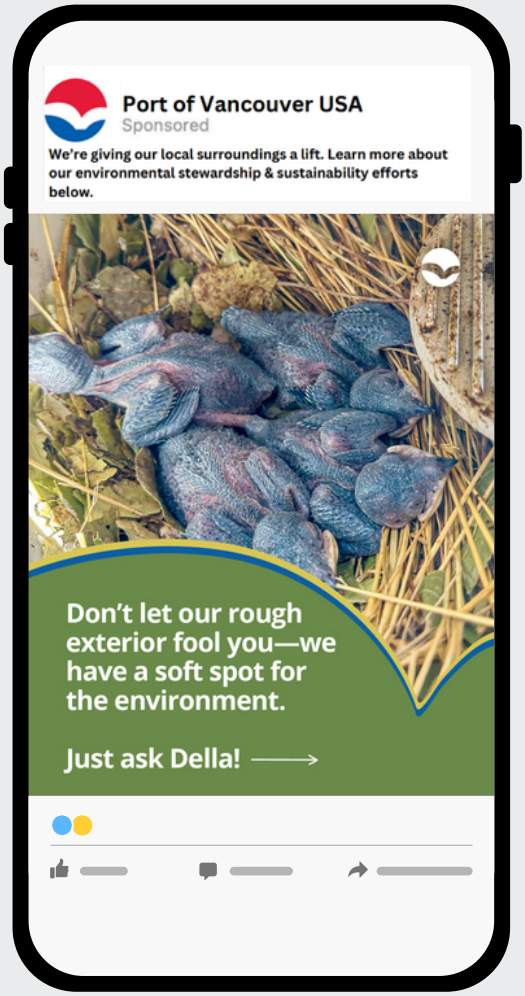
Port of Vancouver USA

2025 COMMUNITY AWARENESS DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

AAPA LIGHTHOUSE AWARDS | JUNE 12, 2026

CATEGORIES:

- EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY/EDUCATION OUTREACH (LARGE PORT)
- EXCELLENCE IN PRINT/DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS (LARGE PORT)







Port of Vancouver USA | 2025 Community Awareness Digital Campaign

Categories: Excellence in Community/Education Outreach (Large Port), Excellence in Print/Digital Media Communications (Large Port)

1. Background, Purpose and Goals

The Port of Vancouver USA generates $2.9 billion in regional spending and its tenant ecosystem supports 20,000 jobs—yet few residents were aware of its crucial role as a community economic driver. A 2022 benchmark survey found only 54% of Vancouver residents were aware of how the port benefits the community, and those who were aware viewed it narrowly as a marine operation, with little understanding of its 50 industrial tenants, environmental programs, or role in major community development projects.

Beginning in 2023, the port launched a sustained, multi-year digital community awareness campaign to close that gap. A benchmark survey, completed by a third-party in February 2025 before the campaign's summer 2025 launch, documented meaningful progress: awareness had grown to 79% among port district residents, up 25 points from 2022. Approval of the port's performance reached 84%, and mean performance ratings rose from 6.9 to 7.4 on a ten-point scale. The survey also confirmed the campaign's digital-first approach was correct: 76% of residents now rely on online sources for port information.

With a strong awareness baseline established, the 2025 campaign was designed to move residents from passive familiarity to active understanding of everything the port does. **We identified three goals for the campaign's third year:**

1. Deepen understanding of the port as an employer, environmental steward and community neighbor—not just a marine shipping facility.
2. Expand reach to Spanish-speaking residents in Southwest Washington, who make up 22% of residents.
3. Drive meaningful engagement through authentic content that humanizes the port and helps residents get to know their neighbors.

2. Implementation and Resources

The campaign was executed with an $80,000 budget covering strategy, a dedicated photoshoot, video production, asset editing and animation, landing page design, Spanish-language transcreation, performance optimization and reporting. The paid media buy was $25,000—a figure that required every channel decision to be grounded in detailed audience research.

The port drew on Resonate, an AI-powered consumer data research tool, to build a precise profile of the target audience and confirm where they spent time online. That data showed that the target audience deeply preferred Reddit (new for 2025), Instagram, Facebook, and

YouTube. Every dollar for paid advertising went to platforms where research demonstrated the audience was already present.

