

## **Aquila Tours unveils international training and certification program.**

**June. 9, 2010**

Singling out tour guides as the single most important factor in cruise passengers' experience of a destination, Aquila Tours unveiled an international training and certification program.

The Tour Guide Excellence program was announced today in conjunction with the shore excursions session at the Canada/New England Cruise Symposium in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Apart from Aquila's own 50-member team, the first tour operator to internationally certify its people will be Istanbul-based Tura Turizm, with more than 200 guides.

As the cruise industry grows, training guides becomes more critical. Destinations and tour operators are struggling to provide training,' said Beth Kelly Hatt, president of Saint John-based Aquila Tours.

The online, interactive six-part course, starting in September, will cover all aspects of being a tour guide. Participants who successfully complete the program, verified by testing, will receive International Certification in Tour Guide Excellence.

We are very excited about this program and its potential to ensure that every interaction a guide has with a tour guest is nothing short of excellent,' Kelly Hatt told Canada/New England Cruise Symposium delegates.

The announcement followed a shore excursions panel in which cruise executives called guides extremely important.

The guide makes or breaks the tour. Guides are 100% key to any tour,' said Lisa Jensen, manager of Caribbean and Atlantic shore operations for Princess Cruises.

The new certification program is part of Aquila's Center for Cruise Excellence, established in 2007 to help tour operators achieve high standards and directed by Aquila partner Melanie Colpitts.