

Arrangements for opening of Hong Kong Disneyland and Penny's Bay

The Commissioner for Tourism, Ms Eva Cheng, held a joint press conference today (June 22) to announce the phased opening of Hong Kong Disneyland and Penny's Bay starting from early August 2005.

Also attending the press conference were the District Commander of the Lantau Island, Hong Kong Police Force, Mr Keith Chau; Principal Transport Officer (Special Duties) (NT Region) of the Transport Department, Mr YC Lo; Assistant Director (Control) of Immigration Department, Mr Simon Peh; Director of Park Operations & Industrial Engineering of the Hongkong International Theme Parks Ltd (HKITP), Mr Andrew Bolstein; and Head of Operations of Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC), Mr Wilfred Lau.

"Hong Kong Disneyland is a key milestone in our tourism development. The arrangements for the phased opening of Hong Kong Disneyland and associated facilities at Penny's Bay aim to ensure a smooth and well-coordinated opening," Ms Cheng said.

"The idea of a phased opening is to give the theme park, public transport operators and relevant departments a familiarisation period to adjust their operation and services," she added.

The three phases are:

Phase 1

From early August 2005 – Disneyland Resort Line (DRL) is scheduled to run between Sunny Bay Station and Disneyland Resort Station (DRS). A section of the Park Promenade, linked to the DRS will be open to public.

Phase 2

From August 16, 2005 – All public facilities at Penny's Bay, including public roads, the Park Promenade, the Inspiration Lake Recreation Centre, the Disneyland Resort Public Transport Interchange, Hong Kong Disneyland car and coach parks and the Disneyland Resort Pier will begin operation. Franchised bus and taxi services will

commence. This period covers the Rehearsal Days of the theme park and hotels, which will be open to invited guests only.

Phase 3

From September 12, 2005 – Opening of the theme park and hotels to the public.

To prepare for a smooth and orderly opening of Hong Kong Disneyland on September 12, 2005, the Government set up the Disneyland Readiness Committee in May 2004 to monitor the progress and facilitate interfaces of the work of all relevant Government bureaus and departments, Hongkong International Theme Parks Ltd and MTRCL in specific areas including transport, permits and licenses, public relations and promotion, site security and emergency response and opening events and arrangements. The phased opening arrangements represent the joint efforts of all parties concerned in the past 13 months.

"The Government needs to devise a communication strategy and contingency plan to ensure that both the general public in Hong Kong and our visitors are well informed of the operation sequence and the facilities and services opened and provided in each phase. Apart from providing general information, the strategy also enables the HKITP, Government authorities and public transport operators to make a coordinated response to any transport and crowd management contingency situation," Ms Cheng explained.

The strategy comprises three key components: Communication Systems to ensure effective communication and swift response, in particular, a Joint Command Centre for the opening of Hong Kong Disneyland (JCCO HKD) and channels for dissemination of information to the public during normal operation and emergency; a Communication Plan with key messages during the pre- and post-Grand Opening stages to enable the public to plan their trips in an orderly way; and a Transport and Crowd Control plan for each of the three phases. (Please refer to the Annex for details.)

The main communication channels to be set up by relevant departments and operators for the public and our visitors to obtain essential information for planning their trips to the theme park include:

* a designated website of the Tourism Commission (www.hkdisneyland.gov.hk);

* website of the Transport Department (www.info.gov.hk/td/);

* website of Hong Kong Disneyland (www.hongkongdisneyland.com);

* enquiry telephone lines provided by the Transport Department and the Hong Kong Disneyland (to be announced); and

* information booklet, and TV & radio announcements in public interest (to be launched in August).

Ms Cheng said, "The familiarisation period will last for more than one month. We strongly encourage members of the public to take time to plan their visit, and make good use of the communication channels to gather important information such as the new transport services and opening hours.

"Visitors from outside Hong Kong are encouraged to stay at least a day before and after visiting the theme park. This will ensure that they have an enjoyable journey to Hong Kong Disneyland and the facilities in the vicinity as well as Hong Kong's many attractions and activities," she added.

Mr YC Lo of the Transport Department explained that a newly built Penny's Bay Highway would connect to the existing North Lantau Highway. As regards public transport services, the DRL, franchised buses, taxis (urban, NT and Lantau), non-franchised buses and cross-boundary coach services would commence operation to tie in with the opening of Hong Kong Disneyland. Mr Lo said, "The Guangdong and Hong Kong governments have also agreed to issue 60 quotas for cross-boundary coaches operating directly between the Mainland and Hong Kong Disneyland via Lok Ma Chau."

The District Commander, Lantau, Mr Keith Chau said, "A joint command centre will be set up at Penny's Bay Police Post with representatives from the Police, Tourism Commission, Transport Department, MTRC and Hong Kong Disneyland to monitor activities in Penny's Bay and coordinate contingency measures when necessary. The Police will be the co-ordinator of the joint command centre." He added that to cope with the anticipated workload, nine Police Constable posts have been created. They will be responsible for manning the police post and performing mobile patrol in the area.

Mr Peh of Immigration Department advised that if possible, Mainland visitors should

use the Lo Wu control point instead of the Lok Ma Chau control point to enter or leave Hong Kong to avoid a long waiting time. "Visitors should avoid entering Hong Kong through Lo Wu Control Point during the busy morning peak hours of 8-10am," he said. He stressed that the Immigration Department would deploy the necessary resources to cope with the increase in traffic through the border crossings.

"We believe the arrangements will achieve the objectives of a smooth and orderly opening of Hong Kong Disneyland and the Penny's Bay area, allow sufficient time for operators to adjust their services during the three phases and most importantly for local and incoming visitors to plan for an enjoyable journey," Ms Cheng concluded.

Tourism Commission

Economic Development and Labour Bureau

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