



August 27, 2008

**RIPKEN BASEBALL AND TAMPA BAY RAYS
FORM JOINT VENTURE TO RETURN
MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TO CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

Charlotte County Team to Serve as Rays Affiliate

Port Charlotte, FL – The Tampa Bay Rays and Ripken Baseball today announced that together they have purchased the team that plays in Vero Beach, FL. The team will be moved to Charlotte County and will play in Port Charlotte, FL starting in 2009.

The team, yet to be named, will serve as the Class A affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays in the Florida State League.

Matt Silverman, President of the Rays, said, “We are thrilled to be partnering with Cal Ripken and Ripken Baseball on this unique venture. Ripken Baseball is an established and proven minor league operator and the Ripken name is synonymous with success.”

Ripken Baseball has hired Joe Hart to serve as the team’s General Manager. Hart was formerly the GM at the Nashville Sounds, the AAA affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers in the Pacific Coast League.

Cal Ripken, President and CEO of Ripken Baseball added, “Florida is a baseball hotbed and we have been anxious to have a base of operations here for some time. When the opportunity to partner with the Rays presented itself we jumped at it.”

Full season seat (70 games) packages start at \$285 and the team is taking deposits for seating now. Those interested should call (866) 272-9789. Single game pricing as well as smaller ticket plans will be announced at a later time.

The proposed relocation of the team to Charlotte County is subject to the approval of the Florida State League, the President of Minor League Baseball and the review of the Baseball Office of the Commissioner (MLB).

This is the third minor league team owned by Ripken Baseball. The others are the Class A Aberdeen IronBirds (Orioles) in Ripken's hometown of Aberdeen, MD and the Class A Augusta GreenJackets (Giants) in Augusta, GA. Aberdeen has enjoyed sold out games in every game since its inception in 2002. Augusta was purchased by Ripken Baseball in October of 2005 and attendance has grown nearly 60% since the purchase, among the highest increases in minor league baseball.

The Tampa Bay Rays have proudly represented Major League Baseball in the Tampa Bay region since 1998. The organization and its foundation are committed to building a strong community bond through meaningful interaction and charitable contributions.

--- www.CharlotteCountyBaseball.com ---