



For Immediate Release

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Elizabeth City, N.C. is 17th “Coast Guard City”

(Elizabeth City, NC, June 1, 2015) – Since the U.S. Coast Guard made Elizabeth City an aviation base in 1940, residents have welcomed, supported and championed their beloved “Guardians of the Coast” and the important work they do to keep America’s shorelines safe. On May 29, 2015, the special relationship between [Base Elizabeth City](#) and the community became official when U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft designated Elizabeth City a “Coast Guard City.”

Under blue skies, on the grounds of the Museum of the Albemarle, approximately 500 people attended the designation ceremony, which featured speeches by U.S. Coast Guard leaders and elected state and local officials, a presentation of colors by the Coast Guard Ceremonial Color Guard, a performance by the Coast Guard Drill Team and a flyover by two Coast Guard helicopters and a C-130 airplane. Within view of the ceremony, the *USS Shearwater*, a Portsmouth-based Coast Guard cutter, was docked on the Pasquotank River and open for tours.

“The Coast Guard and Elizabeth City should be one and the same. It always has been,” said Zukunft, noting the Coast Guard’s 75-year presence in Elizabeth City. “I could not be more proud to see the city be designated a ‘Coast Guard City’ indeed.”

Elizabeth City is only the 17th city so recognized, having earned the acclaimed distinction by making special efforts to acknowledge the professional work of the Coast Guard men and women assigned to the area. Throughout the years, Elizabeth City residents have supported the Coast Guard’s presence through such initiatives as the “adopt a sailor” program in which residents invite single Guardsman into area homes for holiday meals. The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce coordinates the city’s annual Coast Guard Week celebration, support of the USO and other free Coast Guard concerts and the offering of special discounts to U.S. Coast guard personnel in local shops and businesses.

“It’s hard to imagine what life would be like in Elizabeth City without the Coast Guard presence,” said Wayne Harris, director of the Elizabeth City | Pasquotank County Economic Development Commission. “Honestly, I wouldn’t want to try.”

One of the U.S. Coast Guard’s busiest bases, and its largest aviation facility, Base Elizabeth City is home to five commands: Air Station Elizabeth City; the Aviation Logistics Center, where the Coast Guard’s entire fleet of 200 aircraft is overhauled; the Aviation Technical Training Center; a small-boat station; and the National Strike Force Coordination Center, which serves as command central of the nation’s elite anti-pollution response teams.

According to Harris, Base Elizabeth City is the largest employer in northeastern North Carolina, with a combined total of approximately 2,120 military personnel, civilian employees and contract workers, and it boosts Elizabeth City’s business profile with an economic impact of \$117 million in payroll, contracts and local utilities and construction.

The origins of the U.S. Coast Guard date to Aug. 4, 1790, when Congress authorized the construction of 10 sea-going vessels to enforce tariff and trade laws and to prevent smuggling. Soon after, the service became known as the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service. The U.S. Coast Guard received its present name in 1915, when the Revenue Cutter Service merged with the U.S. Life Saving Service, making a single maritime service dedicated to saving life at sea and enforcing the nation’s maritime laws. Over the years, the Coast Guard has taken on additional responsibilities, including oversight of the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1939 and authority over merchant marine licensing and merchant vessel safety authority in 1946.

Today, the U.S. Coast Guard operates in times of peace as part of the Department of Homeland Security, serving as the nation's front-line agency for enforcing the nation's laws at sea, protecting the marine environment and the nation's coastline and ports and saving lives. In times of war, or at the direction of the President, the Coast Guard serves as part of the Navy Department.

Elizabeth City is centrally located on the East Coast, halfway between Virginia Beach and North Carolina’s Outer Banks. Known as the “Harbor of Opportunity,” the city boasts a business-friendly environment, first-class education and training opportunities and a coastal lifestyle ideally suited for families and employees. For information, visit www.harborofopportunity.com.

The Elizabeth City | Pasquotank County Economic Development Commission

The Elizabeth City | Pasquotank County EDC markets business opportunities in the City of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County to prospective employers throughout the United States. It’s location in the center

of northeastern North Carolina makes the area ideally suited for business development, expansion and relocation. For information go to www.elizabethcitypasquotankEDC.com or call 1-888-338-1678 or (252) 338-0169.