

GREAT LAKES ST. LAWRENCE GOVERNORS & PREMIERS LAUNCH *CRUISE THE GREAT LAKES*

INITIATIVE AIMS TO BRING MORE CRUISE PASSENGERS TO GREAT LAKES

(MACKINAC ISLAND, MI) – Against the backdrop of a cruise ship docked at Mackinac Island, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder today helped launch “Cruise the Great Lakes,” a new international partnership to bring more cruise passengers to the Great Lakes.

“Cruise the Great Lakes” is the newest project of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers, (GSGP) of which Governor Snyder is the chair.

“I am excited to bring more cruise ships to our wonderful Great Lakes so visitors can experience our fantastic shoreline communities,” Governor Rick Snyder said. “Cruising on the Great Lakes is poised for major growth in the coming years, with significant economic benefits for the entire region. In 2018, our waterways saw nearly 100,000 port visits by passengers. This initiative aims to increase those numbers, which in turn, increases the amount of economic impact.”

The news conference, attended by executives representing the Great Lakes travel industry, coincided with a port of call by Victory Cruise Line’s luxury ship, Victory 1, which is in its third year touring the Great Lakes. Victory Cruise Lines operates two identical 84-crewmember, 202-passenger ships in the Great Lakes, Victory 1 and Victory II.

“This is an exciting time for Victory Cruise Lines as we are in the midst of doubling our capacity on the Great Lakes within a very short period of time,” said Bruce Nierenberg, chairman and founder, Victory Cruise Lines. “We are committed to taking advantage of the unprecedented demand for our type of cruising in all five Great Lakes and St. Lawrence in particular.”

The GSGP is the organizing body for Cruise the Great Lakes. The initiative is led by representatives from Great Lakes States and Canadian Provinces, and includes partners representing travel and tourism professionals across the region. David Lorenz, vice president of Travel Michigan, serves as the chair of Cruise the Great Lakes.

“The mission of Cruise the Great Lakes is to promote cruising in the Great Lakes through an optimized and unique brand targeted toward current and potential passengers,” said Lorenz. “Our immediate focus is on marketing to potential consumers, both passengers and tour operators, in North America, but we’ll also target cruise operators. There is room for more cruise lines in our waters.”

In 2018, eight ships operated in the region, including ships from Victory, Blount Small Ship Adventures and Pearl Seas Cruises. Two additional lines plan to enter the region by 2020.

After issuing an RFP for marketing services, Cruise the Great Lakes selected Grand Rapids-based Stevens Advertising to develop and execute the regional cruise marketing program. Stevens has extensive experience promoting travel and tourism brands.

“Regional cruising has been growing rapidly despite the lack of a consistent regional brand or marketing program specifically directed at cruise passengers,” said Stevens Advertising president Allen Crater. “We believe our strategy for Cruise the Great Lakes will unify the core messaging and position the region for sustained cruising growth for years to come.”

CRUISE THE GREAT LAKES PARTNERS

State of Michigan	Victory Cruise Lines
Province of Ontario	Visit Detroit
Province of Québec	Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority
State of Illinois	Muskegon County Convention & Visitors Bureau
State of Minnesota	Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
State of Pennsylvania	Destination Cleveland
	Port of Cleveland
	St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
	Blount Small Ship Adventures
	Duluth Seaway Port Authority/Visit Duluth
	Pearl Seas Cruises
	Tourism Thunder Bay
	Visit Milwaukee/Port of Milwaukee

###