Work was conducted across three phases: strategy and planning (March–April), creative production (May–July), and campaign execution (August–October). The defining production investment was a one-day on-site photoshoot—the first in the campaign's history—yielding an original visual library of real port employees and tenant workers. The port selected individuals who collectively represented the port's breadth of industries, workforce diversity, and the surprising, lesser-known aspects of work that challenge the community's narrow "docks and cranes" perception.

Assets produced included animated display banners, Meta carousel and static posts, YouTube pre-roll in English and Spanish (transcreated for cultural relevance, rather than translated directly), Reddit carousel ads, and a redesigned campaign landing page. Animation was incorporated into display ads for the first time, with pulsing calls-to-action and headline build sequences, to improve click-through performance onto the landing page where our audience could read stories about the port's impact.

3. Innovations & Relevance

Four innovations defined the 2025 campaign:

People-first creative. Prior years used preexisting imagery of port tenants and infrastructure. In 2025, the campaign pivoted to real employees and tenants, identified by name and role across all assets under the tagline "People of the Port: Anchoring Our Community." This approach directly addressed a persistent research finding that residents didn't credit the port for job creation or environmental stewardship because there was no one "face" of the port. When environmental content underperformed in Year 2, the team reframed it around a named individual from the port's environmental team. In Year 3, environmental-focused ads became the top-performing content category, accounting for nearly one-third of all views.

Story-driven carousels. In 2025, we leveraged the Meta carousel ad format to tell a narrative about each featured tenant or port employee and tie their profile back to a broader port initiative or an explanation of the variety of work that happens at the port. Our audience was drawn in with slides introducing an individual employee by name and face, which transitioned into slides with copy about "life at the port."

Spanish-language transcreation. Assets were purpose-built for Spanish-speaking audiences, rather than simply translated, responding to survey data showing non-white residents were more than twice as likely to cite social media as their primary source of port information (37% vs. 16%). This was a first for the campaign and achieved an objective of the port in reaching residents in the immediately surrounding neighborhoods, which include many Spanish-speaking residents. Our Spanish-language ads garnered 6x the volume of clicks when compared to

English-language ads, demonstrating that this smaller but vital audience was highly engaged by the campaign.

Research-driven channel discipline. With only $25,000 in paid media, the team used Resonate AI data to concentrate every dollar on channels where the target audience was already active. This approach produced reach and engagement numbers that exceeded projections on every channel. It also led us to introduce Reddit for the first time, where content was served on the city's highly active r/vancouverwa subreddit. This served as a major driver of awareness, securing nearly 500,000 views.

4. Results, evidence and impact

The 2025 campaign delivered strong results across all channels and metrics, achieving the three goals for the campaign.

Goal 1: Deepen understanding of the port as an employer, environmental steward and community neighbor

- The campaign drove significant awareness and interest in the port as a multidimensional community asset—not just a marine shipping facility.
- Generated **3.75 million total ad views, dramatically expanding visibility of the port's broader story**
- Delivered 28,484 clicks to the landing page, **demonstrating active interest beyond passive awareness**
- Achieved a **57% increase in website sessions** during the campaign period, indicating deeper exploration of port-related content
- Attracted 18,273 unique landing page visitors—**nearly 10% of all city residents**—showing meaningful penetration and community reach
- High-quality video engagement, including 55%+ completion rates on YouTube (far above industry benchmarks), shows audiences were not only reached, but stayed to learn more

Goal 2: Expand reach to Spanish-speaking residents in Southwest Washington

The campaign effectively reached and resonated with Spanish-speaking audiences, outperforming English-language benchmarks.

- Spanish-language video assets generated **6x higher click volume** than English-language assets
- This strong engagement signals that culturally relevant, in-language storytelling successfully connected with a key audience representing 22% of the residents in the region

Goal 3: Drive meaningful engagement through authentic, human-centered content

Campaign content successfully engaged audiences and encouraged them to connect with the people and stories behind the port featured in our creative.

