

**For Immediate Release**

**May 2, 2005**

## **RECORD CRUISE SEASON STARTS TODAY**

PRINCE RUPERT, BRITISH COLUMBIA – The Prince Rupert Port Authority announced the start of the record 2005 cruise season today. The Executive Explorer arrives to kick off yet another year of overwhelming success for the Prince Rupert cruise industry. Pocket cruises account for 23 visits to Atlin Terminal, while large cruise ships account for 50 visits. Prince Rupert will host almost 95,000 passengers this season.

The growth in ship traffic represents a 50% increase over the 2004 inaugural season of the new Northland Cruise Terminal, and is 25% above the original growth projections.

Another result of the cruise initiative is further development of the extremely well-received local shore excursion program. Cruise passengers benefit from a multitude of possible experiences while in Prince Rupert encouraging them to come back for more. Programs include the experience of First Nations' cultural programs, sport fishing, grizzly bear viewing safaris, and scenic train excursions on the Skeena River.

Unique to this season, and starting in the fall, is the launch of a new BC focused itinerary, featuring two stops by the Mercury. This is the first result of the Cruise BC initiative, designed to promote and develop BC as a cruise theatre in and of itself. Port calls within this particular initiative include Nanaimo, Victoria, Vancouver, and Prince Rupert.

The Alaska cruise trade has grown dramatically over the past decade with over 800,000 cruise ship passengers visiting Alaska during the 2004 season. Estimates indicate that the industry generates 4,500 direct jobs and injects hundreds of millions of dollars into the British Columbia economy. Original projections suggested growth of the cruise industry in Prince Rupert could generate over \$30 million in economic activity in the region and over 1,000 jobs within a decade. In fact, Prince Rupert's cruise industry is growing faster than originally projected.

Construction of Phase I of the \$9 million Northland Cruise Terminal concluded in May 2004. Construction of the \$3 million Phase II upland improvements commenced in May 2004 and ended last week. The project is a partnership between the Government of Canada, Province of British Columbia, City of Prince Rupert, and the Prince Rupert Port Authority.

“Prince Rupert's collaborative approach to developing the cruise industry and partnering with the community are the envy of other developed and emerging cruise destinations around the world and admired by the cruise lines.” said Krusel. “Together we will continue to see the cruise industry expand into a significant sector of our economy.”

### **For more information contact:**

Maureen Bader

Manager, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs

250-627-2509

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