

Port Milwaukee: Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson announces first cruise ship arrival for 2022 season

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MILWAUKEE, WI – Mayor Cavalier Johnson is announcing the *Viking Octantis* will be the first cruise ship to visit Port Milwaukee as part of the 2022 season. This Seawaymax vessel is scheduled to dock in Milwaukee's Harbor on May 6, 2022.

The *Viking Octantis'* arrival in Milwaukee will begin a summer season where 33 port calls by various cruise ships are planned, bringing more than 10,000 passengers to the city. This is compared to the 10 stops made during the 2019 season, before Great Lakes cruising halted for two years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operated by Viking Cruises, the *Viking Octantis* can carry up to 378 passengers on voyages throughout the Great Lakes. The 2022 cruising season represents the first time this ship will designate Milwaukee as an embarkation and debarkation port for the company's itineraries.

"Milwaukee is a great destination. It's a city filled with attractions and hospitality. That's what cruise passengers will find here," **Mayor Cavalier Johnson said.** "As word spreads, I anticipate even more travelers will cruise to Milwaukee."

Viking Cruises will utilize the Port's City Heavy Lift Dock this season as their port-of-call location. The South Shore Cruise Dock, located immediately east of the Lake Express High Speed Ferry terminal, will serve as the future port-of-call for vessels the size of the *Viking Octantis*. Port Milwaukee recently received \$3.5 million in

Capital Tourism grant funding from the State of Wisconsin to build new Seawaymax infrastructure at South Shore Cruise Dock.

A number of ongoing efforts remain underway to promote the passenger cruise business in Milwaukee and throughout the Great Lakes. Port Milwaukee is the founder of the Milwaukee Cruise Collaborative, a local group promoting the city as a cruise destination. The Collaborative, which includes a cross section of the local hospitality industry, has planned, promoted and prepared for increased Great Lakes cruising passengers. VISIT Milwaukee and various local stakeholders are also proud partners in promoting Great Lakes cruising activity in the city.

Port Milwaukee is also a participant in the Cruise the Great Lakes initiative of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers. The Port recently signed onto a Cruise the Great Lakes pledge committing to promoting environmental stewardship practices and efforts for the 2022 cruising season and beyond.

“Port Milwaukee continues to capitalize on increased interest in passenger cruising on the Great Lakes and increased interest in Milwaukee as the turnaround hub for passengers to start or end their voyages,” **Director Adam Tindall-Schlicht said.** “In the coming years, thousands of passengers will visit our city, stay in local hotels, dine in our restaurants, and enjoy all the great things Milwaukee offers.”

“Port Milwaukee has positioned itself as a premier cruising destination and our hospitality community is excited to welcome this season’s guests,” **said VISIT Milwaukee President and CEO Peggy Williams-Smith.** “With two dock experiences as well as an international airport just minutes from a vibrant walkable downtown, Milwaukee is perfect for Great Lakes cruises. And while ashore guests can explore Milwaukee’s one-of-a-kind attractions, from art galleries and history museums to award-winning restaurants and breweries. We cannot wait to welcome visitors to the city where Unique Unites!”

Port Milwaukee is an economic entity of City government governed by the seven-member Board of Harbor Commissioners, a panel appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council. It administers operations on the 467 acres that make up the Port. It promotes shipping and commerce throughout the region by

providing access to domestic and international ships, rail, and over-the-road transportation. Learn more at portmilwaukee.com.