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UPGRADED QUEEN OF OAK BAY RETURNS TO SERVICE \$35 Million Upgrade

VICTORIA – The refurbished *Queen of Oak Bay* is now back in full service on the Horseshoe Bay – Departure Bay route, following an extensive mid-life upgrade at Vancouver Drydock Company in North Vancouver. BC Ferries spent over \$35 million on the vessel’s mid-life upgrade.

The *Queen of Oak Bay* project prepares the vessel for another 20 years of service with upgrades to engineering components, lifesaving equipment and improvements to onboard services.

The mid-life upgrade to the *Queen of Oak Bay* includes major maintenance work such as steel replacement, piping and cable renewal, hull sandblasting and extensive painting. The vessel has been outfitted with four state-of-the art marine evacuation systems, supplemented by two rescue boats and eight life rafts.

Similar to work completed on the *Queen of Coquitlam* and the *Queen of Cowichan*, passenger improvements include an expanded Passages gift shop, new food service facilities, redesigned passenger lounges, improved children’s play area and study carrels, a new enclosed video arcade, and updated washrooms.

BC Ferries’ food service partners will be featured in the expanded Coastal Cafe along with new healthy choice menu items such as fresh salads and sandwich wraps. The food service area is designed to improve customer choice and speed of service.

The *Queen of Oak Bay* is the third of five C-class vessels to undergo a comprehensive upgrade. The remaining vessels will be completed over the next two years as part of a major program to renew BC Ferries’ fleet and terminals. The next vessel scheduled for a major mid-life upgrade is the *Queen of Surrey*. It is expected to go for its mid-life upgrade in November 2005.

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