



2021 AAPA LIGHTHOUSE AWARDS – COMMUNICATIONS
Classification #4: Community/Educational Outreach

COVID-19 Testing Site

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Summary

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic came to Long Beach in earnest. Long Beach City Hall and the Port of Long Beach Administration Building were closed to the public. Soon after, the vast majority of Harbor Department workers were sent home to telecommute. However, many essential workers in the Port complex work in the field, not in an office – longshore labor, workers in construction, rail and warehouses, truckers, Port security and maintenance personnel and many others.

Keeping all Port workers safe and healthy was key to keeping the Port open and operating during the worst days of the pandemic. Port operations were and are crucial to move vital goods like food, medical equipment and personal protective equipment to their destinations.

At first, COVID-19 testing was a scarce resource, and even as tests became more available, getting tested was often inconvenient and time-consuming. To ease this burden on Port essential workers, the Port partnered with the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department to open a COVID-19 drive-up testing site within the Port.

To get the word out, the Port Communications and Community Relations team redirected already budgeted marketing dollars and produced a successful community outreach campaign to create awareness for the Port testing site without spending additional funds. The plan was multifaceted, using essentially all of the Port's communication tools: press releases, a letter to employees, print and web advertising, a video, and extensive postings on Port social media platforms.

The campaign was very successful, meeting all project objectives and resulting in the unqualified success of the Port's COVID-19 testing site, and the campaign was produced and placed quickly in response to the emergency.



The Port of Long Beach

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Communication Challenges and Opportunities

The Port of Long Beach is the Port of Choice – the premier U.S. gateway for trans-Pacific trade and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety, environmental stewardship and sustainability. As the second-busiest container seaport in the United States, the Port serves 175 shipping lines with connections to 217 seaports around the world, handles trade valued at \$200 billion annually and supports 2.6 million trade-related jobs across the nation, including more than 575,000 in Southern California. Goods moving through the Port of Long Beach reach every U.S. congressional district. The Port of Long Beach prides itself on its top-notch customer service, state-of-the-art infrastructure and operational excellence, and in both 2019 and 2020 industry leaders named it “The Best West Coast Seaport in North America.” In 2020, the Port handled 8.1 million container units, the busiest year in its history. Founded in 1911 with a single municipal dock at the mouth of the Los Angeles River, today the Port encompasses 3,200 acres with 35 miles of waterfront, 10 piers, 80 berths and 70 gantry cranes. More than 40 percent of seaborne cargo that enters the United States

passes through the neighboring San Pedro Bay ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and the complex handles more containers per ship call than any other port complex in the world. The five-member Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council, is responsible for setting policy for the Port of Long Beach and managing the City’s Harbor Department. Mario Cordero, a former Harbor Commissioner, then Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission under President Barack Obama, has served as Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach since 2017, leading a team of 500.

The Port of Long Beach makes an ongoing effort to support community and educational activities, detailed in an extensive Community Outreach Plan, that provide the opportunity to increase understanding of Port programs and operations. In fact, as the City’s primary economic engine it is a top priority to keep the community informed about Port activities.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic came to Long Beach in earnest.

Long Beach City Hall and the Port Administration Building were closed to the public and soon after, the vast majority of Harbor Department workers were sent home to telecommute. However, many workers in the Port complex work in the field, not in an office – longshore labor, workers in construction, rail and warehouses, truckers, Port security and maintenance personnel and many others.

Keeping all Port workers safe and healthy – especially those working in the field – and preventing or minimizing the spread of COVID-19 was key to keeping the Port open and operating during the worst days of the pandemic. Port operations were and are crucial to move vital goods like food, medical equipment and personal protective equipment to their destinations, and to keep the regional and national economy moving.

During the early days of the pandemic, it was very difficult to obtain testing; as this situation eased and various testing sites opened in the community, those sites became extremely crowded, leading to long lines and/or the requirement to make appointments

for testing. Most of these sites were several miles from the Port complex.

To ease this burden on Port essential workers who were literally risking their lives to move cargo and keep the Port complex operating, the Port partnered with the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department to open a COVID-19 drive-up testing site within the Port, to allow anyone who worked in the San Pedro Bay Port Complex (not just Port of Long Beach workers or employees) to get a drive-up test with no appointment. To serve the communities around the Port, the site would also be open by appointment to the general public.

The challenge for the Port of Long Beach Communications and Community Relations Division was to redirect marketing dollars and produce a successful community outreach campaign to create awareness for the Port testing site without spending additional funds.

