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CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PORT OF CASCADE LOCKS AND PORTLAND SPIRIT RUNS A GROUND

Final Sternwheeler Cruise Scheduled for October 30th in the Gorge and December 31st in Portland

October 3, 2022 (Portland, OR) — [Portland Spirit Cruises & Events](#), Oregon's leading river cruise operator, has ended contract negotiations with the Port of Cascade Locks to operate the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler after the deadline was not met for an agreement on a long-term contract that included a repower of the vessel by 2024.

The current agreement, set to end on December 31, 2022, states that Portland Spirit will pay the Port of Cascade Locks a monthly concession fee (regardless of gains or losses in revenue), provide a commission on sales when revenue exceeds a certain amount, and make cash contributions to the Cascade Locks Historical Museum and the Port of Cascade Locks' annual fireworks show. In addition, Portland Spirit is responsible for paying for all the operational, labor and marketing expenses required to operate the Sternwheeler, Locks Waterfront Grill and the Cascade Locks Visitor Center in Marine Park.

In 2018, the Portland Spirit sent the Port of Cascade Locks a 15-year proposal to renew operations and cover the cost of a repower and interior remodel of the vessel, estimated at 3 million dollars. The Port of Cascade Locks offered Portland Spirit a 5-year agreement and removed the exclusive use of the dock for the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler, among other concessions. Portland Spirit accepted some concessions, but countered with a 15 year agreement and a 5-year extension so the cost of a repower and interior remodel of the vessel could be amortized over time.

The Port of Cascade Locks indicated a desire to work with American Cruise Lines, a national cruise ship company based in Guilford, Connecticut, and move the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler to a new location. An agreement on who would pay for the construction of the new dock and its location was not reached.

Leading the negotiations were Olga Kaganova, Port General Manager, and Dennis Corwin, Portland Spirit General Manager. "We loved operating the Port's historic vessel for the past 16 years," Corwin said. "We don't know when the Sternwheeler will operate again in the future," Corwin continued, "but all our wonderful employees in Cascade Locks will be offered employment in Portland."

The Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler was built in Hood River by Nichols Boat Works who used historic specifications to craft an authentic triple-deck paddle wheeler replica. It began operations in 1983 and over time has become a major tourist destination in the Columbia River Gorge with an estimated 55,000 passengers annually. In 2006, American Waterways, Inc. (doing business as Portland Spirit)

entered into a long term contract to operate the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler from Cascade Locks. Since then, Portland Spirit has invested more than 1.5 million dollars into the operation.

About Portland Spirit Cruises & Events

Portland Spirit operates a fleet of five boats, including the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler, and offers a variety of cruises year-round including Champagne brunch, lunch, dinner, sightseeing and holiday cruises for public and private events. The vessels have been equipped with an onboard galley to offer freshly prepared Northwest cuisine on cruises in addition to exceptional service and ever changing views. The company has been locally family and employee owned and operated since 1994. For more information, visit portlandspirit.com.

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