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Professional Porter Program Sails into Port Everglades in Time for Cruise Season

A new “SUNsational Service® ship” is sailing for Port Everglades as the South Florida cruiseport teams up with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, Southeast Florida Employers Port Association, cruise stevedoring companies at the Port and the International Longshoremen’s Association to launch a customized training course for baggage handlers.

Approximately 800 cruise ship baggage handlers from ILA Local #1526 will receive “SUNsational Service training for Professional Porters” over the next four weeks in preparation for the upcoming cruise season. The course teaches customer service excellence and is designed specifically for porters at Port Everglades.

“It is my sincere hope that through proper training of our members as well as the many casual workers that regularly assist us during our busy cruise season, we can attain the necessary service expertise to better serve our cruise customers as we continue striving to become the best cruise port in the world,” said Darryl “Mike D” Payne, ILA Local #1526 Vice President and Business Agent.



The two-hour training course incorporates scenarios specific to the everyday experiences that porters encounter as they assist cruise passengers at Port Everglades. For example, in one role-playing activity, a family travels 10 hours to Greater Fort Lauderdale and is overwhelmed by the security, traffic and check-in procedures. In this activity, the porters will describe “touch points” that could help make this family’s experience more enjoyable.

The Professional Porter Program is based on Broward County’s SUNsational Service® model, which was developed in 1999 by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau in partnership with Broward County Employee Development for local hospitality workers. Today, all Broward County employees are required to complete the SUNsational customer service course when they begin working for the County.

“Convention & Visitors Bureau President, Nicki Grossman, and Port Everglades Director, Phillip Allen, have been brainstorming about how to make every cruise guest’s stay more enjoyable so that they will come back for another cruise vacation and even stay a few days extra to enjoy our award-winning beaches and fine tourist attractions,” says Broward County Mayor Josephus Eggleton, Jr. “A warm smile and courteous attention goes a long way to make a guest feel welcome.”

Port Everglades is one of the world’s busiest cruise ports with 40 cruise ships from 15 cruise lines and more than 3 million passengers passing through the Port each year.

The Southeast Florida Employers Port Association and cruise stevedoring companies at the Port, including Eller & Co., Ceres Terminals and Hallmark Stevedoring, are sponsoring the training courses. The course is taught by the guest service training firm, Hospitality Excellence, Inc.

For more information on SUNsational Service training, please contact the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau at 954-767-2476.

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Photo Caption: Joe Williams receives his SUNsational Service pin for completion of the Professional Porter Training from Roberta Nedry, President of Hospitality Excellence, a guest service training firm hired to conduct this specialized program.

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