



Delta Queen Moves to Chattanooga

Historic Steamboat will Operate as a Historic Hotel for Now

Newport Beach, Calif., January 27, 2009 – Ambassadors International, Inc., owners of the historic *Delta Queen*, have chartered the vessel to Harry Phillips, owner of Chattanooga Water Taxi and Fat Cat Ferry in Chattanooga, Tenn., to act as caretaker for its 174-guest *Delta Queen* while Ambassadors continues searching for a buyer to operate it as an overnight cruise vessel.

The company will also continue pursuing a congressional exemption for the 82-year old vessel since federal law prohibits it from operating overnight cruise voyages without an exemption due to its wooden superstructure. A beloved fixture of America's rivers, the 176-guest *Delta Queen* is the last traditional steamboat carrying overnight guests on inland waterways. *Delta Queen* is a registered historic treasure of the Department of the Interior and the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is also a National Historic Landmark and a member of the National Maritime Hall of Fame. The *Delta Queen* was recently nominated for inclusion on the National Trust for Preservation's 2009 list of America's Most Endangered Historic Places.

Delta Queen will depart New Orleans, La., and cruise to Chattanooga in February and moor at Coolidge Park Landing. Once there, *Delta Queen* will operate as a historic, boutique hotel, preserved in her current state and managed by Sydney Slome, owner of Chattanooga's StoneFort Inn. Slome purchased Chattanooga's historic StoneFort Inn from Phillips two years ago.

"The company is committed to preserving this national landmark. In order to maintain the steamboat's historical significance, provisions of the charter agreement prevent the *Delta Queen* from being altered," said Diane Moore, president, Ambassadors Cruise Group. "We selected Phillips due to his knowledge of restoring and maintaining historical properties and his maritime experience. Chattanooga's renewed waterfront is an ideal location for people to celebrate the *Delta Queen* and enjoy her great historical and cultural value."

Phillips, a licensed boat captain, has acquired and restored several historically significant homes in East Hartford, Conn., and in Chattanooga. He has also served on the board of directors of Cornerstones, Inc., a prominent Chattanooga non-profit organization committed to historic preservation of downtown Chattanooga properties. Phillips is a former banker, current business owner and real estate investor who has successfully listed two of his Chattanooga downtown buildings on the National Historic Register including the StoneFort Inn, which he restored in 2003.

"The *Delta Queen* is a national treasure and she will be cared for accordingly until her return to overnight cruise service," said Phillips. "She truly compliments Chattanooga's vibrant waterfront. Her mooring at the North Shore's charming Coolidge Park will provide the first opportunity for all ages to experience and appreciate the last operable, and most cherished overnight passenger steamboat in the country."

Chattanooga's Mayor, Ron Littlefield, is proud to have the *Delta Queen* as part of the city's waterfront. "The *Delta Queen* is a magnificent vessel and a welcome addition to Chattanooga," said Littlefield. "Having such a beloved and unique attraction in Chattanooga adds to the continued revitalization of our city."

Although the majestic steamboat will not be able to leave the dock, Slome said he is committed to recreating the spirit of the *Delta Queen* for visitors and overnight guests during his service to her. “The *Delta Queen* is a glorious tribute to our river history, and it is my honor to serve her.” The boat has 87 cabins consisting of queens, doubles, bunk beds, and suites, and an abundance of properly appointed common areas. Slome plans to book *Delta Queen’s* entertainment venues and offer Dixieland jazz and shows ranging from cabarets to musical revues. Group tours will be available, allowing visitors to learn first-hand about steam technology—a mode of transportation that helped revolutionize the world.

The Chattanooga Water Taxi service connects both shores, and will expand its schedule as necessary to accommodate the demand from residents, tourists, and guests who would like to visit the *Delta Queen*.

About Ambassadors International, Inc.

Ambassadors International, Inc., is a cruise, marine, and travel and event company. The company operates Windstar Cruises, an international, luxury cruise line. The company is also a global provider of construction and consulting services to marina owners. In addition, the company provides travel and event services. The company is headquartered in Newport Beach, Calif.

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