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GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

**GOVERNOR EHRlich HELPS CELEBRATE 300 YEARS
FOR MARYLAND'S PORT OF BALTIMORE**

Designated in 1706, Port Today is Among the Nation's Best

BALTIMORE, MD --- Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., today led a contingent of government, business, and community officials in a celebration announcement recognizing the Maryland Port of Baltimore's 300th anniversary. As a primary gateway of cargo and goods, today's Port handles automobiles, tractors, paper, electronics, toys, coal, sugar, and clothing, among many other items. Today's celebration helped shed light on the Port's contributions to building the State of Maryland.

"For 300 years, Maryland's Port of Baltimore has been a primary supplier in building the economy of our state and bringing in goods and cargo that have positively contributed to the American way of life," said Governor Ehrlich. "The Port today is well-known in the maritime industry as one of the top ports in the country, and I look forward to another 300 years worth of great contributions from the Port of Baltimore."

In 1706, Maryland's colonial legislators designated Whetstone Point, near where Fort McHenry now sits, as an official Port of Entry for the state's tobacco trade with England – the basis of the Port's 300th anniversary celebration in 2006. As the century progressed, five small ports – all within a few miles of each other – would merge to become the Port of Baltimore, which has since matured into a world-class maritime center whose public and private operations consume 45 miles of shoreline and 3,403.25 waterfront acres. It soon became a hub of international commerce and a thriving maritime community. It was declared the gateway to the world, bringing in goods to be shipped by truck and train throughout the country and sending exports to the rest of the world.

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“This is an historical, once-in-a-lifetime event,” said former U.S. Rep. Helen Delich Bentley, Chairman of the Port of Baltimore Tricentennial Committee. “The Port of Baltimore built the city, and it continues to be an economic engine for the entire state providing well-paying jobs, tax revenues, and a host of other advantages which come from having a first-class Port in our own backyard.”

Maryland's Port of Baltimore has never been stronger than it is today. Foreign cargo increased 28 percent over 2003, from 24.7 million tons to 31.8 million tons. That is the highest total since 1981 and the first time that foreign cargo has exceeded 30 million tons since 1995. The increase in cargo boosted the Port's national ranking from 19th in 2003 to 14th in 2004 in cargo volume among U.S. ports.

In addition to an increase in the amount of cargo, the Port also saw an improvement in the value of that cargo. Total foreign cargo value in 2004 was \$31.2 billion, the Port's highest level in its history. This is an increase from about \$26 billion in cargo in 2003. The Port improved to seventh among major U.S. ports for total value of cargo. In 2003, the Port ranked eighth.

The Maryland Port of Baltimore is currently:

- Ranked first nationally for roll-on/roll-off cargo;
- Ranked second in automobile importing and exporting;
- Ranked second in importing paper.

In 2004, the Port provided almost 19,000 direct jobs, \$2.4 billion in personal wages and salary, and \$2 billion in business revenues. The Port helped to generate \$278 million in state, county and municipal taxes.

During the year, the Baltimore maritime community will participate in a year-long celebration of the Port's 300th anniversary. Some of the activities include:

- A maritime-themed photo display in the lobby of the World Trade Center in Baltimore;
- The sale of commemorative license plates with the 300th logo. Plates may be purchased by calling the Baltimore Maritime Exchange at (410) 342-6610 or by emailing manager@balmx.org;
- The sale of a variety of 300th anniversary commemorative merchandise
- A gala benefit in the Maryland Port Administration's new South Locust Point cruise terminal to be held on May 25, 2006;
- Participation in Baltimore's Waterfront Festival and Volvo Ocean Race in the Inner Harbor;
- Burying a time capsule;
- Bus tours of the Port's Dundalk and Seagirt Marine Terminals;
- Producing a commemorative photo book and poster.

For more information on the 300th anniversary and the events taking place throughout the year, the public can log onto www.marylandports.com or www.portofbaltimore300.org.