

Alton Approves Multiyear Agreement with American Cruise Lines

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ALTON - The City of Alton approved a five-year agreement with American Cruise Lines to allow its Mississippi River passenger cruise ships to have priority docking for turnarounds on the Alton riverfront starting in 2020.

The agreement gives American Cruise Lines the right to dock its ships on the Alton riverfront for five years with options to extend the agreement for additional five year terms. The agreement also calls for the cruise line “to promote tourism and retail activity in Alton”.

“The economic impact for the city could be \$2.38 million over the five year agreement,” Brett Stawar, President and CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau said. “For the first time this agreement legitimizes the relationship between the city and the cruise lines as they come to Alton. We see this lease as a huge step forward toward making Alton a major Mississippi River port city for cruise lines.”

According to the agreement, American Cruise Lines will use Alton lodging properties for its passengers who begin a cruise in the city. That could mean up to 80 percent of its embarking passengers could spend one night in Alton prior to a cruise. In addition, American Cruise Lines will arrange for tours in Alton and arrange shuttle services between the docked boat and East Broadway shopping district.

In 2020, a total of 11 cruises are scheduled to dock in Alton with an anticipated economic impact of \$234,570. That number increases to 23 cruises in both 2021 and 2022 with an anticipated economic impact each year of \$538,080. Economic impact numbers are based on the value the average leisure visitor spends in a community during an overnight stay in downstate Illinois. More than 18,200 potential passengers are anticipated to travel through Alton during the length of the agreement.

American Cruise Lines is a small ship cruise line headquartered in Guilford, CT. The line operates 12 cruise ships along the Eastern Seaboard, Western Seaboard as well as the Mississippi-Ohio and Columbia-Snake river systems in the U.S.

Four different cruise ships will dock in Alton including the Queen of the Mississippi, American Harmony, America and American Jazz.