History of the Port of Galveston

- 1519 Discovery of Galveston Island by Juan de Grijalva.
- 1528 Cabeza de Vaca shipwrecked on "Malhado," an island believed to have been Galveston.
- **1816 -** The first settlement was established on September 13, 1816 by French privateer, Louis-Michel Aury, who was sent as the Mexican governor of Texas to create, first, a port from which to launch an attack against royalists coastal towns, and, second, to prey upon Spanish shipping.
- 1817 While Aury traveled to Mexico, the pirate Jean Lafitte made Galveston Island his base of operations, created a fortified village and named it Campeche. The little village contained not only huts for pirates but also a large slave market, boarding houses for visiting buyers, a shipyard, saloons, pool halls, gambling houses, and Lafitte's own mansion, "Maison Rouge."
- 1825 The Congress of Mexico designated Galveston a provisional port and customs entry point.
- **1831 -** Mexican customhouse established.
- 1835 Galveston made homeport for Texas Navy.
- **1837 -** Galveston declared port of entry by Congress.
- **1837 -** Gail Borden appointed Collector of Customs.
- **1845 -** Morgan Line of steamers established.
- **1854** By charter from the State of Texas, various dock and warehousing interests in Galveston joined together, to strengthen their position and became known as the Galveston Wharf and Cotton Press Company.
- 1860 Railroad bridge completed. Until this time, goods on trains were unloaded on the mainland side onto a steam ferry and then transported to the island side where they were unloaded onto drays, then taken to the wharves where they were unloaded once again.
- 1860 Railroads began arriving on Galveston Island.
- 1873 Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad chartered.
- **1873 -** Cotton Exchange organized.
- 1880 The Galveston District of the Corps of Engineers was established to serve the Texas Gulf Coast.
- 1889 The U.S. Congress decided to deepen the natural channel and build the protective jetty system.
- **1890s** Galveston built its first grain elevator at Pier 16/18.
- 1893 Wagon bridge to mainland completed.
- **1900s** By 1900, Galveston was the leading U.S. port for export of cotton, and the third most important for export of wheat.

- **1900s** During the 1900's, Imperial Sugar Company's operations began on the docks in Galveston as imported sugar began arriving from Cuba.
- 1912 Causeway completed.
- **1931 -** Elevator B was dedicated and commenced operations.
- **1940 -** By a vote by the citizens of Galveston, the private interests controlling the Galveston Wharf Company sold their holdings to the City of Galveston, and the properties, thereafter became known as the Galveston Wharves.
- 1951 Elevator B's tonnage helped Galveston set a national record for exports from a single port.
- **1954 -** The \$6 million rail and vehicular causeway was built connecting Galveston Island to Pelican Island.
- **1962 -** The citizens of Galveston approved the issuance of a \$12 million Bond Issue for the improvement of facilities of the Port of Galveston. Overall Rehabilitation Project was \$20 million, with \$8 million from Galveston Wharves Surplus Revenues.
- 1964 Bunge Corporation leased Elevator B.
- 1964 Pier Point Packers Crating Division opened providing dockside crating services.
- 1964 Port Industrial Road was dedicated.
- **1965 -** Galveston became the first Texas port to win the President's "E" award for Export Trade Development for outstanding contributions to the increase of U.S. trade abroad.
- 1965 Port property was valued at \$35,000,000 and covered 299 acres.
- 1969 The Port purchased the 50-acres tract known as the Seabee Terminal Property for \$278,000.
- **1969 -** The West Indies Shipping Company, a subsidiary of Del Monte Corporation, began bringing banana imports through the Port of Galveston.
- 1970 Duval Corporation opened a \$9 million sulphur exporting facility in the port complex.
- 1970 The port purchased 185 acres on the northeast side of Pelican Island for \$61,800.
- **1970 -** The Port used \$5.7 million of the \$7.7 million in general obligation bonds authorized by a vote of the citizens of Galveston along with an additional \$2.3 million of port revenues for the construction of a container terminal, purchase of a container crane and other container equipment and for construction of new Seabee facilities on Pelican Island.
- 1972 The Container Terminal opened for business.
- 1974 Cruise ships first docked at the Port.
- **1974 -** The Port purchased 100 acres just east of the Pelican Island Terminal for \$2.4 million.
- 1976 The Galveston Channel deepening project was completed, taking the channel from 36' to 40'.
- **1976 -** The new \$26 million Cook Industries Grain Elevator was completed.

