



AAPA Lighthouse Award Project Highlight

Port of Vancouver USA's 2025 Lecture Series



Port of Vancouver USA
Vancouver, WA

Project Overview

Port of Vancouver USA's 2025 Lecture Series

Award Category: Excellence in Community/Educational Outreach

Completion Date: 4/30/2025

Description: In 2025, the Port of Vancouver USA hosted a free public lecture series at the historic Giggins Theatre, designed to educate and engage the community. Featuring dynamic speakers from ports and related industries, the series explored high-interest topics in an accessible, welcoming setting—complete with popcorn, pizza, wine, and beer.

Each year brings fresh topics and growing interest. In 2025, the series reached a new milestone, drawing nearly 700 attendees across three events—our most successful season yet.

Inspiration

Explain what inspired your team to undertake this project

The port's seasonal tours offer a rare glimpse into our operations—but space is limited. To reach more curious residents, we launched the Port Lecture Series in 2017, bringing the most popular tour topics to a larger public venue.

What began as small gatherings in a motel conference room has grown into a signature community event. By 2025, the series draws hundreds to the city's iconic theatre, creating a dynamic space for learning, dialogue, and connection.

Challenges

Describe the main challenges faced during the planning and execution of this project, and how did the port overcome them.

One of the key challenges in planning the lecture series was ensuring it went beyond education to foster real connection between the port and the community. In 2025, we addressed this by formally integrating transparency and accessibility into the series—adding a “meet and greet” component that gave attendees the chance to engage directly with Port commissioners.

This shift helped transform the events into more than just lectures—it made them a space for open dialogue, relationship-building, and trust.

Lessons Learned

Describe any valuable lessons your team learned from this project to share with other ports

A key takeaway from the Port Lecture Series was the value of collaboration. By creating new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, we broadened the educational reach and impact of the series. In 2025, we welcomed the Columbia River Maritime Museum for their first-ever participation—an opportunity that benefited both organizations, as the museum’s director was able to share its expansion campaign with a new audience.

We also learned the importance of sharing our model. By presenting at industry conferences, we inspired others—most notably the Port of Tacoma, which launched its own lecture series based on ours. Additionally, we found meaningful ways to give back, donating a portion of concession proceeds to the Port of Vancouver USA Seafarers Center.

Value

Explain why or what about this project makes your port proud

In 2025, the Port of Vancouver USA hosted its most successful lecture series yet, drawing nearly 700 attendees to the historic Kiggins Theatre. We’re proud of how the series strengthened transparency, featured engaging speakers, and built new partnerships—including the Columbia River Maritime Museum and the Washington Public Ports Association.

Creative storytelling, multimedia, and a welcoming atmosphere made the events memorable. The series boosted public awareness, inspired other ports to follow our lead, and showcased the Port’s commitment to innovative, community-focused education.

Contact

Contact Person: Katie Odem

Title: Marketing Communications Manager

Email: kodem@portvanusa.com

Phone: 360-518-3287