



Port of Kennewick



BLACK HERON SPIRITS
Distillery and Port Works

Tuesday, August 25, 2009

For immediate release

Black Heron Spirits Distillery and Port Works to be Located at West Richland Wine Estates Park

New Distillery is first in southeast Washington State

Kennewick, WA-- Port of Kennewick Commissioners and staff announced an agreement which will launch the first distillery in Southeastern Washington – joining only a handful of craft distilleries in the entire state of Washington. This latest announcement is the most recent example of the Port's commitment to quality development and quality of life within its service district.

“Distilling is Washington’s newest passion, just as wineries and breweries were a decade ago,” said Tim Arntzen, Executive Director. “On behalf of the Commissioners and staff, we are pleased to help bring this innovative and unique distillery to the region. It will generate new jobs, tourism, and enhanced quality of life for the enjoyment of Port district residents, tourists, and everyone in the greater region.” Continued Arntzen, “We cannot say enough about our partnership with the City of West Richland. Mayor Jackson and city staff worked tirelessly to make this project happen. Under Mayor Jackson’s leadership, city staff members are focused on fostering new industry and new jobs, and are pursuing economic development opportunities which will have long-term, positive impacts on the surrounding community.” Arntzen thanked Joel Tefft and Becky Runyan for choosing to invest in West Richland; stating their business will enhance the region’s draw as a wine and spirits tour destination.

Joel Tefft and Becky Runyan will construct and operate the ***Black Heron Spirits Distillery and Port Works***, slated to open in 2010. The new Distillery will be located in the Port of Kennewick’s Wine Estates Park located in the City of West Richland.

“Innovation is a continuing hallmark of the Port of Kennewick,” said City of West Richland Mayor Dale Jackson, who joined Port Commissioners in celebration at Tuesday’s Commission meeting. “We are very pleased to welcome this new distillery to the Port’s destination park development in West Richland. It is yet one more achievement among many, and is a result of intensive marketing and collaboration between the City of West Richland and its economic development partner, the Port of Kennewick. We cannot emphasize how much we value the spirit of excellence and cooperation exhibited by Port Commissioners and staff.”

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Mayor Jackson also congratulated Mr. Tefft and Ms. Runyan, commending them for their decades of success and service in the wine and hospitality industries and for their commitment to excellence. “We welcome Black Heron Distillery to West Richland with open arms, along with the commitment to support and expedite your project. On behalf of our City Council, staff and residents, please accept my generous thanks for choosing West Richland as your new business home.”

Wine Estates Park, West Richland

The Port of Kennewick and City of West Richland have collaborated in recent years to market the Port’s West Richland Wine Estates park; located adjacent to the Red Mountain Center, a 320-acre master planned development within the historic Lewis & Clark Ranch.

Port, City, and regional economic development partners Benton REA, West Richland Area Chamber of Commerce, and others have collaborated in marketing efforts targeting the wine industry. The Port’s Wine Estates Park in West Richland is also home to Pacific Rim Wine Estates, one of the region’s largest wineries, also recruited by the Port of Kennewick. Renowned California winemaker and entrepreneur Randall Gramh invested nearly \$7 million to construct and open the 30,000 square-foot winery in 2007.

Black Heron Distillery and Port Works

Joel Tefft and Becky Runyan share that “The essence of Black Heron Distillery and Port Works is to create and present fine handcrafted spirits in an elegant manner reminiscent of a bygone era. Our location will pull elements of the ‘Roaring Twenties’ and Prohibition together to create an atmosphere of mystery, elegance and nostalgia for our customers to witness the process of craft distillation.”

Black Heron Spirits expects to feature barrel aged whisky, brandies and other spirits. Customers will be allowed to taste and purchase their products on site, and will be served “in a manner that will encourage and allow patrons to linger and take in the atmosphere....” Black Heron Distillery will use locally grown products and work with local businesses to create and support their operations.

Joel Tefft has owned Tefft Cellars Winery in the Yakima Valley for the past 20 years. Joel sold his winery and is pursuing his new interest in distilling, having recently completed intensive training in the art and craft of distilling. Becky Runyan brings 25 years of experience in customer service and will focus on providing a warm and inviting atmosphere for patrons, including art, music, and themed special events.

Craft Distilleries – the State’s Newest Passion

Distilling is the State of Washington’s newest fervor, and it is anticipated that this new distillery will generate new interest and development of additional local distilleries and wineries.

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In 2008 a new “craft-distillery” license became available in Washington, allowing a new and emerging industry to develop in the state. These new distilleries are allowed to serve up to 2 ounces in tasting rooms, and to sell on site and distribute their products. Since the Liquor Control Board opened the opportunity, 5 craft distilleries have been granted licenses, and many more applications have been submitted. The state of Oregon has 17 distilleries, with long-term growth of this industry projected.

City of West Richland

The City of West Richland has invested more than \$15 million in infrastructure in support of the emerging wine industry. The extension of Keene Road to the Red Mountain Center offers a scenic entrance to its destination park located at the foot of Red Mountain. The City is located next to the Red Mountain, and is actively working to enhance and champion the region’s economic development and tourism strategies. The City’s 2008 Economic Development Strategic Plan identified wine industry development as key to its economic future. The City is also actively seeking support for a new Red Mountain Interstate Interchange which would serve its residents, the Red Mountain AVA, and the Port’s 92-acres.

Attracting New Visitors Key Ingredient in Economic Development

Kris Watkins, president & CEO for the Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau was pleased with the announcement stating that investing in tourism amenities diversifies the local employment base, brings new money into the community through visitor spending, and enhances the quality of life for local residents. “We are thrilled to have another marketing tool added to our growing tourism portfolio,” stated Watkins. “Thousands of visitors are already exploring our craft breweries and premium wineries; we look forward to helping them discover the craft of distilling spirits as well.”

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