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BANANA FEST MAKES WAVES!

Celebrating People, Prosperity, and Port Partnerships at the 12th Annual Festival



The Port of Hueneme's 12th Annual Banana Festival.

[PORT HUENEME, CA] – The Port of Hueneme’s 12th Annual Banana Festival set a new attendance record this past Saturday, welcoming more than 13,000 community members for a day of music, food, tours, and family fun. This year’s theme, *“Making Workforce Waves Through Global Trade,”* spotlighted the people who turn ships and cargo into local careers and opportunity.



Revealing the theme: Making Workforce Waves through Global Trade.

Festivalgoers enjoyed banana-inspired treats, live performances from Instone Live, Morie & the Heavy Hitters, Savor, and The Brandon Ragan Project, and family-friendly activities like the kids’ zone and pie-eating contest. Land and sea tours offered a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse to the Port’s operations, showing firsthand how bananas, cars, and other global goods move through Ventura County’s only deep-water harbor.



Attendees line up for bananas and treats.

“This year’s theme speaks to what matters most: our people,” said President Jess Ramirez of the Oxnard Harbor District Board of Commissioners. “Every container unloaded, every car driven off a ship, every shipment of fruit represents the hard work of our local workforce. The Banana Festival is our way of celebrating them and showing how global trade builds opportunity right here at home.”



Oxnard Harbor District President Jess Ramirez addresses the crowd.

Commissioner Jess Herrera noted the festival's role in honoring both community and partnerships. "Our longshore workers, farmworkers, truckers, and tradespeople are the backbone of Ventura County's economy. The Banana Festival is a chance to thank them and to recognize the strong partnership we share with Naval Base Ventura County. Together, we create prosperity locally while strengthening national defense."



Local veterans show their festival spirit by posing with bananas.

Attendees learned about the various ways the Port of Hueneme is investing in training and employment initiatives. Many of the Port's paid interns are now pursuing logistics and maritime-related careers thanks in part to their experience in the Port's educational programs including the Global Trade and Logistics class (GTL). GTL, offered in partnership with the Oxnard Union High School District, is a 12-session program conducted on-port each semester. The Port's new Sustainability, Prosperity, Education, Equity-Driven (SPEED) campaign represents a \$2 million investment in Workforce Development strategies, programming, and organizational support. SPEED connects

the Port with partners like trades, the Ventura County Community College District, CSUCI, the US Navy, nonprofits, and K-12 districts to create additional employment pathways. The approach focuses on “upskilling” the workforce and intends to help develop opportunities for local families. Other key components include a Women in Construction program and an ESL to trade pipeline.



A group of three enjoys a scenic waterside boat tour during the Port of Hueneme’s Banana Festival.

For Commissioner Celina Zacarias, the celebration was about connecting the dots between trade and future careers. “The Banana Festival is about more than cargo - it’s about people. From students learning logistics in our classrooms to apprentices gaining skills on the docks, to small businesses thriving because of international trade, these are the workforce waves that ripple through our community.”



Young community members compete in a classic pie-eating contest at the Port of Hueneme's Banana Festival.

Those present also learned about the Port's ongoing efforts to electrify operations and become the first port in the nation to reach Zero Emissions status by 2030. As an essential component of the nation's supply chain and major driver to the region's economy, the Port remains committed to ensuring all operations help build robust opportunities and a cleaner, more sustainable future for generations to come.



Bananas meet Batteries at the Festival's electric car showcase.

Kristin Decas, CEO & Port Director, reflected on the Port's long-term vision: "The Port of Hueneme is charting a course toward a future where global trade and community well-being go hand in hand. The Banana Festival is a powerful example of that vision in action – connecting families, partners, and future generations to the opportunities that maritime trade creates. By celebrating together, we are shaping a shared future built on prosperity, sustainability, and community."



Guests step off the boat after a scenic harbor tour at the Port of Hueneme.

As guests roamed the festival grounds, volunteers and Port staff shared lots of fun facts. Important take aways included:

- The Port ranks **5th in the nation for refrigerated cargo**, handling bananas, blueberries, avocados, pineapples, citrus, and more.
- It also ranks **5th for automotive cargo**, moving more than **400,000 cars each year**.
- This activity generates a **\$2.8 billion economic impact**, contributes **\$236 million in state and local taxes** to support public services, and sustains **25,000 trade-related jobs**.



A group poses with one of the entries into this year's vintage car show.

Miguel Rodriguez, Director of Community Relations & Workforce Development, emphasized the festival's role in supporting that workforce and connecting global trade to local opportunity: "The Port of Hueneme is committed to making workforce waves through global trade by preparing students and workers for maritime careers. Through initiatives like SPEED — Sustainability, Prosperity, Education, Equity-Driven — we are building programs that expand access to logistics, clean-tech, and maritime industries. The Banana Festival is our way of saying thank you to the community and showing how these opportunities are making a difference for local families."



Food vendors sport festive banana attire.

The Banana Festival remains free to the public thanks to the support of community partners. This year's Top Banana sponsors were Hyundai/GLOVIS, Driscoll's, and the City of Port Hueneme. Admiral Sponsors included Chiquita, Del Monte, Dole, Pegasus Transit, and Gold Coast Broadcasting, along with dozens of additional Captain & Crew and Friends of the Port sponsors.

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[About the Port of Hueneme](#): The Port of Hueneme is one of the most productive and efficient commercial trade gateways for niche cargo on the West Coast. Five locally elected Port Commissioners govern the Port. The Port consistently ranks among the top ten U.S. ports for automobiles and fresh produce. Port operations support the community by bringing \$2.8 billion in economic activity and creating 25,000 trade-related jobs. Trade through the Port of Hueneme generates more than \$236 million in direct and related state and local taxes, which fund vital community services. In 2017, the Port of Hueneme became the first port in California to become Green Marine certified and was voted the Greenest Port in the U.S. at the Green Shipping Summit. Learn more at: www.portofh.org.