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## Donations revive concert series in Portland park

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The free concert series at the Washington Park amphitheater is back on.

Less than two weeks after the Portland Parks Bureau said the series, which takes place in August, would have to be canceled because financial support had fallen through, city Commissioner Nick Fish announced Friday that the community has raised more than enough money to revive the event.

Fish, along with other donors, made the announcement at the Hotel deLuxe, 729 S.W. 15th Ave. in downtown Portland, saying donors had given \$120,000 – \$20,000 more than was needed.

The donations poured in after Gordon Sondland and his wife, Katy Durant, stepped up first. They said they would give \$50,000 through their foundation and two hotels, Hotel Lucia and Hotel deLuxe, if other companies matched their pledge.

Before long, other businesses and organizations large and small did just that. They include the Portland Trail Blazers, Pacific Power, PGE, Qwest Communications, Reser's Fine Foods, Northwest Natural Gas, and Laborers Local 483, the union representing parks employees.

"To have one more headline saying something that is so vital to our community ... has been canceled is the beginning of the end," Sondland said Friday. "We need to start pulling out of the nose dive."

Fish, who oversees the Bureau of Parks & Recreation, said the agency expects as many as 35,000 people to attend this summer's series and that the extra \$20,000 will go toward supporting the 2010 series.

Among the highlights of Friday's announcement was a performance of "Amazing Grace" by saxophonist Devin Phillips, a Portland musician billed as America's ambassador of jazz to the world.

"When the economy is tough, that's when you have to hang on" to traditions, said Paul Vogel, a managing director at Pacific Power. "They keep you centered. They keep you grounded. Events like these are for everybody."

The first word that the concerts were in trouble came May 4 when the city announced that it was suspending this year's concerts after the main corporate sponsor, Daimler Trucks North America, dropped out for financial reasons.

The concerts were started in 1949 by a manager in the Parks Bureau, which suspended them in 1988 during a budget crunch.

Daimler Trucks North America, then known as Freightliner, revived the series in 2005.

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