

For Immediate Release

Port of Prince Rupert 2008 Cruise Season ‘Biggest Year Ever’

Prince Rupert, B.C.; October 7, 2008 –The Port of Prince Rupert’s cruise business experienced its best cruise season ever, welcoming 63 ships and a record 103,635 passengers compared to 99,135 in 2007, and a 21% increase in passengers participating in shore excursion tours, from 25,621 in 2007 to 30,962 this year.

“The substantial growth in tour participation reflects the success of our collaborative efforts with Prince Rupert tour operators to enhance the quality and quantity of our tours, and the corresponding increase in awareness among cruisers of the exciting excursion programs that Prince Rupert has to offer,” says Prince Rupert Port Authority Vice President Marketing & Business Development **Shaun Stevenson**. New capacity in grizzly bear viewing, improved performance for flightseeing and an overall increase in the variety of tours all contributed to the success of this year’s shore excursion program.

Prince Rupert has also undertaken a number of initiatives to improve cruise guests experiences in the city, including projects by Tourism Prince Rupert to create a user-friendly way-finding program to cultural, heritage, shopping and other attractions, and a weekly market featuring products created throughout the northwest region.

“The improvement in guest services through a variety of collaborative initiatives has resulted in higher satisfaction levels that were evident in the passenger exit surveys,” notes Mr. Stevenson. “Our cruise line customers recognize that Prince Rupert has been growing and expanding its cruise capabilities since opening in 2004 and that we are constantly engaged in initiatives to continuously improve guest experience and expand as a cruise tourism destination.”

The continuous improvements in the shore excursion program are resonating with more passengers, who spent nearly \$2.4 million in the city on tours and excursions in 2008, up 32.4% from 2007 and 267% in 2006. In addition, it is estimated that the total economic impact of the cruise industry in Prince Rupert exceeded \$10 million in 2008.

Other highlights for the 2008 season included:

- First year that in excess of 1,000 passengers engaged in shore excursions in one day.
- Record grizzly bear viewing year as more guests enjoyed a nearly 100% success rate in viewing *arctos horribilis* in the Khuzemateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary, a one-of-its kind protected area that is home to 40-60 grizzlies.
- Norwegian Cruise Lines’ Norwegian Star expanded its weekly visit to six hours for better shore excursion opportunities for their guests.
- All cruise ships called as scheduled– no weather-related disruptions or cancellations.

The Prince Rupert Port Authority is optimistic about the 2009 cruise season, despite the loss of the weekly call of the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line’s Rhapsody of the Seas, which is returning to Victoria after two seasons calling on Prince Rupert. In addition to the cruise lines confirmed for 2009 – Norwegian Cruise Lines, RCCL and Silver Seas, Mr. Stevenson says the PRPA is currently working with other Alaska Theatre cruise lines to extend their ports of call to Prince Rupert.

He believes Prince Rupert's increasingly high quality of guest services and experiences, combined with the soaring fuel costs contributing to high operating costs in the Alaska Cruise Theatre, strongly positions Prince Rupert as an attractive destination that warrants greater consideration by cruise lines in their itinerary planning.

"We believe Prince Rupert's location on the Inside Passage presents cruise lines with an opportunity to optimize their fuel consumption while contributing a guest experience that adds value and market appeal to their Alaska cruise product."

For more information on Prince Rupert as a cruise destination, visit: www.cruisetoprincerupert.com.

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Norwegian Cruise Lines' Norwegian Star making its weekly call on Prince Rupert. NCL increased its stay to six hours in the Port of Prince Rupert for passengers to take better advantage of the shore excursion tours and other guest experiences that the area has to offer.



The Port of Prince Rupert is where Canada's wilderness begins.

Photos are available upon request.