



**South
Carolina
Ports**

NEWS RELEASE

176 Concord Street, P.O. Box 22287, Charleston, SC 29413-2287
Telephone: (843) 577-8197 • Fax: (843) 577-8127 • e-mail: bmiller@scspa.com
Contact: Byron D. Miller

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CRUISE PASSENGERS SUPPORT LOCAL HISTORICAL SITES, BOOST AREA ECONOMY

Charleston, SC – The six-star luxury cruise ship, *Crystal Symphony*, is in port today, with hundreds of guests supporting local historic and cultural attractions.

The *Crystal Symphony* and her 814 passengers arrived in Charleston this morning on a 19-night voyage from New York to Los Angeles through the Panama Canal. The ship departs this evening around 11 pm, but not before her guests enjoy the city's dining, shopping and attractions. In fact, nearly 400 cruisers are going on organized excursions around town, supporting historical and cultural sites in the local community, including:

- Nearly four dozen are visiting Middleton Place
- Three dozen are visiting the Joseph Manigault House
- A dozen will take a city walking tour, including the Old Exchange & Provost Dungeon and the Heyward Washington House
- More than 70 will take private carriage tours
- Several will take a cooking class at Charleston Cooks
- 61 will take a Civil War Tour, including a visit to the Hunley
- 65 are taking an historical tour
- 60 will attend a performance of Alfred Hitchcock's "The 39 Steps" at the Dock St. Theater
- And 14 will take a Ghost Tour

This kind of spending is typical of the broad and diverse contributions that cruise ships bring to the community. Since last Thursday, another 2,400 cruisers on port-of-call ships took excursions organized by local company Charleston Convention & Group Services, which has been in operation since 1986.

Many other guests explored the city on their own, shopping, eating and visiting local attractions with assistance from the Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, which meets every ship inside the cruise terminal.

In addition to the port-of-call visits, the *Carnival Fantasy* sails from Charleston every five to seven days, contributing greatly and broadly to the area's economy. Surveys detail that 37 percent of passengers stay in local hotels, 50 percent eat in local restaurants, 37 percent shop in local stores, and 39 percent visit local attractions and museums.

The local economy will get an estimated \$37-million boost this year from cruises alone. With 89 cruise ships on the 2011 calendar, compared to 67 this year, the economic activity associated with cruise spending will likely increase.

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Cruise Passengers Support Economy – add one

The Crystal Symphony is also making stops in Philadelphia, Miami, Georgetown (Grand Cayman), Cartagena (Colombia), Caldera (Costa Rica) and Acapulco and Cabo San Lucas (Mexico). Fares range from about \$5,000 to \$30,000 per person.

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