2 Complementing the Overall Mission

The Port serves the City of Long Beach as a primary economic engine and considers it a top priority to keep the community informed about Port activities that contribute to meeting the six goals set by the Board of Harbor Commissioners in the most recent version of the Port's Strategic Plan, updated and released in April 2019:

- Strengthen the Port's competitive position through secure and efficient movement of cargo while providing outstanding customer service;
- Maintain financial strength and security of assets;
- Develop and maintain state-of-the-art infrastructure that enhances productivity and efficiency in goods movement;
- Improve the environment through sustainable practices and the reduction of environmental impacts from Port operations and development;
- Broaden community access to Port-related opportunities and economic benefits;

- Attract, develop and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce.

Of course, the prime goal of the Port is to maintain the health and safety of its workforce, not just the Harbor Department but all the men and women who work in the Port complex: longshore labor, construction workers, first responders, rail workers, warehouse employees and truckers, to name a few. In addition to the primary Strategic Plan goal of "Attract, develop and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce," other goals supported by this project are "Strengthen the Port's competitive position through secure and efficient movement of cargo while providing outstanding customer service" and "Broaden community access to Port-related opportunities and economic benefits."

Opening a COVID-19 testing site at the Port demonstrated that the Port is willing to take extra steps to serve its workforce and the surrounding communities, making it easier and more convenient for them to access COVID-19 testing.



Port of Long Beach
COVID-19 Testing

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Planning and Programming Components

Goals

- Promote the COVID-19 testing site at the Port to maximize the number of people tested, especially Port workers;
- Demonstrate that the Port of Long Beach is taking unprecedented steps to protect its workforce and the Port community during a pandemic;
- Help maintain a healthy Port workforce;
- Demonstrate that the Port is open and operating safely during the pandemic.

Objectives

- Reach Port workers, including Harbor Department employees, longshore labor, truckers, construction workers, etc., with information on getting free, no-appointment, drive-up COVID-19 testing;
- Reach the wider local community with the message that an additional testing site is available, provided by the Port;
- Demonstrate to Port essential workers that the Port is grateful for their hard work and sacrifice and is proactively working to keep them safe;
- Provide reassurance to the community and Port stakeholders that the Port is open for business, moving vital goods to market and continuing to fuel the economy;
- Demonstrate that municipal entities like the City, the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department and the Port are united in efforts to combat the pandemic, keep the economy moving and keep the public safe;
- Following the Port's standard design format, create ads featuring dramatic City/Port photography from the Port's photo archive.

- Invest minimal new marketing dollars in this community outreach campaign; instead, reimagine content for existing schedules.

Target Audiences

- Harbor Department employees and contractors including construction crews, longshore, warehouse, rail and trucking workers;
- Other Port and City stakeholders and customers;
- Long Beach Health and Human Services Department employees and other COVID-19 response agencies;
- Residents of Long Beach and surrounding communities;
- Elected and appointed officials;
- Companies that service the Port;
- Safety and security agencies;
- Members of the news media.



Port of Long Beach
COVID-19 Testing



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4 Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Used

Timeline and Activities

On Friday, Aug. 14, a press release was sent to the 5,000 recipients of the Port's e-mail list, which includes local and national news media.

- <https://polb.com/port-info/news-and-press/new-covid-19-testing-site-to-open-for-port-workers-08-14-2020/>

In addition, the unveiling of the site was promoted on the Port's social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn). The availability of the testing site has been continually promoted on social media subsequently (generally once per week per platform until March 2021, and then somewhat less since then). On Nov. 16, a one-day free flu vaccine clinic was held at the testing site, and this was also promoted on social media.

- **Instagram text (Aug. 14):**
We're excited to announce that we are sponsoring a free COVID-19 test site in the Port of Long Beach at 2100 W. Anaheim St. The site will be available to dockworkers, truck drivers and other partners at the Port beginning Monday, Aug. 17 to help ensure workforce health and safety at the nation's second-busiest seaport. Drive-up registration will be available for Port-related personnel. Appointments are required for the general public and can be made online or by calling 562-570-INFO (4636). More information at link in bio.

Another news release and social media push came when the site's hours were expanded to include weekends and evenings in mid-January 2021;

the extended hours continued until approximately the end of February.

- <https://polb.com/port-info/news-and-press/ports-covid-19-test-center-expands-operation-01-14-2021/>

On Aug. 18, an email was sent from Port Executive Director Mario Cordero to all 500 Harbor Department employees with information on the testing site and wishes for their continued health and the health of their families.

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FklweCB6FT-gZ5NoBL-Auw3FQ52Mntys/view?usp=sharing>

In September 2020, a 90-second promotional video was produced by longtime Port video contractor Media 360 in conjunction with the Communications and Community

Relations Team. The video features Port Executive Director Mario Cordero explaining why the Port is funding the site, footage of testing and Travis Liberman from the Long Beach Health Department explaining the testing process. The video has also been shared on the Port's social media platforms.