- **28,484 total clicks** demonstrate active audience engagement with campaign content
- Strong platform performance exceeded expectations across channels:
    - **Meta:** 1,653,479 views, **1.63% CTR** (surpassing the 1% benchmark), and **40%+ above projected views**
    - **YouTube:** 623,776 views (**2x projection**) with **high completion rates**, indicating sustained attention
    - **Display:** 1,006,939 views (**17% above projection**)
    - **Reddit:** 465,642 views (**24% above projection**)

The cumulative multi-year impact of the campaign is also significant. Between Year 1 of the campaign in 2022, and the 2025 pre-campaign baseline, community awareness grew 25 points (54%→79%). Approval of port performance reached 84%. Unaided resident mentions of port jobs grew from 6% to 18%, and its revitalization project at the waterfront/Terminal 1 awareness nearly doubled to 21%—direct evidence that the campaign's messaging themes are breaking through. Among residents who are "very much aware" of the port, 94% support its mission, underscoring the long-term value of sustained community awareness investment.

5. Integration, Adaptability & Scalability

This campaign functions as a long-term communications platform that builds on the work of prior years. Each year's performance data directly informs the next year's strategy, channel mix, and creative direction. The consistent visual identity—maintained across Meta, YouTube, display, and Reddit—ensures residents encounter a coherent port presence regardless of where they see it. Ad traffic flows to a dedicated landing page that accounts for 31% of all port website views and 46% of all active users during the campaign window, extending engagement beyond where the ads are served.

The campaign's core architecture—research-informed creative, multi-channel paid digital, a dedicated landing page, and an annual iteration cycle—is scalable for specific topics or audiences the port believes are important for the community. The Port of Vancouver USA's three-year experience offers a documented playbook for building genuine community understanding over time with a modest annual investment.

6. Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

Community engagement was core to the campaign, as it centered on featuring both direct and tenant employees. We worked directly with tenant businesses to identify and approach employees for the photoshoot, selecting tenant businesses and employees who could

visually demonstrate workforce diversity and the breadth of work taking place at the port. Tenant businesses featured included Wickum Weld and Trobella Cabinetry, who provided employee time and facility access. Port employees included International Longshore and Warehouse Union workers, maintenance employees and environmental specialists.

The campaign also feeds into the narratives shared with the public at Port of Vancouver USA's annual lecture series and its marine terminal tours for the public. Both efforts saw 100% capacity attendance for the following season, with significant waitlists for 2026. In total, the port's 3-part lecture series received 900+ ticketed attendees, and its 10 tours served about 450 attendees.

7. Conclusion

The Port of Vancouver USA's 2025 90-Day Community Awareness Campaign demonstrated that sustained, people-centered digital communications can meaningfully shift how an industrial institution is understood by its community. In three years, awareness has grown 25 points, approval has reached 84%, and the port's story—its jobs, its environmental work, its people—is breaking through in ways that research confirms. The 2025 results (3.75M views, 28,484 clicks, 57% increase in website sessions), and extremely strong community engagement at post-campaign events, reflect the strength of an approach that keeps getting sharper and the value of an organization willing to invest in the long game.

8. Work Examples

WATCH CAMPAIGN VIDEO ADS:

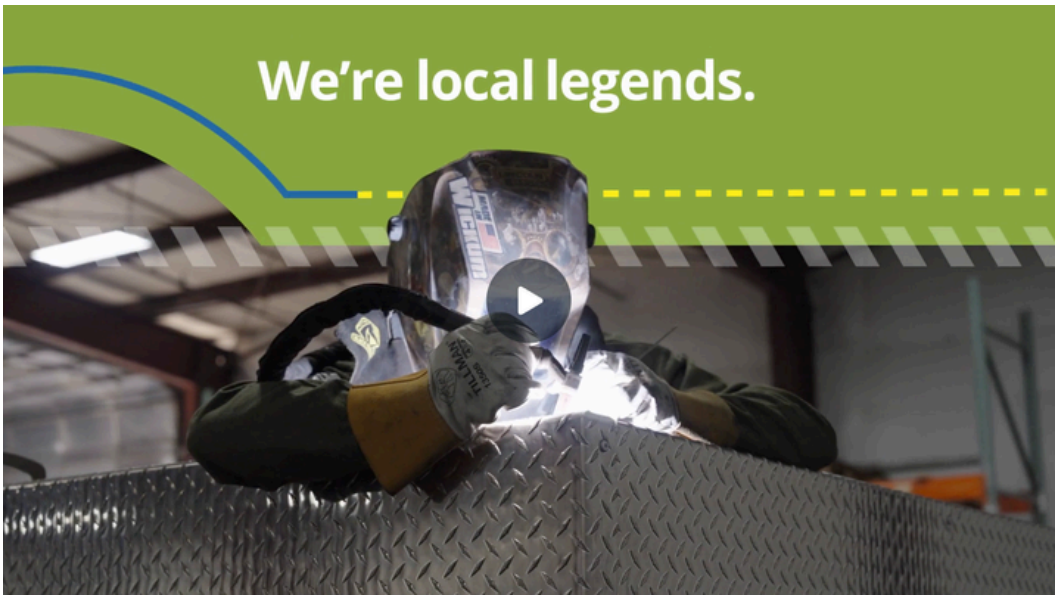
- 30 second: https://youtu.be/ahZWymULFfI
- 30 second Spanish: https://youtu.be/0Lj2gDeYd-4
- 15 second: https://youtu.be/7AII46TF220
- 15 second Spanish: https://youtu.be/gbpOJ-GFPJo

