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**For Immediate Release**

## **VOYAGER-CLASS CRUISE SHIP COMING TO TEXAS**

### **GALVESTON SELECTED AS NEW HOMEPORT**

#### **VOYAGER OF THE SEAS EXPECTED IN NOVEMBER 2007**

Galveston, Texas...April 12, 2006...Royal Caribbean International announces its decision to homeport a Voyager-class vessel at the Port of Galveston as part of RCI's service in the Western Caribbean.

In the fall of 2007, the ship that revolutionized the cruise industry, *Voyager of the Seas*, will offer 7-night cruises from Galveston Island, marking the first time that a Voyager-class ship will sail from the Lone Star State. The *Voyager* will offer alternating Western Caribbean itineraries, calling one week on Montego Bay, Jamaica; George Town, Grand Cayman and Cozumel, Mexico; and the next week on Cozumel; Roatan, Honduras; Costa Maya, Mexico and Progreso, Mexico.

"We are excited that RCI has made this announcement and we look forward to *Voyager's* arrival," stated Steven M. Cernak, Galveston Port Director. "We had a tremendous cruise year in 2005 when we reached the one million revenue passenger mark, which means that cruising attracted over 500,000 visitors to Galveston Island in 2005. We have invested over \$42 million upgrading, renovating and enhancing our cruise facilities and we believe that all of the hard work and effort has paid off for the port and the city. Port staff is hopeful that the community recognizes the opportunity for future growth that has been presented here with the development of new business enterprises throughout the community."

The *Voyager of the Seas* was the world's largest cruise ship when it entered service in November 1999. The sheer size of the ship suggests magnificence. *Voyager* is wide enough to accommodate an eight-lane freeway and, at 1,020 feet in length, is long enough that a 17-car freight train could stretch along her decks. The ship weighs 138,000 tons and can hold 3,114 passengers and 1,176 crew members. Features particular to this ship include an ice-skating rink, rock-climbing wall, in-line skating, 9-hole miniature golf course and full-size basketball court, in addition to numerous restaurants, bars and lounges.

“It is becoming more and more apparent that Galveston Island is a natural choice for cruise lines as larger ships are being deployed to the Port. Galveston has a lot to offer passengers in the form of first-class attractions and top-notch restaurants and hotels, and the opportunities as a homeport and as a port-of-call destination for Galveston Island are endless,” Cernak concluded.

The Port of Galveston renewed its commitment to attracting cruise operators to Galveston Island in 1999 with an investment of \$10.6 million to redevelop The Texas Cruise Ship Terminals on Galveston Island. Royal Caribbean’s decision to operate out of the Port of Galveston, when coupled with other cruise lines coming to the Port, makes Galveston the number one cruise port in Texas.

A strong market of potential cruise passengers supports the Port of Galveston’s commitment to the cruise industry. This market includes two of the largest and fastest-growing population centers in the country: the Houston-Galveston and the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan areas.

Located in the heart of the port complex, the terminals are located just one block from attractions unique to Galveston Island and an entertainment area that hosts festivals and events attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

The near-by Strand Historic Landmark District, filled with 19<sup>th</sup> century iron-front buildings features unique shops, art galleries, pubs, restaurants and hotels. The restored 1877 Tall Ship ELISSA and the island’s fixed, rail-trolley system connecting the historic district to Galveston’s popular sun-drenched beaches are close by.

World-class Moody Gardens is a tourist mecca set in a lush, subtropical environment that houses three multi-story glass pyramids. The structures contain a tropical rainforest, a unique space exhibit and futuristic movie ride and a giant 1.5-million-gallon aquarium offering a splashy tribute to the North Pacific, Caribbean, Tropical Pacific and Edge of the Antarctic oceans.

Schlitterbahn Galveston is the first convertible waterpark with closeable sections for year-round fund. The new Surfenburg area offers 16 water attractions including uphill water coasters, a wave lagoon, three beaches, body slides, the Tiki Tikes kids’ area, the Boogie Bahn surf ride, family raft rides and three different rivers that all connect to form the park’s Transportainment® river system. Uphill water coasters, tube chutes, water slides and more make Schlitterbahn Galveston the ultimate family destination.

Galveston Island’s location just two miles off the Texas coast combines with a colorful history, popular festivals, a vast array of activities, numerous attractions and miles of beaches to make Galveston the ideal location for successful cruise operations.

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