- **1977** Farmers Export Company purchased Elevator C from Cook Industries.
- **1977 -** A disastrous explosion leveled parts of Elevator C with the exception of some of the concrete silos. The facility reopened August 1980.
- 1977 A referendum was held dedicating Pier 19 to be used, rented or leased exclusively as boat slips, berths or docks for shrimp boats, party boats, fishing boats, retail and commercial fish-sales outlets, etc.
- 1978 Foreign Trade Zone #36 was established on Galveston and Pelican Islands.
- **1980** A referendum was held to prohibit Very Large Crude Carriers from entering Galveston Channel, making the deepdraft port economically unfeasible. The referendum was defeated. The matter has been tied up in court since that time.
- 1981 FAR-MAR-CO Inc. purchased Elevator C from Farmers Export Company.
- **1982 -** The balance of the \$2 million general obligation bonds authorized in 1970 was sold to finance, in part, the extension of the container terminal dock.
- 1984 The highest tonnage figures in the history of the port authority were recorded during 1984.
- 1985 Union Equity Cooperative Exchange assumed operation of Elevator C from FAR-MAR-CO Inc.
- 1986 The first sister port relationship was established. It was between Galveston and Valparaiso, Chile.
- 1987 The Port sold its railroad equipment and leased the port rail tracks to Galveston Railway, Inc.
- **1989 -** The first day-cruise operation began cruises in December.
- **1990 -** Elders Grain gave up its grain holdings in the United States, including Elevator B. The port assumed operation of the elevator.
- **1990 -** The \$2 million Galveston Cruise Ship Terminal was dedicated. \$1.4 million of the project was financed through Tax Reinvestment Zone Bonds with additional financing repaid from the proceeds of a \$1 million UDAG loan.
- **1991 -** Half Cent Sales Tax Referendum was defeated. The Port was a potential recipient of a portion of the half-cent sales tax referendum.
- 1992 Farmland Industries assumed operation of Elevator C from Union Equity Cooperative Exchange.
- **1992 -** The Port of Galveston was presented an Award of Excellence for Overall Campaign in the 1992 Communications Competition for the Half Cent Sales Tax Campaign.
- 1993 The port purchased the Todd Shipyard property on Pelican Island for \$6 million.
- **1993 -** The Port restructured its long-term debt, saving over \$1 million a year in debt service.
- **1994 -** The port leased 109 acres of Pelican Island Terminal, the former Todd Shipyard property, to PMB/Bechtel.

- **1995 -** Lykes Bros. Steamship Line moved its container operations out of Galveston, making the Pier 10 terminal available for development as a multi-use cargo facility.
- **1995 -** The first event held on the Galveston waterfront showcasing the Galveston maritime industry was held in conjunction with the port's 170th birthday.
- 1995 Wallenius Lines moved their Gulf operations to Galveston and established a weekly service.
- 1995 In conjunction with the Wallenius Lines operation, Bennett International Group/Transport Services Inc. opened a marshalling yard on port property to handle equipment for John Deere and for Grove Cranes Inc.
- **1995 -** A lease agreement was signed with the Offshore Rig Museum Inc. to operate a rig museum at Pier 19.
- **1996 -** The 100,000th Deere & Company unit to be carried by Wallenius Lines was discharged at the Port of Galveston.
- 1996 The Mexican Consulate opened a branch office at the Port of Galveston main offices.
- **1996 -** The Port of Galveston won 2 Awards of Merit in the AAPA Communications Competition: (1) The Report to the People advertisements and (2) Harborfest Galveston '95.
- 1997 The Offshore Energy Center operated by Offshore Rig Museum Inc. opened at Pier 19.
- **1997 -** The Galveston City Council appointed the first female board member to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves.
- **1997 -** In a historic move, officials from the Port of Galveston and the Port of Houston Authority solidified a landmark lease agreement for Houston to operate Galveston's container terminal.
- **1997 -** The Port of Galveston won an Award of Excellence in the AAPA Competition for Harborfest Galveston '96.
- **1997 -** The Port contracted with VZM/TranSystems to prepare the first strategic plan for the Port of Galveston.
- **1997 -** The Port leased a portion of the Pelican Island Terminal, the former Todd Shipyard property, to Newpark Marine Fabricators.
- **1997** The Port held the first public hearing on the budget.
- **1998 -** The Port created a committee consisting of representatives from port management and local labor to establish a cohesive unit to work together to promote and create business opportunities.
- **1998 -** The Inaugural Season of RiverBarge Excursion Lines, Inc. included five cruises included Galveston Island as part of their 1998-1999 cruise itinerary.
- **1998** A ribbon cutting was held to mark the \$1 million in new improvements at the Del Monte Fresh Fruit facility at Pier 16/18.
- **1998 -** The Port approved a lease agreement with Paul Blum Co., Inc. to develop a bulk cement discharge operation at Pier 28 in Galveston.

