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Saint John to become a home port for cruise line

SAINT JOHN (GNB) - Blount Small Ship Adventures will originate a Bay of Fundy cruise itinerary from Port Saint John in the summer of 2015. The itinerary will include stops in other Bay of Fundy ports such as St. Andrews, Grand Manan and Campobello Island.

The announcement follows a Feb. 18 provincial government announcement of a three-year investment to help Saint John become a home port for cruise ships. It also follows a Feb. 18 release of a study completed by Dillon Consulting Ltd. which found that the port is well-suited to become a home port for expedition-class ships.

Blount’s services and line of ships fits well within the expedition-class of vessels, carrying 98 passengers on seven to 16-day tours focussed on unique destinations, educational opportunities and adventure.

“We are pleased that Blount Small Ship Adventures will be using Saint John as its home port for one of its cruises in 2015,” said Tourism, Heritage and Culture Minister Trevor Holder. “The Blount line will be the first to offer cruises where passengers will start or end their experience right here in New Brunswick. This signals to other similar companies that we are also open for their business.”

The Bay of Fundy and the unique features of the area are all drawing interest in the region. As recognition of the brand expands, the provincial government and port will be looking to expand this niche business line.

“Unlike the average visiting cruise ship, our port will not be the first stop for Blount passengers,” said Peter Gaulton, chair of Port Saint John’s board of directors. “Instead, they will experience the city before our world-class port becomes a gateway to this region’s natural wonders. We are proud to be part of this bigger picture and to be an economic driver for culture-building industries like hospitality, tourism and retail in the province.”

The feasibility study examined the strategic position of Port Saint John on the Canada-New England itinerary of expedition-class ships. It evaluated tourism offerings of Saint John and what steps Port Saint John needs to take to become a home port of expedition-class ships. These are often high-end, niche-market vessels, carrying 50 to 200 passengers plus crew. Expedition cruises are often geared toward adventurers with specific interests such as exploring nature.

During a call to Port Saint John, passengers spend an average of $60 to $80. In the case of starting their journey from Saint John as a home port, passengers spend up to twice these amounts. Passengers visiting home ports often stay at least one night in a hotel while spending money on meals and other incidentals.

“We are thrilled to announce this partnership and our continued commitment to New Brunswick and Port Saint John,” said Nancy Blount, President, Blount Small Ship Adventures. “We have already been operating in the destination as part of Blount’s ‘Classical Maine and the Northeast’ cruise, and know it is beloved by our customers for its historic cities, charming maritime villages and the beauty of its rocky shores jutting into the Atlantic Ocean. Beyond the stunning backdrop it provides, we understand the economic impact of calling Port Saint John home, and are proud to partner with the destination and contribute to its tourism development.”

Blount Small Ship Adventures epitomizes the best of small ship cruising, offering highly authentic and personal experiences aboard amazing ships that can simply go where the big ships can’t. Unique
destinations are a hallmark of travelling with Blount, from the rain forest-bordered shores of Guatemala’s Lago de Izabal and the pristine beaches of the Honduran Islands to America’s great waterways like the Mississippi and the Erie Canal. The freedom to go anywhere gives the like-minded, curious guests travelling with Blount Small Ship Adventures the chance to travel like explorers, immersing themselves in the best of local culture. Founded in 1966, the company operates two U.S.-registry and U.S.-crewed ships. Each ship holds 88 passengers, features patented designs such as retractable pilothouses and shallow-draft bow landing ramps that enable them to access remote destinations larger ships cannot.

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