



The Port of Galveston Set to Welcome Back Carnival Cruise Lines

For Immediate Release

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GALVESTON - October 21 2008 - The Port of Galveston is delighted to welcome back Carnival Cruise Lines and its devoted passengers, beginning November 1, 2008.

Following *Hurricane Ike*, Cruise Terminal 1 underwent a speedy but thorough top-to-bottom overhaul, and seven weeks later to the day, the *Carnival Ecstasy* will return to its homeport of Galveston. The *Carnival Conquest* will follow shortly, returning on November 2, 2008. Both vessels will embark passengers only on their first post-storm call, but will be back to a normal schedule thereafter, both disembarking and embarking in Galveston.

Port Director Steven M. Cernak had high praise for Carnival's operational work and customer service in the weeks following the storm. He said, "Carnival's advance planning and experience enabled them to swiftly relocate the ships temporarily while they continued to provide excellent passenger service. That allowed us to fast-track our repairs at the cruise terminal."

Gerry Cahill, Carnival's president and CEO said, "We are extremely pleased to be resuming service from the Port of Galveston and extend our congratulations and appreciation to the port and the Galveston community as a whole for enabling us to return so quickly."

All cruise terminal services and operations are now in place; for example, air-conditioning, web-based pre-paid parking, and Customs and Border Protection services are up and running. The Port was on the scene as soon as the storm waters receded, with work crews immediately tearing out carpeting and walls, meticulously cleaning the passenger facility, and then quickly installing new amenities. Terminal equipment, including passenger gangways, rolling doors, luggage X-ray machines and electrical systems, underwent expedited repairs. Cernak said, “We almost have a new terminal. It is spotlessly clean and nicely appointed, with fresh paint and carpeting. All of the equipment is in working order and ready to receive guests.”

Much of the credit for the expeditious cleanup, according to Cernak, goes to Belfor USA. Belfor is a damage recovery and restoration firm specializing in water and wind damage. Cernak applauded them for their rapid, careful and comprehensive response under very trying conditions. He said, “It was a tough order to fill, with no city utilities at first to support their tasks and with debris everywhere impeding movement. The Belfor team arrived, almost fully self-contained and self-sufficient. They brought our terminal back to life in record time.”

RoShelle Gaskins, public relations manager at the Galveston Island Convention and Visitors Bureau was pleased to hear of Carnival’s approaching return. She said, “Substantial progress has been made and the Island is excited to welcome back cruise passengers.” Many attractions have reopened, including all beaches, Moody Gardens and its golf course, the Texas Seaport Museum’s tall ship *Elissa* and Bishop’s Palace. A wide selection of hotels and entertainment venues are also open and receiving guests.

The Port of Galveston is the most active cruise port on the Gulf Coast, welcoming more than a half million passengers each year.

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