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PORTLANDERS REACH OUT TO NEW ORLEANS JAZZ MUSICIANS
Portland Jazz Festival offers New Orleans jazz musicians a temporary home

Portland, OR (September 8, 2005) – The Portland Jazz Festival, partnering with many leading Portland businesses and civic organizations, is working with New Orleans jazz musicians, agents and promoters to find housing in Portland for musicians and their families displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

The goal is to give the musicians a temporary refuge, a home for their families, and a place to live, practice and work. Reuters reported on September 3rd, “The shape of live entertainment in the (New Orleans) region will be affected for months, if not permanently.”

“Portland has a great reputation for its affection for jazz among musicians and we want to help them during this terrible time,” said Sarah Bailen Smith, Managing Director of the Portland Jazz Festival. “We want those musicians to know we can give them a place to stay – to get away, so they can continue their lives and their music, while the City of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast rebuilds.”

Working with organizations like the Portland Oregon Visitors Association (POVA), Azumano Travel, Mercy Corps, and Qwest – the title sponsor of the annual Portland Jazz Festival, work has begun to try to secure temporary housing for about 100 musicians. Portland Jazz Festival Artistic Director Bill Royston has been in contact with musician’s agents and reports he has received a positive response to the idea of bringing them to Portland. New Orleans jazz icons Nicholas Payton, Terrance Blanchard and others New Orleans musicians have offered to help put out the call for musicians to relocate to Portland.

“Portland has been a welcoming place for jazz artists with national and international reputations. It is the right thing to do what we can to help them during this awful time,” said Mel Brown, considered by many the Dean of Portland’s Jazz scene. “If we can open up our homes and help these people lead somewhat of a normal life here, perhaps that’s the best way we can contribute to the relief effort.

Plans are also underway to find venues for the musicians to play.

Supporters are also in contact with the State of Oregon, the City of Portland, school districts, hotel chains, and apartment owners to find temporary housing and other support these families need.

Those wanting to house the musicians or help this effort can call 503 228-5299 or email at sarah@pdxjazz.com.

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