Creative Concept

Graphics, Colors, and Design system

In the third phase of the campaign, we built on existing graphics and design systems by introducing new, people-focused photography, featuring subjects breaking out of frames to create more visual interest, unify design elements and capture audience attention.

We also incorporated animation for added dynamism, improved click through, and embraced carousel posts to boost audience engagement, all while maintaining the familiar design system that our audience recognizes.







Creative Asset Examples

Display Ads and Static Social







Port of Vancouver USA

Creative Asset Examples

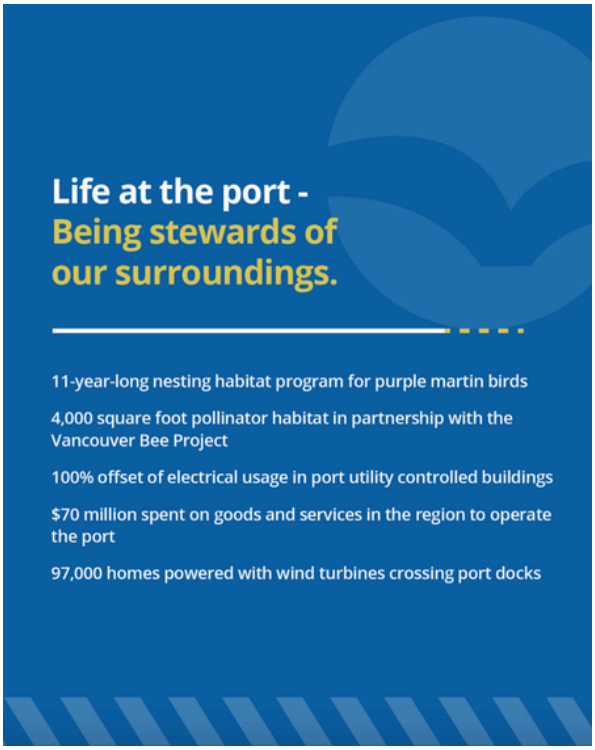
Meta and Reddit Carousels

Example 1







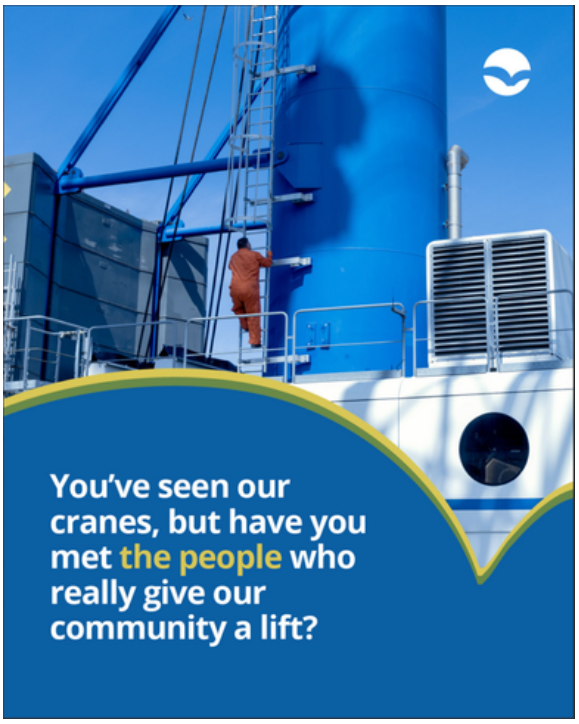


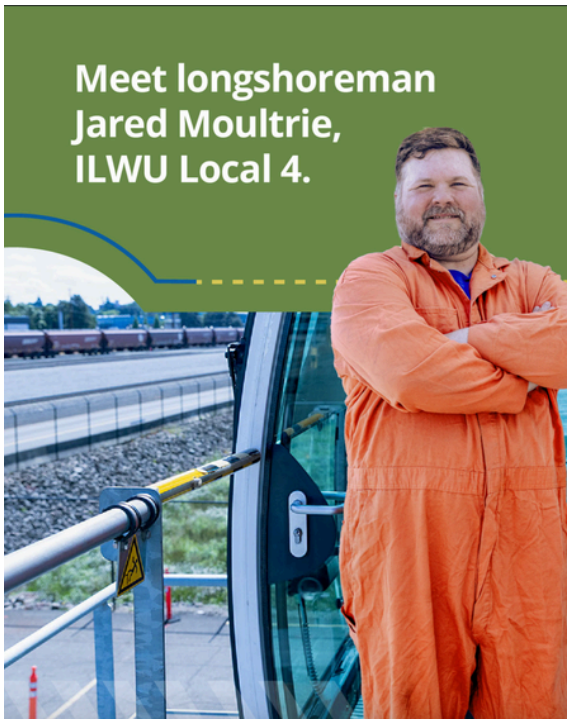
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Creative Asset Examples

Meta and Reddit Carousels

Example 2









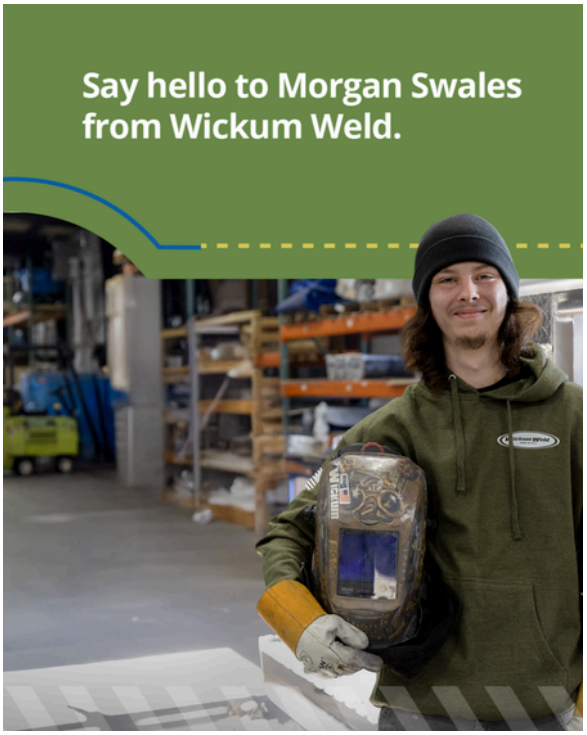
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Creative Asset Examples

Meta and Reddit Carousels

Example 3









Port of Vancouver USA

Creative Asset Examples

Video



English Video

- **Views: 555,192**
- **Finish Rate: 58.6%***

(*Above industry standard of 15-30% for skippable ads)

Scan to view video



Spanish Video

- **Views: 68,584**
- **Finish Rate: 55.84%+**

(*Above industry standard of 15-30% for skippable ads)

Scan to view video

Port of Vancouver USA

Landing Page



Anchoring our community.

We're more than cargo and cranes.

The Port of Vancouver USA is more than an industrial hub—it's an instrumental part of our community. Beyond the big ships and heavy machinery are friendly faces working hard to drive the local economy. From longshoremen to manufacturers, truckers, and terminal operators, the people of the port work day in and day out to lift up our community.





Bringing growth and vitality to Vancouver.

Between our marine activities andthose of our 50 tenant businesses, we support 20,000 jobs and create $2.9 billion in economic impact in the region. We also lead numerous sustainability efforts and community growth projects, like redeveloping Terminal 1 at Vancouver's waterfront. Upon completion, Terminal 1 will bring more jobs to our community. It's a location for locals and visitors alike to gather, enjoy food and craftmanship, and celebrate our city.