



Cape Liberty: From weary warehouse to snappy ship port in four months

In 1609, explorer Henry Hudson sailed past what would later become Bayonne, N.J. Now, thanks to the efforts of CH2M HILL Constructors, Inc., and the design team in West Palm Beach, Fla., new voyagers are making their way through the United States' newest cruise ship port.

Bayonne's new Cape Liberty Cruise Port, formerly an abandoned Army military ocean terminal, was transformed from utilitarian warehouse to classy cruise ship terminal in four short months.

This project is the firm's second "just-in-time" design-build conversion of a warehouse to a cruise ship terminal. The first was the seven-week transformation at the Port of Galveston in 2002.

Leveraging the experience from the Galveston project, the Bayonne team quickly took action.

"We immediately assembled a team of key people familiar with this fast-paced process. Working closely with the client, the team created cost-effective solutions for improving the old warehouse, an underutilized site and a wharf where cruise ships could dock safely," said Larry Hurley, director of CH2M HILL Constructors, Inc. — Transportation.

The notice to proceed was received in late December, and the project team mobilized the following week.

In mid-February, while design was nearing completion, the building was being gutted in preparation for remodeling. Once the dust settled, construction began in early March, and included removing all the existing utilities, refurbishing the interiors, pier and pile work (including new bollards and piles) and dredging.

The existing building, with its arched concrete shell

ceilings and exposed brick walls, provided an excellent backdrop for the new design enhancements. The design included a number of innovative elements that created an effective and enlivened experience for passengers and staff.

"Lively color selections, fabric-sail partitions, check-in counters shaped like ship hulls, duct coverings and other unusual materials all seek to organize movement through the terminal and heighten the sense of passage to the ship," said Drew Pedrick, a CH2M HILL senior architect. "Furniture from the Museum of Modern Art collection proved to be an affordable means of providing comfort and style for waiting passengers."

Located seven miles from New York City, the cruise terminal is an 80,000-square-foot facility composed of 40,000 square feet of passenger embarkation area, 35,000 square feet for

baggage screening and handling, and 5,000 square feet for port, customs and border protection personnel.

On May 7, the *Empress of the Seas* (formerly the *Nordic Empress*) arrived at Cape Liberty from drydock, carrying its crew and the contractors who had been working on refurbishing the ship. On May 9, the 2,020-passenger ship sailed out on the first revenue cruise from the new facility.

One week later, the new terminal welcomed Royal Caribbean's 3,114-passenger *Voyager of the Seas*—among the second-largest class of cruise ships in the world—as it made its New York metro debut.

Future plans for the area call for a vibrant mixed-use waterfront development with residential, light industrial and office space, film studios, a river-walk and extensive recreational and park areas.



The opening of the Cape Liberty Cruise Port marks the first time in 40 years that a cruise line has operated out of New Jersey.

