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## *The Port of Virginia Sustainability Report EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

### *Tactics – B1 – Annual Reports*

#### **RESEARCH**

The Port of Virginia contracted Meridian Group's services and expertise for creative direction and writing on its digital-only Fiscal Year 2016 Sustainability Report. Completed in January / February 2017, Meridian Group was tasked with giving the Port a face through its four pillars of sustainability: Financial, Health & Safety, Environmental and Social. Primary research consisted of first scouring digital annual reports from numerous industries to craft both a visually compelling and informative product. Secondary research tactics included analyzing the content of the previous years' Sustainability Report, identifying additional content needs and performing interviews with Port assets to gather information for the report.

#### **PLANNING**

The Port of Virginia plays a critical role in the lives of two-thirds of the nation's population. It is a catalyst for commerce in the Commonwealth of Virginia — creating jobs and moving incoming and outgoing cargo year round. With an overarching theme of Fiscal Sustainability for this report, Meridian Group's public relations team took on the task of telling the stories of The Port of Virginia with a focus on sustainability and responsibility. Planning consisted of multiple client meetings and interviews on content and design. Of particular focus — planned multi-million dollar infrastructure improvements at the Port and how they would sustain the future of its operations and in turn impact the larger Hampton Roads community. Meridian Group created a detailed production schedule to ensure on-time delivery for report distribution.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Port's leadership team decided to hire an outside agency (Meridian Group) to take the Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to another level and requested the same of their second iteration of the digital-only Fiscal Year 2016 Sustainability Report. One challenge of implementation was the timeframe for writing and producing the entire report. It started with the delivery of assets by the client on Dec. 2, 2016, and ended with a hard distribution date of Feb. 28, 2017. By following a strict production schedule provided before project activation, Meridian Group was able to stay on-time and on budget.

An additional challenge was to take a flat, scrolling online document and turn it into a dynamic and interactive web-based format weaving copy, photos, video and graphics together to take readers from cargo container to cargo container, so to speak, to learn about the Port's sustainability efforts to include the following:

- Container I: Financial Sustainability
  - Responsible Expansion
  - Stewards of Our Money and Yours
- Container II: Health & Safety Sustainability



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- Accountability & Recognition
- Problem Solving
- Outside the Box
  - Process Excellence
  - MIRT
  - Channel Deepening
  - External Transportation Networks
  - Position Detection System
  - SOLAS
  - Maintenance Dredging
- Container III: Environmental Sustainability
  - We're Certified
  - Clean Sea, Land & Air
- Container IV: Social Sustainability
  - Giving Back
  - Economic Development
  - Port EQ

The Meridian Group team overcame that challenge by utilizing assets provided by the Port in addition to performing multiple subject matter interviews to craft elements of each pillar of sustainability as well as:

- A *Letter From the CEO* outlining the Port's six core values of mindfulness, innovation, fortitude, helpfulness, sustainability and accessibility.
- An *About the Port* section summarizing how sustainability is not only a function of being green but an investment in the community, terminals and people at the Port to ensure it serves as an economic engine for generations to come.
- A look ahead in *Sustaining the Future* demonstrating how future planning leverages robust partnerships, industry-leading technology and responsible asset management to spur growth and sustain operations.

## EVALUATION

By design, the report itself is only available online, to further demonstrate The Port of Virginia's commitment to sustainability. Their target audience included 9,500 stakeholders, economic development leaders, customers and business leaders across the Commonwealth, as well as representatives serving in the General Assembly. It was distributed by email and also made available as a link on The Port of Virginia's website.

Port of Virginia Sustainability Report URL

<http://www.portofvirginia.com/fy16-sustainability-report/>