

INTERNATIONAL CRUISE RESULTS – 2009 A RECORD SEASON FOR THE SAINT LAWRENCE

Sept-Îles, 26 November 2009 – International cruise ships calling in at ports along the Saint Lawrence continued to increase in number in 2009. With a total of 17 cruise lines and 21 ships carrying 166 000 passengers and 63 000 crew members, Destination Saint Lawrence gained important new market share and enhanced exposure in international cruise circles. Comparable figures for 2008 stood at 126 000 passengers and 45 000 crew members.

“The Saint Lawrence remains a youthful newcomer to the cruise destination world. However, despite the challenging economic juncture, the 2009 cruise season proved both positive and constructive from every standpoint for our destination,” stated Priscilla Nemey, President of Saint Lawrence Cruise Association (ACSL).

The nine international ports of call along the Saint Lawrence all welcomed cruise ships to their facilities in 2009, led by the Port of Québec with 87 000 passengers, the Port of Montréal with 32 000 and the Port of Saguenay with 26 000. Season highlights included as follows: a staggering increase in the number of passengers embarking/disembarking at the Port of Québec; visits by a total of six new ships to ports along the Saint Lawrence; visits by ships large and small, some for the first time ever, at ports of call such as Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles, Havre-Saint-Pierre, Gaspé and Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Representatives of the Saint Lawrence ports of call presented seasonal results to their government partners gathered at Sept-Îles on the occasion of the 4th annual meeting of the Saint Lawrence Cruise Association. This meeting enabled industry members and stakeholders to discuss key challenges and ensure quality product development with a view to remaining competitive.

Conferences and workshops made it possible to pursue efforts to seek out solutions to issues such as infrastructure development for the welcoming of ships and passengers, recruiting and training of human resources, ground transport, regulatory considerations and customs services.

In 2009, ACSL and Promotion Saguenay together hosted the Canada/New England International Cruise Symposium which contributed handsomely to broadening destination exposure as a result of impressive international media coverage viewable on www.cruisesaintlawrence.com.

This past September, the Cruise the Saint Lawrence group, the mission of which is to promote Québec's ports of call in the international marketplace, was selected as a **Cruise Destination of the Year** finalist at the Seatrade Insider Cruise Awards gala held in Hamburg, Germany.

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