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FRS Acquires Clipper, Plans North American Expansion

FRS and Clipper to combine expertise to deliver new ferry services and open new hubs in Vancouver, Florida, and Cuba; company also plans to expand travel products

SEATTLE, Wash. – January 19, 2016 – Clipper and FRS today announce that FRS has acquired a majority interest in Clipper. FRS is a global ferry and shipping group, currently operating 60 vessels in 12 countries, and carrier of more than 7 million passengers and 1.9 million vehicles last year on national and international ferry lines. Clipper, operator of Clipper Vacations, is a recognized company in the Pacific Northwest and Western Canada, offering unique regional travel experiences, including high speed Victoria Clipper ferry services from Seattle to Victoria, and Seattle to San Juan Island. With the acquisition, Clipper will expand its Canadian service with a new hub in Vancouver connecting downtown Vancouver to downtown Victoria. With Clipper’s support, FRS will launch a new ferry service from Florida to Cuba, pending government guidance and approval.

“This is an exciting day for Clipper, as we are thrilled to join forces with another industry leader,” said Merideth Tall, founder, CEO and Chair of Clipper. “FRS is a company that shares our values and our vision for travel and tourism in North America, and has long-term experience in markets around the world. Combining with FRS will allow us to expand our travel products and services to provide many more options for our customers that will now include Vancouver and Cuba.”

Tall will continue in her role as CEO of Clipper, and will expand the Clipper team to support this growth. She will also retain minority ownership of the company. More details regarding the new hubs in Vancouver, Florida and Cuba will be revealed in the coming weeks and months ahead. Terms of the acquisition are not being disclosed.



“Clipper and its leadership team plan to leverage FRS’ long history of managing multi-country operation models as we launch our future growth plan. The expansion of operations to Vancouver and Cuba will further benefit both of our Canadian and American destination cities,” said Tall.

Both FRS and Clipper are family-owned businesses. FRS has 150 years of experience in the operation of various ferry types and has grown from a regional passenger ferry operator to an internationally active group. FRS operates ferry routes in Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East.

Clipper is a 30 year-old Seattle institution best known for owning and operating the Victoria Clipper ferries between Seattle, Victoria, BC and the San Juan Islands. The company is also well recognized for providing travel packages throughout Washington state, Vancouver Island, the San Juan Islands, Portland, the Canadian Rockies and more. The travel packages feature quintessential experiences in the region and offer a wide range of activities, including whale watching, zip lining, wine tasting excursions and train adventures.

“By acquiring Clipper, we are expanding our presence in the North American market, bringing with us our long history of operational acumen and connection to the European tourism market,” said Götz Becker, CEO of FRS. “Clipper has an impressive track record in the Pacific Northwest and Canada, and will now serve even more of the Canadian market with a new Vancouver service. With the support of Clipper, we are also thrilled to launch a new ferry service between Florida and Cuba.”

“When I went on a business trip with U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (Wash.) to Cuba in 2002, it opened my eyes to the possibilities of a tourism industry between our two countries,” said Tall. “Together with FRS, we will continue to build our role as a major presence in the tourism industry throughout North America.”

For more information about Clipper, visit www.clippervacations.com. For more information about FRS, visit www.frs.eu.

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About Clipper

Clipper, operator of Clipper Vacations, is well known as the travel experts for the Pacific Northwest and Western Canada. Since 1986, Clipper has provided transportation, tours and accommodation packages for over 8 million customers. Clipper offers opportunities to experience picturesque and popular destinations such as: cosmopolitan Seattle or Vancouver, quaint Victoria, the peaceful San Juan Islands, the hub of Portland, the beauty of the Canadian Rockies and Vancouver Island.

About FRS

FRS is a leader in the maritime transportation of people, vehicles and cargo on short distance routes. A global ferry and shipping group, FRS currently operates 60 vessels and carried over 7 million passengers and 1.9 million vehicles last year on national and international ferry lines. Based in Northern Germany, FRS includes 24 operating subsidiaries across Europe, North America, North Africa and the Middle East, with more than 1,500 employees. FRS' fleet includes RoPax ferries, passenger ferries, high speed catamarans for vehicles and passengers, crew transfer vessels for the wind offshore industry, hovercrafts, water taxis, and electric-powered solar ferries. FRS is committed to developing ecofriendly solutions for public transportation. FRS also provides port management and operation services worldwide.