

Cruise Business Creates Additional Employment Opportunities

Wayne Cook, Director of Transportation with the City of Galveston, is involved daily with the operations at The Texas Cruise Ship Terminal on Galveston Island. The city bus system under his direction provides transportation services for Galveston's cruise operation, four days a week.

"Responding to the needs of the cruise operations in Galveston, the Transportation Department has increased its staff by 6 to 7 new employees since the start of operations in September 2000 when the *Celebration* first came in," stated Cook. "Our drivers enjoy visiting with the cruise passengers as they are transported from the parking lots to the cruise terminal. We have even adjusted our route. Now we return to the terminal via The Strand so that our passengers can view the shops, restaurants and museums that make up the Strand Historic District."

The City of Galveston and the Port of Galveston partnered to acquire the busses. The City received the federal grant for the busses and the Port paid the matching funds of \$85,000. When the busses are not in use for cruise passengers, they are utilized as part of the city bus system and can be seen each day on the streets of Galveston.

"An additional benefit of this process is that the busses are used in the city bus system when they are not in use at the Cruise Terminal," added Cook. "That means that the citizens of Galveston get to use these nice, new busses when they travel around the city."

The City and the Park Board of Trustees partnered to provide an informational video on the busses. The Park Board wanted to tap this new source of traveler and decided that a video was the perfect mechanism to reach this public.

"Three of our busses have Galveston videos playing continuously. The Park Board of Trustees put together the video so that we could showcase tourist attraction from all over the island to the thousands of visitors that are now cruising from here," concluded Cook. "Our goal has become not only to get these visitors from the parking lots to the cruise terminal but also to entice these them back to Galveston Island."