



# NEWS

**Contact:** Shirley Roberts  
Event Coordinator

**Phone:** 989.893.1222

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**E-Mail:** shirley@chartermi.net

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### “Mission and Impact” Garner Support for Tall Ship Celebration

[*Bay City, MI*] Despite lingering concerns about the State’s economy, Tri-County businesses have proven once again that they’re willing to invest in projects that have all the right stuff. Missions grounded in youth, the environment and preserving history, coupled with the regional impact of Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City, have generated more than \$150,000 for the popular maritime festival.

“Companies invest between \$12,500 and \$50,000 to become Major Sponsors of Tall Ship Celebration,” explained Event Coordinator Shirley Roberts of the Bay City Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Their investment is used to pay appearance fees to visiting vessels, the largest expense of the event.” 2006 appearance fees are expected to total almost \$200,000. Most visiting Tall Ships are owned and operated by independent non-profit organizations with missions related to environmental education and protection and personal development opportunities for youth. Their operations are supported in large part by the fees charged to ports.

Two Tri-County companies join Port Sponsor The Bay City Times and returning sponsors The Dow Chemical Company, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, S.C. Johnson and Independent Bank to become Major Sponsors of Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City in 2006.

The **Dow Corning Corporation** found common ground with the mission and impact of Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City. “Dow Corning has a strong commitment to youth, particularly in increasing access to science, math and technology,” said Mary Lou Benecke, Corporate Media Relations Manager. “We are equally committed to improving the quality of life for our employees and the communities where they work and live. Tall Ship Celebration marries these interests particularly well because of the youth-oriented programs aboard the Tall Ships and the regional impact of the event.” Dow Corning employs more than 2,000 people at its global headquarters in Bay County and at plants in Saginaw County and Midland.

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The statewide prominence of Tall Ship Celebration in 2006 was appealing to **St. Mary's of Michigan**, according to Rick Ohle, Vice President of Strategic Planning, New Business Development and Marketing. "As a regional healthcare leader, St. Mary's of Michigan has a long history of supporting and getting involved in the many communities where we have a presence. We look forward to sharing this special celebration with our 2200 associates as well as our medical staff and volunteers." St. Mary's of Michigan operates 22 specialty centers throughout the region, including Bay City, Saginaw, Bad Axe, Birch Run, Chesaning, Frankenmuth, Marlette, St. Charles, Standish, Tawas, Vassar, and West Branch. St. Mary's of Michigan is a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest nonprofit health system with hospitals in 20 different states and the District of Columbia.

### **The Event**

Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City is a family-oriented maritime history festival that has hosted the American Sail Training Association Tall Ship fleet each time it has toured the Great Lakes in 2001 and 2003. In 2006, Tall Ships dock in Downtown Bay City from Thursday, July 20 to Sunday, July 23. A non-profit organization, Tall Ship Celebration was created to promote local maritime history and the continuous improvement of the community's waterfront resources.

Bay City is the only Michigan community to host the ASTA Tall Ship fleet in 2006. With the largest gathering of Tall Ships in the State this year, the event will generate a great deal of attention for Bay City and the Tri-County region. As many as 50,000 guests are expected to fill area hotels, restaurants and shops and generate more than \$5 million of economic impact throughout Bay City, Midland, Saginaw and surrounding communities.

Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City is presented by The Bay City Times and sponsored by Dow Corning Corporation and St. Mary's of Michigan with additional support from The Dow Chemical Company, S.C. Johnson, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan and Independent Bank. The event is made possible by the support of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tickets are affordably priced at \$6.00 a day. Souvenir Passports provide admission for all three and a half days of the festival and allow guests to board and tour visiting ships. Passports will be available after May 1<sup>st</sup> and are \$12.00 before June 30 and \$15.00 after July 1. Almost all of the festival's activities, including a number of children's crafts, are offered at no additional cost to ticket holders.

The American Sail Training Association's Tall Ships Challenge is a series of races and rallies that occur annually, rotating among the east, west and Great Lakes coasts. Other ports to host the Tall Ships Challenge fleet in 2006 include Cleveland, Ohio; Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Chicago, Illinois. The Challenge is not expected to return to the Great Lakes until 2010.

For more information about Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City, visit [www.tallshipcelebration.com](http://www.tallshipcelebration.com) or contact Shirley Roberts, Event Coordinator, at the Bay City Convention & Visitors Bureau at 888.229.8696.

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