



News Release

Contact:
Judy Slocum
Port of Galveston
409-766-6119
jslocum@portofgalveston.com

For Immediate Release

GALVESTON DOUBLES CRUISE BUSINESS

ROYAL CARIBBEAN SIGNS FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT

Rhapsody of the Seas Begins Seven-Day Sailings from Galveston Island

Galveston, Texas...April 14, 2002...The Port of Galveston solidified its position as the number one cruise port in the western Gulf of Mexico today with the first sailing of the *Rhapsody of the Seas* marking a new five-year agreement between the Port of Galveston and Royal Caribbean International (RCI).

"The Board and staff are pleased with Royal Caribbean's decision to call at Galveston Island for the next five years," stated Steven M. Cernak, Acting Port Director. "This new piece of business will not only positively impact the Port of Galveston, but will also create a roll-over impact on the entire Galveston community through passenger purchases, visits to local attractions and restaurants, and pre- and post-cruise hotel accommodations."

The *Rhapsody of the Seas* will sail from Galveston Island for seven-night Western Caribbean sailings, with ports-of-calls at Key West, Florida; Georgetown, Cayman Islands; and Cozumel, Mexico.

Using an economic multiplier, developed for ports involved in cruise operations, RCI's year-round operation of the *Rhapsody of the Seas* could have a direct economic impact on the Galveston community of \$10 million and an indirect impact of \$15 million.

In addition to this impact on the city and the surrounding area, Royal Caribbean's marketing efforts worldwide for their cruises from Galveston will more fully enhance Galveston's reputation in the travel industry.

“The vision of the Galveston Wharves Board of Trustees, the strong backing of the Galveston business community and the investment of the Galveston City Council have combined to bring about cruise opportunities for Galveston Island,” said Donald L. Schattel, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Port of Galveston. “Internationally successful cruise operations look for vision and leadership when they make commitments of this magnitude. Our successful cruise operation is proving very attractive to cruise lines.”

This announcement by RCI represents an additional payoff for the Port’s almost \$11-million investment in the cruise terminal, further diversifying the business base of the 176-year old port and continuing to provide a boon to the burgeoning Galveston tourism trade.

Local merchants are benefiting from the growing cruise trade. Galveston is unique among American cruising ports, with restaurants, shops and other tourist attractions located just one block from the cruise terminal along the waterfront and in the National Strand Historic Landmark District, a world-class vacation destination.

Cruise ships, and their crews, are big buyers, too. Galveston area businesses supplying everything from fuel to flowers are enjoying increased sales.

The port is located on the upper Texas coast at the mouth of Galveston Bay, just 30 minutes steaming time from the open sea. This ideal location boasts facilities to handle all types of cargo including containers, dry and liquid bulk, breakbulk, Ro/Ro, refrigerated and project cargoes, and cruise passengers. The Port is a significant contributor to the strong economy of the Galveston-Houston, Texas marketplace. Annual business through the Port totals approximately \$12 million with an estimated economic contribution to the region of over \$125 million.

The Port of Galveston is a landlord port, owned by the City of Galveston and managed by a City Council-appointed Board of Trustees.
