



**PRESS RELEASE - EMBARGOED UNTIL 1:30PM Eastern, JUNE 22, 2015**

**For More Information Contact:**

**August R. Carlino, President & CEO, Rivers of Steel – 412-464-4020**

**RIVERS OF STEEL AND RIVERQUEST ANNOUNCE PLANS TO MERGE**  
**Rivers of Steel Intends to Acquire RiverQuest as part of National Heritage Area Program**  
**in Southwestern Pennsylvania**

Pittsburgh, PA, June 18, 2015 – Rivers of Steel Heritage Corporation, managers of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, and RiverQuest which operates *Explorer* and its popular river-based environmental sciences program, announced today that the two non-profit organization's boards of directors have approved pursuing a merger of the two organizations. This announcement comes more than a year after RiverQuest publically announced they were seeking a merger partner. That announcement led to a series of negotiations and studies between the two groups, culminating in today's announcement of the intent to merge.

Jim Roddey, President of the Board of RiverQuest stated, "Today's announcement is a result of more than a year of evaluating how to best preserve the RiverQuest education program for students K through 12 and how a merger of our two organizations can also strengthen the many historic and educational offerings of Rivers of Steel. We look forward to continuing RiverQuest's 20 years of service to the Pittsburgh region and to building upon our total of more than 100,000 students learning the importance of the history, ecology, and importance of our areas waterways."

Rivers of Steel is a non-profit that manages the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, one of 49 National Heritage Areas in the United States designated by Congress. Its mission is to conserve the industrial, cultural, natural, and recreational resources of southwestern Pennsylvania. Rivers of Steel also manages a similar state heritage area program in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Among the many programs and projects it maintains, the Carrie Furnaces in Swissvale and Rankin, PA, The Bost Building in Homestead, both National Historic Landmarks, along with the Battle of Homestead Site in The Waterfront, have become popular destinations for visitors and tourist over the last few years. Rivers of Steel also operates a successful receptive services tour business that packages and sells Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania destinations, sites and activities to out-of-town motor coach operators.

RiverQuest's mission is to engage students and citizens in river-based environmental science experiences that promote critical thinking and foster stewardship of the rivers as a significant and vital natural resource. The RiverQuest boat *Explorer* is a one-of-a-kind green vessel, custom-constructed for river-based education. Since 1995, RiverQuest has provided hands-on STEM education programs to more than 100,000 school students, as well as an additional 100,000 members of the general public.

August R. Carlino, President and Chief Executive Officer of Rivers of Steel said bringing together of the two organizations makes sense. "It seems perfectly natural and logical for two partners that are already working together on river programming, environmental education and historic and cultural tourism to

solidify the partnership and make the combined organization stronger than the two separate groups. We anticipate a greater reach into schools as we continue the first-rate education programming, along with added presence of *Explorer* on the rivers to be chartered for tours, private events and other activities.” W. Franklin Reed, Chairman of Rivers of Steel, added that “The three rivers are central to understanding our region’s cultural and industrial heritage, and the combination of these two great organizations will not only enable Rivers of Steel to expand its historic and cultural tourism programs, but also preserve RiverQuest’s acclaimed ‘floating classroom’ educational offerings.”

A business plan is currently underway that is examining a variety of revenue-generating alternatives for *Explorer* along with expanding the successful tours that Rivers of Steel has been conducting. The business plan will lay out alternatives for staffing and capital investment as a part of a strategy to fully integrate RiverQuest as a program of Rivers of Steel.

A press event announcing the merger will be held on June 22, 2015 at 1:30PM at the Explorer Dock on the riverside of the Carnegie Science Center on the North Shore.

###