



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Astoria Sunday Market vendors set up shop next to the Port of Astoria's Pier 1 offices, offering homemade goods to debarking cruisers.

In Astoria, it takes a village to welcome cruise ships

More than 20,000 passengers came through this year

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Astoria is home to about 9,500 people, so when more than 8,000 tourists debarked cruise ships last week at the Port of Astoria for the end of the fall cruise season, they got noticed.

A patchwork of the ships' crew, bar pilots, longshoremen, Port staff, travel agents and volunteer cruise hosts helped accommodate the passengers and the more than 20,000 other cruisers this year.

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"We have exactly what cruise passengers want," he said of Astoria's iconic status as the only port in Oregon accessible by cruise ship.

Earlier this month, though, the Port wasn't even sure it could safely handle the latest spate of cruise ships, which grossed the agency more than \$150,000 from nine ships in the fall season before payroll expenses.

Jim Knight, the Port's director, said a bathymetry report revealed depths of 25 feet at points along Pier 1, shallower than the draft of most major cruise ships. But staff got an emergency dredge permit and deepened the berth in front of Pier 1 a couple of days before the Coral Princess and Jewel of the Seas came and went, carrying with them more than 4,000 passengers.

Tying up

The 964-foot Norwegian Pearl pulled in early last week, dwarfing the pier at more than 200 feet tall, with passengers lining a viewing deck above the ship's pilot house eye level with the deck of the Astoria Bridge.

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Jean Matheson, a cruise ship host, holds up visitor guides for passengers leaving the Norwegian Pearl.

Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

