

Grants Pass Oregon's **Daily Courier**

Business

Last Update Monday, June 02, 2014

Chinese diplomats take a spin on Hellgate's boats (Business Buzz)

By Shaun Hall of the Daily Courier

Three Chinese diplomats visited Grants Pass and Hellgate Jetboat Excursions on Friday for a ride on the Rogue River.

"It's our pleasure and honor to have these distinguished guests," said Travis Hamlyn, general manager of Hellgate. Sara Colee, jetboat supervisor, said she wanted to welcome the visitors "on behalf of not just Hellgate, but all of Grants Pass."

More visitors from China were expected to ride the Rogue Saturday, when 70-something delegates to a China-Oregon trade conference held in Medford were scheduled for another Hellgate tour.

The three visitors on Friday were from the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Minister Li Jie, who described himself as a senior diplomat, said 40 percent of China's population of 1.3 billion speaks some form of English.

"That shows that people in China want good relations," he said.

He also joked "When you come to Oregon, you see trees everywhere. When you come to China, you see people everywhere."

Hamlyn said Chinese delegations visit Grants Pass about every year. The delegates were attending "The 5th International Conference on Oregon-China Investment, Education, Culture and Tourism," held at the Fiesta Restaurant and Event Center in Medford. Other conference events were held in Portland.

Delegates were due to visit Crater Lake on Sunday, taking the long way back to Portland for more conference meetings. Co-sponsors of the conference are the Confucius Institute at Portland State University and the Oregon-China Sister State Relations Council.



As jetboat pilot Johnny Yanutik prepares to get underway on Friday, three officials with the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., settle into their seats for a ride on the Rogue River. The visitors were Wang Xijun, in the purple shirt at left, and behind him in a striped shirt is Gao Yuan. Next to Xijun is Li Jie.