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Coast Guard Cutter EAGLE returns to Portland in August for Maine's bicentennial celebration

PORTLAND – America's Tall Ship, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter EAGLE will return to Portland this August for an exciting weekend of public tours and other events.

The Maine Bicentennial Commission, the City of Portland and the U.S. Coast Guard are bringing this national treasure to the Ocean Gateway on Friday, August 6 through Monday, August 9.

The EAGLE, a 295-foot seagoing classroom from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut has a crew of about 60 and will have more than 100 academy cadets on board. EAGLE is a three-masted barque that tours the world as a goodwill ambassador of the USA, while training cadets and officer candidates for future assignments in America's smallest military branch.

“What an exciting occasion it is for EAGLE to arrive in Portland to help celebrate our state’s 200th birthday,” said Senator Bill Diamond, chairman of the Maine Bicentennial Commission. “We are so honored to be the hosting organization for the visit and to work closely with the city and our local Coast Guard command. We want everyone to come and tour this piece of maritime history.”



Each summer, EAGLE conducts port visits in different parts of the world, having sailed to Europe and Australia in previous years. This summer, Portland will be the sixth stop on a tour that will include the Azores, Iceland, and Bermuda.

“A visit from EAGLE brings many great things to the Portland waterfront,” said Coast Guard Captain Amy Florentino, who commands Coast Guard forces in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont from Sector Northern New England, headquartered in Portland.

“It puts the spotlight on the tireless work the men and women of the Coast Guard do year-round on our coast and on Lake Champlain. They act as the constant guardian for those who earn their living or just enjoy being on the water. It's nice to see them recognized.”

EAGLE will arrive in Portland at about 8 a.m. on Friday, August 6. As in past years, the public is expected to turn out in large numbers on the water and along the shore to welcome the square rigger into port. EAGLE will be open for public tours, which are free, on Saturday and Sunday. Exact tour times will be published as the visit draws nearer.

The Maine Bicentennial Commission (Maine200), the non-profit sponsoring organization, aims to honor the state's shipbuilding and seafaring history as part of the activities that spurred interest in Maine.

“Maine is renowned for the quality of the ships built here, the value of the wood that was used to construct these vessels, and for the variety of activities -- from fishing to transportation, recreation to rescue, research to defense. The EAGLE is a magnificent reminder of the majesty of sail,” said Diamond.

Coinciding with EAGLE's visit and sponsored by Bangor Savings Bank and the Maine Bicentennial Commission, the local nonprofit Sailing Ships Maine will coordinate a week-long Bicentennial Sailors Voyage for Maine teens. The voyage will take place the first week of August aboard the USCG-certified, wooden 131' Maine-built Schooner Harvey Gamage.

Sailing Ships Maine creates life-changing opportunities for teens of all abilities and income levels through accredited overnight voyages and high school semesters at sea on traditional sailing vessels. These voyages help students discover maritime history and the ocean environment, develop leadership skills, and encourage them to consider further maritime training and studies.

“To be disconnected from electronics, to stand a watch and be responsible for the lives of your shipmates, to co-exist with different personalities in close quarters for many days, these experiences provide some really important life lessons,” said SSM President Alex Agnew. “Since 2015 our mission has been to provide access to the ocean to any high school student and we've taken nearly 500 kids to sea on overnight voyages. Now we see many of those students pursuing high-paying careers in the maritime trades.”

For more information about the EAGLE, the Maine Bicentennial or Sailing Ships Maine, visit: www.maine200.org, www.uscga.edu, and www.sailingshipsmaine.org

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