- https://youtu.be/q4Wq2sm8_DY

The Port's COVID-19 testing site has also been prominently featured in both print and online advertising. The week of Aug. 18, ads were placed in the Grunion Gazette, a free newspaper with a print circulation of 52,000 in Long Beach. Each two-part ad placement consisted of:

Print tabloid full back page 10" x 13.5"
Print front page banner 10" x 2"
Web banner ad 728px x 90px
Web ad 320px x 90px

- Ad text (Aug. 18):**
Doing Our Part
The Port, working to ensure the health and well-being of our workforce, has opened a COVID-19 test site offering free tests to Port workers and the public.

Location: 2100 W. Anaheim St. Hours: M-F, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; 4-7 p.m.

Drive-up registration available for Port workers; the general public must make an appointment.

More information at polb.com/covid19.

Port Logo
THE PORT OF CHOICE
- (stressing that test results were confidential) were placed the weeks of:
- Aug. 18
 Sept. 15
 Sept. 22
 Nov. 3
 Dec. 7
 Jan. 19 (expanded test site hours)
- Similar ads were placed in the Long Beach Business Journal print edition the week of Nov. 10, and digital ads were placed in the Long Beach Business Journal's Monday Morning Coffee weekly e-newsletters and on the LBBJ web site the weeks of:
- Jan. 14
 Jan. 21
 Jan. 28
 Feb. 4
 Feb. 11
 Feb. 17
 Feb. 25
 March 3
 March 11
- Web ads and the front-page strip contained less copy; web ads contained links to the Port's COVID-19 information page at www.polb.com/covid19.
- Ads for the COVID-19 testing site, with updated photos and messaging



Port of Long Beach
Advertisement

5 Communications Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

Overview

The Port of Long Beach Communications and Community Relations Division's community outreach efforts were very effective, meeting all project objectives and resulting in the unqualified success of the Port's COVID-19 testing site. When the Port first partnered with the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department to open the site, the plan was that it would be open for operation for three months and test about 200 people each day. Due to demand and need, the Port has continued to fund the site and it is still open as of this entry.

Through the week of May 3, the site has conducted 24,764 tests, an average of about 650 tests per week, with the peak of testing in December 2020,

when tests topped 2,000 per week. About 44% of the tests have been for Port employees, with the remainder being members of the public. Tests are now in the 200 range per week as more people in Southern California have received vaccinations.

Existing marketing schedules were quickly reimagined to convert to the important COVID testing site message, without the expenditure of unbudgeted dollars.

Media Results

Targeted local and maritime industry media responded to the news release on Aug. 14 with coverage – write-ups on the testing site were featured that weekend in the Long Beach Press-Telegram, Spectrum News and City News Service, as well as the American Journal of Transportation and Sea

News. Local television stations KCBS 2 and KTLA 5 covered the site on their morning news programs, and Telemundo 52 carried the news on its morning and evening Spanish-language news programs. The site's expanded hours were covered in January by the American Journal of Transportation and Sea News.

Social Media/Digital Publications

The social media campaign for the site began Aug. 14, 2020 and has continued to the present:

11 Instagram Posts

- Likes: 933
- Comments: 23
- Reach: 29,362
- Actions: 319

7 Instagram Stories

- Impressions: 4,068
- Actions: 153

13 Facebook Posts

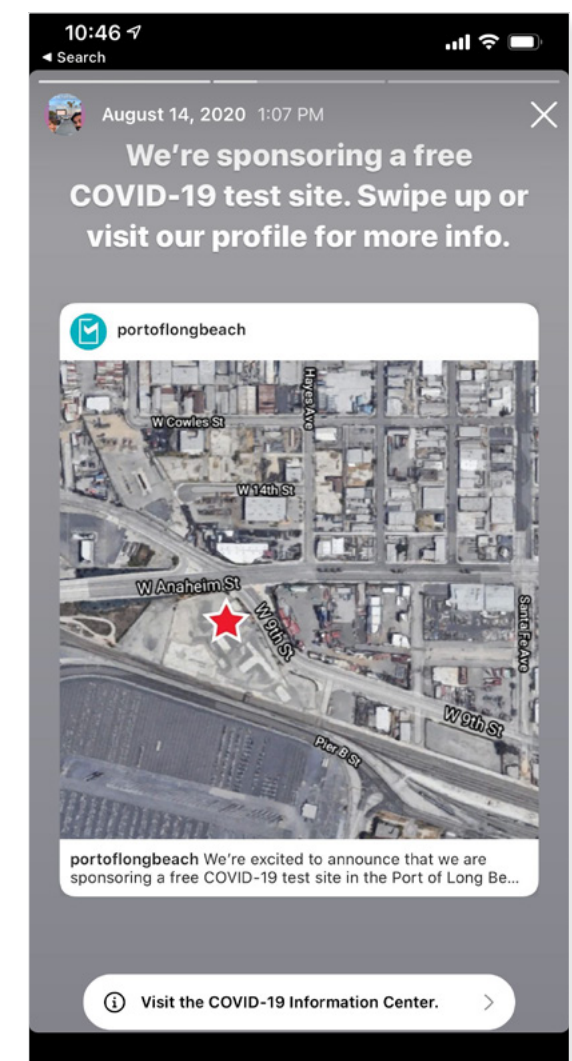
- Reactions: 324
- Comments: 6
- Reach: 42,561
- Engagement Rate: 3.8 %
- Shares: 139
- Video Views: 6,141

