



MEMORANDUM

TO: Libraries, Utilities & Seattle Center Committee Members

FROM: Ned Dunn, Seattle Center

DATE: March 28, 2013

RE: **Northwest Folklife Festival Agreement**

The legislation authorizes a six-year renewal agreement with Northwest Folklife, a Washington non-profit corporation, for the continued development and presentation of the Northwest Folklife Festival at Seattle Center from 2013 through 2018.

Through the presentation of an annual, free, four-day festival over Memorial Day weekend, Folklife strives to preserve the integrity of traditional arts in the Northwest and encourage their growth by providing a forum for performance and the exchange of skills and ideas. This May Northwest Folklife will present the 42nd Folklife Festival, free to the public. The festival will be produced with the support of 800 volunteers, 6,000 unpaid performers, and will offer 900 free performances. Expected attendance is 250,000.

This renewal agreement makes no substantive changes from the last two agreements. In 2001, the City altered the agreement with Northwest Folklife to cap the City's support to the festival. This labor cap is adjusted annually by the amount of the cost of living adjustment negotiated between the City and the Joint Crafts Council, but has otherwise remained the same. For 2013, the labor cap is \$238,315. These labor costs are included in Seattle Center's 2013 Adopted and 2014 Endorsed Budget. In order to incentivize Folklife to control costs, any labor savings below the cap are shared 50/50 between the City and Folklife. Any labor costs above the cap are 100% the responsibility of Folklife. The City also provides the use of Seattle Center facilities and equipment rent free and office space for the Festival's administrative functions.

The combination of City support, voluntary donations from festival attendees, other donations and sponsorships obtained by Northwest Folklife, the work of hundreds of volunteers, and thousands of performers performing for free allow the annual Northwest Folklife Festival to be presented to the public free of charge.

Seattle Center estimates it gets back roughly half of its direct costs in incremental, festival-related revenues from parking, the Monorail, and Armory food concessions. The City also benefits from the local spending and tax revenues from the thousands of visitors who come from outside the area each year to attend the Folklife Festival.

The annual Northwest Folklife Festival is a signature event for Seattle Center and the region, drawing a huge and diverse audience of all ages to enjoy its cultural and artistic offerings. This agreement continues this long-standing tradition for the City.

cc: Robert Nellams, Director, Seattle Center
Michele Scoleri, Mayor's Office
John Merner, Seattle Center
Greg Shiring, City Budget Office