- 1998 The Port of Galveston and the Port of Houston announced the selection of the PHA Container Terminal - Galveston by a container alliance as part of the group's South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico service. The alliance included China Ocean Shipping Company, "K" Line and Yang Ming Line.
- **1998 -** The Port of Galveston won an Award of Excellence in the AAPA Competition for Harborfest Galveston '97 and an Award of Merit for the PORT GALVESTON newsletter.
- **1998** The Port refinanced two 1993 bonds thus allowing for the elimination of a \$3.5 million balloon payment due in the year 2004.
- **1999** The Port signed a five-year lease with Deepsea Flexibles, Inc. to develop a flexible pipe manufacturing business at Pier 34.
- **1999** Carnival Cruise Lines, the largest cruise line in the world, announced their decision to offer cruises from the Port of Galveston beginning in September 2000.
- **1999** Wallenius Lines joined with Wilhelmsen Lines to form the largest ro-ro (roll on, roll off) carrier in the world and selected Galveston as their new regional U.S. Gulf headquarters.
- **1999** The Port of Galveston received an Award of Merit from the American Association of Port Authorities for its Community Outreach Program.
- **1999** The Port began the \$2.175 million rehabilitation of the Pier 19 Historic Mosquito Fleet marina which is home to Galveston's commercial shrimping and fishing fleet.
- 1999 Net Income for 1999 was the highest in the history of Galveston's publicly owned port authority.
- **2000** The Capital Plan for Improvements for FY2000 of \$12 million represented the largest in the Port's history, exceeding by 50% the largest amount previously invested in port facilities in a single year.
- 2000 The Port received a federal grant to provide safety improvements and landscaping at Pier 21.
- 2000 The Port held groundbreaking ceremonies in March to mark the beginning of construction on the \$10.6 million renovation and refurbishment project on The Texas Cruise Ship Terminal on Galveston Island.
- **2000** The Port signed a lease agreement with C-Port Galveston, IP/Edison Chouest Offshore for the development of an \$89 million, multi-service terminal on Port-owned property on Pelican Island.
- **2000** Paul Blum Company handled one million tons of cement at the bulk cement terminal at Pier 28 since the beginning of operations in December 1998.
- **2000** The week of September 24-30, 2000 was designated Texas Cruise Week by Governor George W. Bush.
- **2000** The week of September 24-30, 2000 was designated Galveston Cruise Week by Mayor Roger Quiroga and the Galveston City Council.

- 2000 The Texas Cruise Ship Terminal on Galveston Island was rededicated during ceremonies on September 27, 2000 to mark the \$10.6 million renovation and refurbishment of the Mallory Building at Pier 25 -the greatest single investment in improvements in the Port's 175-year history.
- **2000** Carnival Cruise Lines' vessel *M/S Celebration* made her inaugural voyage from Galveston Island on September 30, 2000.
- **2001** The Port of Galveston announced the initiation of a new Roll-On/Roll-Off (RO/RO) service by "K" Line on March 2, 2001 at Pier 34.
- **2001** The Board of Trustees of the Port of Galveston approved a berthing agreement with Export-Import Asphalt, L.L.C. to develop a liquid asphalt transfer operation at Pier 39/41.
- **2001** Galveston doubles cruise business as Carnival Cruise Lines announces plans to begin homeporting a second cruise ship in Galveston in mid-summer 2002.
- **2001** The Historic Mosquito Fleet returned to Pier 19 in July after the completion of \$3.1 million in capital improvements to the Pier 19 area.
- 2001 Plaques recognizing the 1927 builders of the Pier 27 warehouse, the 1989-1990 developers of the cruise terminal at Pier 24, and the 1999-2000 redevelopers of The Texas Cruise Ship Terminal on Galveston Island were ceremoniously set in the front of the building in July.
- **2001** The 100,000 passenger to sail from The Texas Cruise Ship Terminal on Galveston Island was recognized by the Port of Galveston and by Carnival Cruise Lines.
- **2001** Carnival Cruise Lines' first full year of operation at the Port of Galveston enticed almost 130,000 new visitors to Galveston Island.
- **2001** Royal Caribbean International signed an agreement with the Port of Galveston to operate the *Rhapsody of the Seas* from Galveston Island for five years beginning in April 2002.
- **2001** The Port of Galveston received an Award of Excellence from the American Association of Port Authorities for its website.
- **2001** Royal Caribbean International operated eight seven-night sailings from Galveston Island as part of RCI's service in the Western Caribbean.
- **2001** An election to merge the Port of Galveston and the Port of Houston was defeated by a vote of the citizens of Galveston.
- **2001** The Port of Galveston ranked number seven among U.S. ports serving the Caribbean region based on estimated passenger figures for 2001.
- **2001** The Port of Galveston ranked number ten among all U.S. ports based on estimated passenger figures for 2001.
- 2002 Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's Rhapsody of the Seas began seven-day sailings in April 2002.