11 Tweets

- Likes: 77
- Replies: 7
- Retweets: 39

10 LinkedIn Posts

- Clicks: 155



- Comments: 3
- Engagement Rate: 3.2%
- Impressions: 11,881
- Reactions: 227
- Shares: 25

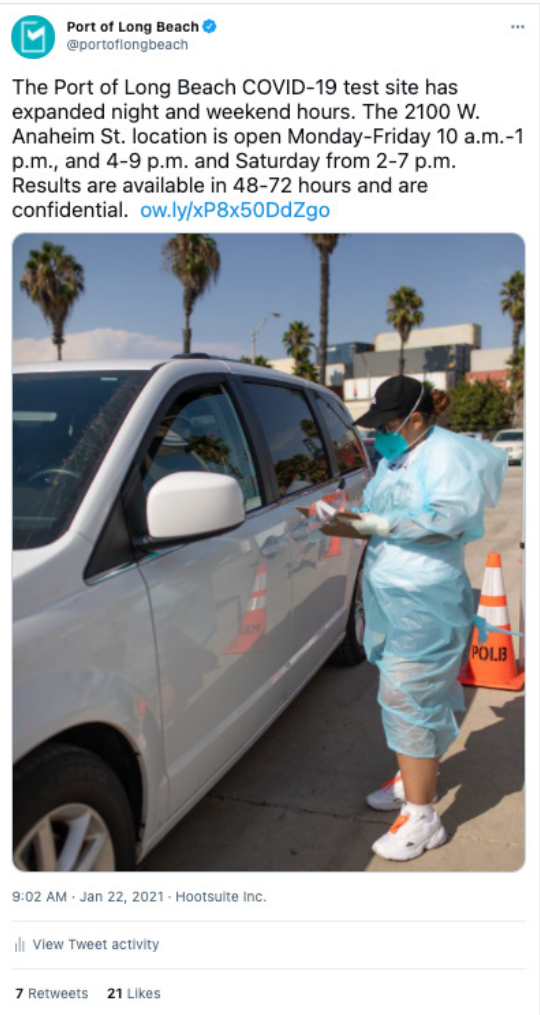
The 90-second promotional video has 143 views on YouTube and 37 views on Vimeo (used on the Port’s website), but the primary views of the video were on other platforms (see above, especially Facebook video views).

Web advertising in the Grunion Gazette received approximately 159,550 impressions over the life of the campaign, and the web advertising in the Long Beach Business Journal totaled approximately 623,960 impressions.

Budget

Spending for print and digital advertising and video production was already incorporated in the Communications and Community Relations Division’s regular advertising and production budget. The content was simply switched from what was previously scheduled to messages in support the Test Site campaign.

- The budgeted cost for each ad insertion in the Grunion Gazette (including web ads) is \$2,000.
- The budgeted cost for each print ad in the Long Beach Business Journal is \$2,400 and \$400 per insertion for web ads.



Comments

"The COVID-19 pandemic hit our industry and our community hard. It was imperative that we remain open, operating and delivering vital goods to battle the pandemic. The goods that cross our docks reach every U.S. congressional district, so a lot of people were depending on us. But keeping our workers safe had to be priority one. Our Harbor Patrol and Maintenance divisions, along with our Incident Management Team, did a tremendous job working with our city Health Department, and our Communications and Community Relations team got the job done to support the effort and get the word out – the Port's testing site was a big success."

- Mario Cordero, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach

"My extremely talented team and our longtime contractors prove time after time that we can turn on a dime to get important messages out there. This community outreach campaign to let people know about the Port's COVID-19 testing site was one of those times. Reaching out to our community is always a top priority for us, especially during this pandemic."

- Kerry Gerot, Director, Communications and Community Relations, Port of Long Beach

Links

Port of Long Beach COVID-19 information site

www.polb.com/covid19

90-second promotional video for COVID-19 testing site

https://youtu.be/q4Wq2sm8_DY

Follow the Port of Long Beach:

