

Port E-News

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PORT OF GALVESTON PASSES ONE AND A HALF MILLION PASSENGERS

On Thursday, June 9, 2005, the Port of Galveston passed the 1.5 million cruise passenger mark since the inception of year-round cruises from The Texas Cruise Ship Terminal on Galveston Island® on September 30, 2000.

“The Board and Staff at the Port of Galveston have worked diligently to get to where we are today in the cruise industry,” stated Steven M. Cernak, Port Director. “A unique financing package allowed the Port to develop a first-class cruise facility that has enabled the Port to welcome a million and a half visitors from all over the United States, Canada, Mexico and beyond to Galveston Island. Many of those visitors would never have vacationed in our city had it not been for the determined efforts on behalf of the Board and Staff at the Port working with our cruise partners Carnival Cruise Lines, Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Princess Cruises. The Port of Galveston takes pride in the work that we have accomplished over the past five years in reaching this major milestone.”

The 1,500,000th passenger sailed from the Port of Galveston on June 9th aboard Carnival Cruise Line’s *Ecstasy*, which sails on a 4,5,5-day itinerary every other Monday, Saturday, and Thursday to Cozumel and Calica/Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

Just over one year ago, on May 30, 2004, the Port recognized a family from Spring, Texas as our one millionth cruise passenger, cruising aboard Royal Caribbean International’s *Rhapsody of the Sea*.

In a report by the U. S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), based on statistics for 2004, the Port of Galveston ranked No. 7 in the Top 20 Departure Port Market Share Report,

behind five U. S. Ports – Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Port Canaveral, New York and Los Angeles; and San Juan, Puerto Rico and Vancouver, Canada. Galveston moved from 9th place in 2003 to the 7th place ranking.

In an article in the *Seatrade Cruise Review*, based on the MARAD report, the seven largest cruise lines all achieved greater than 100% occupancy based on two passengers per cabin. The top seven cruise lines include Galveston's partners – Carnival Cruise Line in the top spot; Royal Caribbean International in second; Princess Cruises in third; and Celebrity Cruise Lines in sixth. The Western Caribbean remains the most popular destination market by a wide margin, with a 32% share of the total North American market.

The Port of Galveston is the Texas maritime gateway to the Caribbean, Latin America and South America for everything from commerce to recreation. The 179-year old Port of Galveston is a major contributor to the robust Galveston-Houston area, contributing \$656 million to the Texas economy in 2003 from cruise and cargo operations.

The Port of Galveston is the #1 cruise port in the Gulf of Mexico. Galveston is home port to two Carnival Cruise Line ships, one Royal Caribbean ship, and seasonal cruise operations by Celebrity Cruises, Princess Cruises and Royal Caribbean, offering approximately 227 cruises in 2005.

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