After navigating a sea of red tape, the Nanaimo Port Authority was pleased to see the long-awaited cruise ship and passenger terminal open with the arrival of the Norwegian Pearl, a 2,394-passenger ship in early May.

"The Port has been receiving cruise vessels in Nanaimo’s Inner Harbour since 2002 and we have had as many as 15 in one season," says Bernie Dumas, president & CEO, Nanaimo Port Authority (NPA). "In 2005, the board of directors and the management of the Nanaimo Port Authority began to look at a better option to discharge passengers from the ships on a permanent dock, rather than shuttle them ashore by boat." In 2006, the NPA engaged CH2M HILL Canada Limited, a Vancouver engineering firm that specializes in cruise ship terminals, and a number of options were considered.

"The current 35-acre assembly wharf had been used for decades by the forestry industry," says Dumas. "The initial concept by CH2M HILL Canada Limited was to use the original berths, but environmental and geotechnical analyses revealed the need for almost 100,000 cubic metres of dredging. The environmental impact would be severe, so alternative arrangements were pursued.

Interest in creating a workable solution remained strong, and things changed when funding began to come through. "In 2008, the Port Authority received $5 million from the Province of B.C., and the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) provided an addition of $3.5 million," says Dumas. "The Federal Government contributed $8.5 million through the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund and the NPA added $5 million from its reserves for a budget of $22 million."

Construction began in August 2010 on a floating dock designed by North Vancouver’s Worley Parsons, based on specifications by PND Engineers, a Seattle-based company with experience in building Alaskan cruise ship docks. Built in North Vancouver, the main component of the floating dock is a pontoon that is 350 feet long, 50 feet wide and 20 feet deep. "The pontoon is moored to a number of pilings, and is where the passengers will embark and disembark," says Thomas Hoffschild, project manager with CH2M HILL Canada Limited. "The dock consists of 320 metric tons of rebar and has the equivalent of 130 large truckloads of concrete. It was built in North Vancouver by Vancouver Pile Driving Ltd., a contractor for the marine works side."

Construction of the terminal building was finished in record time – from May 2010 to May 2011. Several unique building procedures were implemented in the land works side where the Welcome Centre and second-floor administration offices of the Nanaimo Port Authority are located.

The facility has the latest technology and construction to meet future needs of the industry. "We are expecting to handle all the ships on the Alaska run, most of which would originate in Seattle," says Dumas. "The terminal is designed to accommodate larger vessels in the future, with some additional dredging. We are very proud of the project and the fast turnaround. It will change the waterfront in Nanaimo with a style that we can incorporate into other buildings on the assembly wharf."

LOCATION
100 Port Drive
Nanaimo, B.C.

OWNERS/DEVELOPERS
Nanaimo Port Authority

PROJECT MANAGER/STRUCTURAL & CIVIL CONSULTANT
Nanaimo Port Authority

PROJECT MANAGER/PRIME MARINE WORKS CONSULTANT
EBA Engineering

ARCHITECTS IN JOINT VENTURE
Ben Checkwitch Design

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Heatherbrae Builders Co.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR (MARINE WORKS)
Vancouver Pile Driving Ltd.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT
Walters Chambers & Associates Ltd.

MECHANICAL CONSULTANT
Rocky Point Engineering Ltd.

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT
R&B Engineering Ltd.

GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANT
Lewkowich Engineering Associates

FIRE PROTECTION CONSULTANT
Des Design Ltd.

ENVIROMENTAL/GEOTECHNICAL SUB CONSULTANT (MARINE WORKS)
CH2M HILL Canada Limited

MARINE WORKS SUB CONSULTANT
PND Engineers Inc.

CIVIL CONTRACTOR (LAND WORKS)
Minden Contracting Ltd.

TOTAL AREA
10,000 square feet – Welcome Centre

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST
$24 million

Nanaimo Cruise Ship Facility