- **2002** Steven M. Cernak was named Port Director by the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves at the April meeting of the Board.
- **2002** In May, Carnival Cruise Lines announced their decision to bring a Fantasy Class cruise ship, the *Elation*, to the Port of Galveston in September 2003.
- **2002** In June, the Port of Galveston was awarded \$375,000 in Federal Grand Funds for a Port Security Assessment Grant.
- 2002 In August, Carnival Cruise Lines' Jubilee began sailing from Galveston Island.
- **2002** In September, the Galveston Port Facilities Corporation signed an Operating Agreement and Financing Document with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL) for the development of Cruise Terminal #2 at Pier 27.
- **2002** In September, the Galveston Port Facilities Corporation signed a Design Build Agreement with CH2M Hill for the design and construction of Cruise Terminal #2 at Pier 27.
- **2002** The refurbishment of Cruise Terminal #2 began in September.
- **2002** In September, the Port of Galveston was awarded \$1,236,206 for the physical security enhancements to the west end of the Port.
- **2002** In November, the Port of Galveston welcomed Royal Caribbean International's *Splendour of the Seas*.
- **2003** In January, the first shipment of hard, red winter wheat was shipped to Iraq from the Port of Galveston.
- **2003** In June, the Port of Galveston began demolition of the 1930's era-Elevator B as part of a \$30 million plan to renovate the Port's cruise terminals.
- **2003** In June 2003, the Port of Galveston was awarded \$1,421,000 in Round 3 of the security grants from the Federal Government.
- **2003** In July, Princess Cruises announced it would begin 7-day sailings from the Port of Galveston in November 2004 with the first sailing of the *Grand Princess*.
- 2003 In August, the Port of Galveston signed a lease with River Materials L.L.C. to develop a general purpose bulk cargo terminal at Pier 35.36, site of the former Imperial Sugar Company bulk sugar terminal.
- **2003** In August, *Lloyd's Cruise International* announced the top 20 cruise ports in the world for 2002 Galveston ranked #18. The Port of Galveston ranked #6 in leading Caribbean Base Ports.
- 2003 In September, the International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL) announced that cruise operations in Texas in 2002 had an \$445 million impact on the Texas economy. The preponderance of the impact was from cruise business at the Port of Galveston in 2002 as Galveston had 3 year-round cruise ships and one seasonal cruise operation.

- **2003** In September, the Port of Galveston imploded Grain Elevator B, the second tallest building on Galveston Island, making way for expansion of the Port's cruise operations.
- **2003** In September, Carnival Cruise Lines' *Elation* replaced the *Jubilee* and began sailing from Galveston Island offering 7-day cruises to Mexico and Central American.
- **2003** In December, Carnival Cruise Lines announced it would replace *Celebration*, Galveston's first year-round cruise ships, with the larger *Ecstasy* in October 2004, creating a 38% increase in capacity.
- **2003** In December, the Port of Galveston signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alimport, Cuba's single largest importer of food supplies, to secure food for the 11 million residents of Cuba.
- **2004** In January, Wallenius Wilhelmsen Lines announced it would begin a new service to the Middle East in March from U.S. East and Gulf Coasts including the Port of Galveston.
- **2004** In February, the Port of Galveston was featured in the *New York Times* in an article based on the Port's growing cruise business.
- **2004** In March, Celebrity Cruises announced it would begin sailings from the Port of Galveston with 11 and 12-day cruises to the Panama Canal on the *Galaxy*.
- **2004** In March, the Port of Galveston and the Port of Victoria announced a new cooperative arrangement in support of the export of Texas-grown agricultural products.
- 2004 In March 2004, the Port of Galveston began the \$7 million refurbishment of Cruise Terminal No. 2.
- **2004** In May 2004, the Port of Galveston issued a Request for Proposals for the lease and development of the Pier 19/20 channel front area.
- **2004** In May, the Port of Galveston marked the one millionth passenger to sail from the Port of Galveston since the beginning of year-round cruise operations in September 2000.
- **2004** In June 2004, a fuel cell was installed at Pier 26 to support electrical needs of the Port of Galveston.
- **2004** In August, the Port of Galveston signed a lease with Agriliance LLC to operate a general purpose bulk cargo terminal at Pier 35/36.
- **2004** In August, the Port of Galveston opened the new West End Security Gate funded in the first round of Federal Security Grants. The gate covers piers 30 through 41.