



OCEAN ♦ DRILLING ♦ PROGRAM

# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Exploring Earth's Deepest Secrets Scientists converge in Miami to board scientific drill ship

**Miami, December 1** - Scientists from around the world are preparing to sail on Christmas eve from Miami on a two-month adventure in the Caribbean sea. Research crew members participating in the Ocean Drilling Program's latest expedition will board the *JOIDES Resolution*, which extends longer than a football field and is the world's largest scientific drill ship. Outfitted with 12 laboratories and 100 computers, the ship has the most advanced equipment enabling scientists to conduct research while at sea.

"It's been more than three years since the *JOIDES Resolution* has docked in the U.S. and we're thrilled to be back home," says Dr. Jeff Fox, director of science operations for the Ocean Drilling Program. "Miami is the hub of some of the world's most prestigious scientific marine institutions and we hope our visit will contribute to the synergy generated for geoscience research."

Port call activities begin Dec. 20 when scientists and government officials convene for lunch aboard the ship, then take guided tours. The Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmosphere Science (RSMAS) is hosting an evening reception and science lecture at their auditorium.

Officials with the National Science Foundation and RSMAS will be participating in events during the port call. Also attending will be Admiral James Watkins, former U.S. Secretary of Energy and current president of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions, Inc. based in Washington D.C.

"This cruise is an exercise in diplomacy. Not only does this program provide important scientific opportunities, but it allows a large group of international scientists to work together toward common goals," says Peter Swart, professor of marine geology and geophysics at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. Swart will be a co-chief scientist on leg 166 following the cruise in the Caribbean. He will be leading a research team drilling cores from the Great Bahamas Bank to learn more about the geological process of sediment cementing and the slow drift of the Great Bahamas Bank toward the Florida coast.

One of the key events in Earth's geological history is when a meteor hit the Yucatan Peninsula near Mexico about 65 million years ago. Geologists suspect that the fundamental climate change associated with the impact contributed to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

The *JOIDES Resolution* is taking researchers to the Caribbean sea to investigate the consequences of the impact. The scientific results from this expedition will help build a better picture of the distribution and dispersal pattern of ejected material, and provide additional information regarding the nature and significance of any resulting climate change.

The Ocean Drilling Program is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, Canada, Australia, the European Science Foundation Consortium, Germany, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom to investigate such topics as earth's history and evolution, climate change and formation of the ocean crust.

Joint Oceanographic Institutions for Deep Earth Sampling (JOIDES), an international group of scientists, provides scientific planning and program advice. Joint Oceanographic Institutions, Inc., a nonprofit consortium of 10 major U.S. oceanographic institutions, manages the program.

Texas A&M University, science operator, operates and staffs the drill ship that retrieves core samples from strategic sites in the world's oceans. Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University is responsible for downhole logging.

Note: U.S. members of JOIDES are: University of California at San Diego, Columbia University; University of Hawaii, University of Miami; Oregon State University; University of Rhode Island, Texas A&M University, University of Texas at Austin; University of Washington, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The European Science Foundation Consortium consists of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Greece, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

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\*\* For the television media, video footage is available in beta sp and beta formats showing life at sea with scientists and crew members working aboard the *JOIDES Resolution*.