



Rivers of Steel Announces the Acquisition of RiverQuest

Homestead, PA, August 31, 2016— Rivers of Steel Heritage Corporation, managers of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, announced today it has completed the acquisition of RiverQuest, the floating environmental education vessel and program, and its ship, Explorer. The union comes more than two years after the organizations formally announced they were exploring a merger, leading to a series of negotiations and studies between the non-profit groups.

In making the announcement, August R. Carlino, President and Chief Executive Officer of Rivers of Steel expressed elation that the RiverQuest program will continue under Rivers of Steel, and thanked the board of directors of both organizations for their leadership and determination to make the acquisition a reality. “The end result is the preservation of a world-class environmental science, technology, engineering and mathematics program on what many consider one of the most advanced green energy boats in the nation. We plan to build on the STEM education program by adding in an “H” for history and make the H-STEM program one of the best in the nation for teaching children. We will be actively marketing RiverQuest to schools across southwestern Pennsylvania, and at all levels of learning, from elementary, middle- and high-school, to colleges and universities.”

Rivers of Steel will integrate the RiverQuest program into their ongoing programs making the learning experience seamless and interconnected. Plans call for a RiverQuest experience to include history, heritage, and arts and also site visits to the Carrie Furnaces National Historic Landmark and other partner sites. The explorer will remain docked on the North Shore in front of the Carnegie Science Center.

Carlino also expressed thanks to the Pittsburgh-area foundations for their support of the acquisition. “We are very fortunate to have a foundation community that worked with us to make this a reality. Their generous philanthropy and counsel were instrumental in our work to finalize the acquisition.” He also thanked the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for approving the transfer of the boat and the docking system, paid for, in part, by grants from the Commonwealth.

Rivers of Steel is a non-profit that manages the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, one of 49 National Heritage Areas in the United States designated by Congress. Its mission, in partnership with the National Park Service, is to conserve the industrial, cultural, natural, and recreational resources of southwestern Pennsylvania. Rivers of Steel also manages a similar state heritage area program in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Among the many programs and projects it maintains are the Carrie Furnaces in Swissvale and Rankin, PA, The Bost Building in Homestead, both National Historic Landmarks, along with the Battle of Homestead Site in The Waterfront. These have become popular destinations for visitors and tourist over the last few years. Rivers of Steel also operates a successful receptive services tour business that packages and sells Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania destinations, sites and activities to out-of-town motor coach operators.

The acquisition enables Rivers of Steel to meld RiverQuest into its other programs. RiverQuest's mission is to engage students and citizens in river-based environmental science experiences promoting critical thinking and fostering stewardship of the rivers as a significant and vital natural resource. Since 1995, RiverQuest has provided hands-on STEM education programs to more than 100,000 school students, and another 100,000 members of the general public.

In addition to educational programs with schools, Rivers of Steel plans to make Explorer available to the general public for private charters, corporate events, weddings and other gatherings. "The boat is available to rent for tours, parties and other activities," Carlino said. "We believe one of the best ways to show the beauty of Pittsburgh is by being on the rivers. We hope this boat will be used by both schools and others as we showcase Pittsburgh."

For information about RiverQuest, please call 412-464-4020.