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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SS United States Set to Depart Philadelphia to Begin Journey to Become the World's Largest Artificial Reef

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Okaloosa County's Tourist Development Department, [Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida](#), has completed the necessary safety requirements by local, state and federal agencies to move the SS *United States* (SSUS) from her current docking area in south Philadelphia to a docking area in Mobile, Alabama where preparations to ready the ship to become the World's Largest Artificial Reef will continue.

Operations to move America's Flagship will begin with a lateral move from Pier 82 to Pier 80 on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025 at 6 a.m. The SSUS will depart Philadelphia on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025 at 4 a.m. If visibility is an issue that morning, the move down river will take place at the next low tide. She will be chaperoned by multiple tug boats as she makes her way down the Delaware River and into the Atlantic Ocean.

- To follow her journey via GPS tracking, visit www.destinfwb.com/explore/eco-tourism/ssus. Tracking will begin when the vessel begins moving operations.

*****This is a tentative schedule. Dates, times and other logistics are subject to change.*****

The SSUS' journey to Mobile, Alabama, is expected to take about two weeks. Upon arrival, the vessel will continue its rebirth into an artificial reef as contractors remove hazardous material, including non-metal parts and fuel to ensure this deployment is clean and not harmful to the environment it aims to benefit. Modifications will also be made to ensure that when the vessel is deployed, it will land upright underwater. The preparation process will take about 12 months.

The exact location along the Gulf Coast for the vessel's deployment has not been set but it is expected to be about 20 nautical miles south of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach area.

As the World's Largest Artificial Reef, the story of the SSUS will be told to thousands of divers from around the world as they explore her unique design and features. She will also benefit her surrounding ecosystem and become home to countless marine species that will thrive from the presence of her structure. Due to the size and the depth, she will be home to a wide variety of marine life from iconic reef fish such as red snapper to pelagic species of fish like wahoo. This new artificial reef will provide bountiful fishing and diving opportunities for the local, visiting and charter industries.

Okaloosa County will continue to partner with the SS United States Conservancy as it pivots to develop a land-based museum in Destin-Fort Walton Beach that will celebrate and commemorate the nation's

flagship. The County will provide the Conservancy with regular project updates and will support the museum planning process which will incorporate iconic features from the ship, including the funnels, radar mast, and other signature components, as well as the Conservancy's extensive curatorial and archival collection. This will preserve the ship's storied history and the memories that she has created for so many people over the years.

Information about the history of the *SS United States* can be found on the Conservancy's website at <https://www.ssusc.org/>

Learn more about Okaloosa County's artificial reef program at <https://www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/artificial-reefs/>.

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