresses safety and shipping requirements in order to allow larger ships that require wider channels and deeper water. Lightly loaded larger cargo ships currently enter from Europe and South America. Some of the larger ships have difficulty maneuvering safely when other ships are berthed at some of the channel’s narrowest areas. The project addresses environmental concerns and will utilize innovative approaches for coral restoration as Broward County, FL, has major economic interests in both its seaport and its sensitive coral reefs.

- **Project Description**
  - Deepening and widening the Outer Entrance Channel from an existing 180 feet depth to a 300 feet depth by 800 feet wide with a 10-foot extension to exceed 3,200 feet seaward.
  - Deepening the Inner Entrance Channel and Main Turning Basin from 30 feet to 40 feet deep with new 140 feet enlargement.
  - Widening the Inner Entrance Channel and Main Turning Basin from 140 feet to 170 feet wide.

- **Revised Plan**
  - Deepening the 90 feet wide section of the Channel Entrance to 300 feet.
  - Widening the turning basin north of the entrance to 170 feet.

- **Recommended Plan**
  - Deepening the 90 feet wide section of the Channel Entrance to 300 feet.
  - Widening the turning basin north of the entrance to 170 feet.

U.S. COAST GUARD STATION RECONFIGURATION

A separate project that is part of the overall U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Port Everglades Navigation Improvements Project will involve the reconfiguration of the U.S. Coast Guard Station (USCG) located on the east side of the Intracoastal Waterway. By moving the Coast Guard facility to the west, the Southport Access Channel will be widened by 250 feet. This will eliminate a choke point and allow non-panamax cargo ships to pass large cruise ships docked along the channel at Cruise Terminals 23, 26, and 29 without the current restrictions.

- **Economic Impact and Job Estimate**
  - 1,025 jobs generated during 2018.
  - $32.7 million in direct and indirect revenue.
  - $132.3 million in induced and induced revenue.

- **Port Everglades By-The-Numbers**
  - 36,000 billion cargo containers.
  - 92,000 ships pass through Port Everglades.
  - 3.8 million tons of cargo are handled through Port Everglades.
  - 3.5 million passengers pass through Port Everglades.
  - 350,000 jobs in Port Everglades’ economic footprint.

- **Port Everglades**
  - Port Everglades is Florida’s primary deepwater port.
  - Port Everglades is the largest Port in the Southeast U.S.
  - Port Everglades handles over 3 million containers annually.
  - Port Everglades is ranked 5th in the nation for container volume.
  - Port Everglades is the 4th busiest East Coast port.
  - Port Everglades is the 5th largest port in the U.S.

- **Mission Statement**
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  - 1500 North State Road 84
  - Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304
  - Phone: 954-583-6363
  - Fax: 954-583-6377
  - Email: info@pef.gov
  - Website: www.porteverglades.com

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  - Website: www.porteverglades.com
Sun-Sentinel (front page, see attached)
Same article ran in the Orlando Sentinel

WPLG-ABC-Channel 10

WFOR-CBS-Channel 4
https://miami.cbslocal.com/2020/02/19/funds-approved-widen-deepen-port-everglades-build-coast-guard-station/

Hollywood Gazette
https://www.hollywoodgazette.com/2020/02/16/port-everglades-recieves-special-designation/
Florida Trend
https://www.floridatrend.com/article/28775/tuesdays-daily-pulse

Florida Politics

Congressman Ted Deutch in Sun-Sentinel 100

Cruise News
http://www.latecruisenews.com/2020/02/19/port-everglades-construction-new-start-a-major-milestone/

Miami Diario
Beyond job creation, the deepening and widening project at Port Everglades will open it up to larger, more efficient cargo and cruise ships. It will also improve the ability of larger ships to navigate through the Port, ensuring that tourist and commercial vessels can enter and exit the Port more quickly and safely. — US Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz #FLPowerhousePort Broward County Government

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When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

2,319 People Reached
239 Engagements

Maneesh Yadav, Paula Stevens and 49 others
4 Comments 7 Shares
Thank you to the Port Everglades Action Team for advocating for deeper, wider water. https://www.porteverglades.net/.../port-everglades-construct.../#FLPowerhousePort
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Conclusion

We know from attending past American Association of Port Authorities and Public Relations Society of America seminars that storytelling works best if the reader can find a personal connection to the news item.

Our community could identify with the news that U.S. Coast Guard Station Fort Lauderdale, a local landmark, is getting a new home. This angle worked well to attract local media coverage.

Our business community could celebrate their advocacy efforts for widening the channel as a start to the larger U.S. Corps of Engineers Port Everglades Harbor Navigation Improvement Project.

Relaying the news of the federal funding also gave Port Everglades another opportunity with the trade press to talk about our expansion and growth.