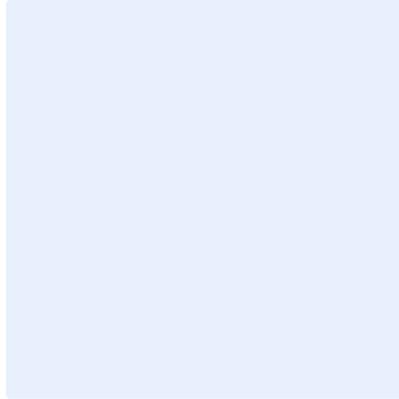




# AAPA Lighthouse Award Project Highlight

## "From Dock to Classroom: Building the Port Pascagoula Maritime Awareness Program from the Ground Up"



Port Pascagoula  
Pascagoula, Mississippi

### Project Overview

"From Dock to Classroom: Building the Port Pascagoula Maritime Awareness Program from the Ground Up"

Award Category: Excellence in Community/Educational Outreach

Completion Date: 5/14/2025

Description: Provide a description of the project, including its goals, key features, and impact.

"From Dock to Classroom: Building Port Pascagoula's Maritime Awareness Program from the Ground Up" is a grassroots educational initiative launched in 2024. Developed entirely in-house with no pre-existing framework, the program connects K–12 students and educators with the maritime industry through classroom presentations, guest speakers, field trips, and mentorship opportunities. Its goals are to raise awareness of maritime careers, strengthen workforce pipelines, and foster community pride in the maritime heritage of Pascagoula and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Since launch, the program has already engaged 500+ students, created job-shadowing pilots, and partnered with GenSea and We Work the Waterways to scale regional impact

### Inspiration

The program was inspired by the growing disconnect between local youth and the port, despite Pascagoula's rich maritime history and its role as a top economic driver. Students had little direct exposure to maritime opportunities, and the port saw a need to bridge that gap. The desire to inspire pride, inform students about high-paying career pathways, and build a sustainable workforce pipeline motivated the port to take action

### Challenges

Key challenges included starting from scratch—no existing curriculum, partnerships, or funding streams. Another hurdle was aligning educational content with evolving school standards while still making it engaging for students. The port overcame these by building resources in-house, leveraging local expertise, and aligning with state workforce priorities. Partnerships with GenSea and We Work the Waterways

further provided credibility and logistical support, while in-kind contributions and volunteer time minimized costs

## Lessons Learned

Building outreach programs requires flexibility: the phased rollout allowed adjustments based on educator and student feedback.

Partnerships amplify impact: collaboration with schools, nonprofits, and industry created legitimacy and scalability.

Grassroots development can be cost-effective yet impactful if community assets are mobilized effectively

## Value

This project makes Port Pascagoula proud because it was built entirely from the ground up and is now recognized as a model for other Gulf Coast ports. It has already led to measurable outcomes, including student job placements and increased district-wide interest. The initiative embodies the port's commitment to economic mobility, community pride, and sustainable workforce development

## Quotes

"This program has opened our students' eyes to opportunities they never knew existed. The maritime industry is no longer invisible—it's exciting, accessible, and inspiring." — Local Educator, Jackson County School District

## Additional Information

Looking ahead, the program plans to:

- Launch five pilot internships/job-shadowing opportunities with industry employers by 2026.
- Expand the speaker bureau and digital classroom hub.
- Develop new content around green shipping and emerging maritime technologies.
- Target underrepresented student groups to ensure inclusivity in maritime workforce pipelines

## Contact

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## Resources

<https://prezi.com/view/27EaoneHadUJdxQAMu8K/>