

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

October 26, 2026



**Okaloosa County Scheduled to Deploy the SS United States as an Artificial Reef
on Nov. 12 with a Sendoff Ceremony on Nov. 11**

Okaloosa County, Florida – Okaloosa County will deploy the 990-foot SS *United States* ocean liner as the World's Largest Artificial Reef on Thursday, November 12, 2026 (weather permitting) in the Gulf about 22 nautical miles southwest of Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

This historic vessel maintains the record for the fastest ocean liner, set in 1952, and will continue its record-setting tradition as the World's Largest Artificial Reef, where it will become a home for numerous species of marine life, provide a premier diving destination, and contribute to the local and regional fishery.

"This will be a historic day for Destin-Fort Walton Beach and for a ship with such a historic story," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Trey Goodwin. "Her story will continue to be told by thousands of people who visit her in tandem with the SS United States Conservancy's land-based museum."

The vessel will be towed from her Mobile, Alabama location to the deployment site days in advance. Deployment operations are scheduled to begin at the deployment site on November 12 at 10 a.m.

Ceremony the day before the deployment – Nov. 11

Okaloosa County will be hosting a public event celebrating the ship's history during a sendoff ceremony on Wednesday, November 11, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. . Light refreshments will be provided.

Virtual Event on Deployment Day – Nov. 12

A live viewing party will be held at AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar in Destin beginning at 9 a.m. where a live feed from the deployment site will be viewable on the large outdoor screen. The live viewing link will be shared on thessus.com pre-deployment.

In-person Viewing

The deployment of the SS *United States* will potentially draw hundreds of vessels. Okaloosa County is working with our safety and security partners for a safe and efficient deployment and bystanders are expected to follow the guidance from the safety boats present at the deployment site. Proposed deployment location: 30° 07.148' N, 86° 46.755' W

More information

- For a comprehensive look into the ship's history, go to: <https://www.ssusc.org/>
- A 3D model of the ship is available at: <https://www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/artificial-reefs/3d-models/>
- Read a summary about the completed remediation of the ship at <https://www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/ssus/ssus-remediation-updates/>

The SS *United States* artificial reef project was fully funded by tourism revenue and multiple partner contributions.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER NICK TOMECEK AT 850.651.7321

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