

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Fort Vancouver National Historic Site 612 East Reserve Street Vancouver, WA 98661



Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Assumes Direct Operational Responsibility of Pearson Air Museum

February 4, 2013

On the record statement from Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent:

"The National Park Service appreciates and values the work of the City and the Trust in operating the museum on the Service's behalf, and we look forward to a continued productive partnership agreements with both organizations. The National Park Service is committed to working with both entities to ensure a seamless transition of the museum operations over the next 45 days and to ensure that the public can continue to enjoy all that the air museum has to offer."

On background:

- The National Park Service at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site has assumed operation of Pearson Air Museum, a National Park Service asset located within the boundaries of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.
- Museum operations were managed through a cooperative agreement until last week. On February 1, 2013, the National Park Service and the City of Vancouver (City) concluded an 18year old agreement whereby the City of Vancouver helped to develop the Pearson Air Museum and operate it through subcontractors, most recently the Fort Vancouver National Trust (Trust).
- The National Park Service will operate the museum on the same schedule and on conclusion of the transition period, access to the museum will be provided to the public at no charge.
- For more than two years, and formally since April 2012, the National Park Service and the Trust have worked diligently to develop an agreement to operate the air museum which would support the National Park Service's mission and values, and the interpretation and protection of this portion of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.
- In developing this agreement, the National Park Service underscored its need for a partner who
 would work within the regulations, laws, and policies that have been put in place to preserve
 and protect the special resources of the site in perpetuity, while providing the public ample
 access to enjoy those resources. Unfortunately, despite great effort from both organizations,
 and including support from the City of Vancouver, it was determined that an agreement which



addressed both organizations' mission and needs, and adhered to the NPS legal framework, was not possible.

- A principal focus of the transition and museum operations will be public access. The National Park Service will work with current aircraft owners who would like to keep their aircraft on display.
- The National Park Service will also seek ways to build on or incorporate existing educational and interpretive programs into the operations of the museum. The National Park Service will work to honor existing commitments for events that have been scheduled at the museum while keeping consistent with Federal laws, regulations, and policies.
- The National Park Service has extensive experience managing special events, permitting 90 events in 2012 that had a meaningful connection to the park's purpose and complied with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is excited to better integrate the Pearson Air Museum into the highly successful programs of the National Park Service in history, science, and technology. With over 11,000 students directly reaching the park annually through curriculum-based educational programs, we hope to bring a vibrant, compelling, and timely understanding of the significance of aviation in the Pacific Northwest using the same commitment to excellence undertaken by staff and volunteers for its other programs.
- Created in 1948, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is one of 398 national parks which make up the National Park System. The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve and protect the most important cultural and natural resources of the nation and to provide for their enjoyment by the American people in perpetuity. Each national park is unique, is nationally significant, and was created for a specific purpose. Fort Vancouver was created to interpret and preserve the sites and related historic resources associated with the Hudson's Bay Company fur trade and the U.S. Army, including military aviation and the Golden Age of Flight.
- Pearson Air Museum is an important resource of the National Park System and an important
 part of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Since 1972, the National Park Service has
 administered the seven acre grounds and vicinity of the museum. This area contains historic
 structures and archeological sites tied to the U.S. Army, military aviation, and the colonial
 Hudson's Bay Company fur trading post. Two of the historic structures and much of the
 archaeological remains directly relate to the internationally-significant World War I-era Spruce
 Production Division Mill site. The museum building, constructed in 1998, helps to interpret the
 history of aviation, including the home front war effort.

Additional information:

- If you have volunteered in the past or would like to volunteer to help us achieve our goals, please contact Kimm Fox-Middleton at (360) 816-6243 or email kimm fox-middleton@nps.gov.
- If you have an event scheduled at Pearson Air Museum or would like to hold an event at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, please contact Supervisory Park Ranger Kimm Fox Middleton at (360) 816-6243, or email <u>kimm_fox-middleton@nps.gov</u>. Guidance on special events and application procedures are listed at <u>www.nps.gov/fova/planyourvisit/special-event-</u><u>management.htm</u>.
- If you have museum objects on display or that are on loan to the museum and you would like to keep them on display, please contact Museum Curator Theresa Langford at (360) 816-6252 or <u>Theresa Langford@nps.gov</u>.