

For Immediate Release

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-Paducah, KY

Western Rivers Boat Management, Inc., the City of Paducah, McCracken County, Paducah-McCracken Riverport Authority, and the Greater Paducah Economic Development Council announce the relocation of Western Rivers' new corporate headquarters from Ash Flat, Arkansas to Paducah, Kentucky at 2308 South 4th Street.

Founded in 1996 by Charles Strait and Janice Strait, Western Rivers Boat Management currently operates 27 towboats and harbor tugs and has annual sales in excess of \$50 million, towing barges that carry a variety of commodities along the inland river system of the United States. Western Rivers has in excess of 200 employees.

Western Rivers expects to have its Paducah headquarters fully operational by June 1, 2007, and will make a capital investment in excess of \$2 million. Within 2 years the total Paducah/McCracken employment is projected to be 33 people.

President Charles Strait thanked the City of Paducah, McCracken County, GPEDC, the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority, and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development for their aggressive and visionary efforts. "We are happy to be able to relocate our headquarters to a city and county that understands the importance of the river industry and offers the quality of life that made it an easy decision for us to move our families and company to Paducah. The support provided by the City of Paducah, McCracken County, the GPEDC, the Paducah McCracken County Riverport Authority and the Commonwealth of Kentucky was invaluable as well. We are looking forward to relocating our families and employees to Western Kentucky within the next month."

Western Rivers' announcement continues building on the impressive investment by the river community in Paducah/McCracken County over the past two years. Mayor Bill Paxton welcomed the headquarters relocation to Paducah by saying that "Western Rivers is an impressive and innovative marine service company. They require that their employees possess a superior skill set. The city is very happy to secure the corporate headquarters of this premier river company and recognize it as a new addition to the vibrant marine industry in Paducah. We knew our constant and persistent efforts would land us an impressive company, and Western Rivers is one. The KJDA state incentive certainly played a major part in this project. The city welcomes the relocating employees with open arms and I know they will feel right at home."

McCracken County Judge Executive Van Newberry noted "This is a great day for Paducah/McCracken County. Western Rivers is an outstanding example of a growth oriented marine company with ties to the area. One major advantage Paducah offers Western Rivers in addition to the quality of life is the strong locally based infrastructure available to build upon the success the company enjoyed over the past 11 years."

Ken Canter with the Paducah-McCracken Riverport Authority said "We are very pleased we played a part in this important announcement. When the Riverport purchased the Marquette facility over a year ago we anticipated a river related use for the property. We are excited that Western Rivers has chosen Paducah and we welcome them to the port complex as our newest neighbor."

GPEDC is thrilled about this new headquarters relocating to the region, with Chairman David Denton pointing out that "This announcement is an excellent example of the team work necessary to secure such a vibrant company. Years of planning and solid preparation gave us an outstanding quality of life to offer to these new, relocating employees. When you have a company relocate to Paducah, it must be remembered that it took many volunteers and a consensus of the local leadership to get to this point and you see it in the downtown, the schools, the college, Lowertown and other places. GPEDC works hard to encourage our existing companies to expand. However, if you do not have any new industry locating in the region, then you have fewer expansions."

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