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**For Immediate Release**

**GALVESTON IS TEXAS' #1 CRUISING PORT**

**ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL  
CHOOSES GALVESTON ISLAND**

**Royal Caribbean International Day Proclaimed**

Galveston, Texas...October 28, 2001...The Port of Galveston today became the pre-eminent cruising homeport in Texas and one of the most popular in the Gulf of Mexico with the initial sailing of Royal Caribbean International's *Rhapsody of the Seas* from Galveston Island as part of RCI's service in the Western Caribbean.

"We are excited that the major cruise lines in the world have looked at the Port of Galveston and at Galveston Island and liked what they saw," stated Katherine D. Moore, Port Director. "We have worked hard to attract hundreds of thousands of new visitors to Galveston Island. We feel confident that by the end of 2004, cruising from Galveston Island will have enticed 300,000 new vacationers to our island. The investment of \$11.7 million in Galveston's cruise facility was a really good thing for our island city."

An economic multiplier developed by Price Waterhouse for the International Council of Cruise Lines calculates the direct economic impact of the 2001-sailings by RCI to be approximately \$1.8 million. The indirect impact is expected to be \$2.7 million. The combined impact on the Galveston community is expected to be \$4.5 million for the last quarter of 2001.

In recognition of the economic opportunities for the Galveston community, the Galveston City Council designated October 28, 2001 “Royal Caribbean International Day” in Galveston and signed a proclamation so noting the designation.

“We have been anticipating this day for over a year and now this magnificent cruise vessel will be offering 7-day sailings to Mexico and the Caribbean from Galveston Island,” stated Donald L. Schattel, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Port of Galveston. “It is becoming more and more apparent that Galveston Island is a natural choice for cruise lines. 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.”

Royal Caribbean reports that the decision to operate *Rhapsody of the Seas* out of Galveston was based on the growing interest in cruise vacations. Cruise industry research shows that only 11 percent of American adults have ever taken a cruise vacation.

A strong market of potential cruise passengers supports the Port of Galveston’s commitment to the cruise industry. The Texas cruise market is comprised of a seven-state area with a population in excess of 30 million people. 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.

*Rhapsody of the Seas* traveled through the Panama Canal on a 14-day cruise beginning in San Diego, stopping at Cabo San Lucas and Acapulco, Mexico; Caldera, Costa Rica; and Cartagena, Colombia before arriving for her first visit to Galveston Island.

*Rhapsody* will sail from the Port of Galveston on October 28, November 4, 11, 18, 25 and December 2, 9, and 16, 2001 on eight seven-night Western Caribbean sailings with ports of call at Playa del Carmen and Cozumel, Mexico; Georgetown, Cayman Islands; and Key West, Florida.

On December 23, 2001, the *Rhapsody of the Seas* will depart Galveston on a seven-night sailing to Oranjestad, Aruba, during the Christmas holidays, with ports-of-call at Georgetown, Cayman Islands; Montego Bay, Jamaica; and Willemstad, Curacao. On December 30, 2001, *Rhapsody* will depart Aruba on a six-night sailing back to the U.S. over the New Year's holiday, with ports of call at Willemstad, Curacao; Georgetown, Cayman Islands; and Cozumel, Mexico

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 local for successful cruise operations.

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