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Press Release

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Contact: Mark Kelsey, #269-7387

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Office of Economic Development set to promote Alaska to cruise ship industry

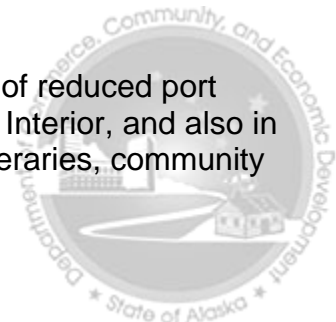
(Anchorage, Alaska) – The state Office of Economic Development is partnering with local businesses to promote Alaska as a top cruise destination at Seatrade's annual Cruise Shipping Miami international exhibition and conference, to be held March 15-18 in Miami.

Cruise Shipping Miami brings together cruise line executives, industry suppliers and buyers, and representatives of destinations from around the world. With more than 10,000 people expected at the event, it is a great opportunity for Alaska to showcase and promote itself as a unique cruise destination, especially in the wake of recent signs of decline in cruise visitors.

After many consecutive years of growth, Alaska is now seeing a significant decrease in passengers. Last year, nearly 1 million cruise passengers visited Alaska. This year, however, total cruise visitors are expected to decline by nearly 150,000. This is at the same time as industry experts predict global growth.

"The tourism sector is a critical component of Alaska's economy. We must do whatever we can to turn around the recent decline and return tourism to a thriving and productive industry," said Curtis Thayer, who oversees the Office of Economic Development as deputy commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. "It is important that we take advantage of marketing opportunities that will bear fruit in the form of economic stability for communities and jobs for Alaskans."

Cruise ship visitors have a long economic reach. The impact of reduced port visits will be felt in communities on Alaska's gulf coast, in the Interior, and also in the Southeast region. Because of variations in cruise line itineraries, community



effects vary from a decline of 16 percent in Juneau, to more than 40 percent in Sitka and Whittier.

“As anyone who lives here knows, Alaska has so much to offer cruise ship visitors,” said Paul Landis, Chief Operating Officer of CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation. “We are pleased with the State’s commitment to increase tourism and look forward to the public and private sectors joining forces at Seatrade to showcase our State and encourage the industry to increase its investment in Alaska.”

Thayer will represent the State at Seatrade’s Cruise Shipping Miami conference. He will be accompanied by Caryl McConkie, a tourism development specialist with the Office of Economic Development.

For more information, contact Mark Kelsey in the Office of Economic Development at 269-7387.

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