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PGE paid \$1 million for a year of stadium naming rights; Jeld-Wen, Providence payments unknown

By Allan Brettman

Portland Timbers officials have contended the public does not need to know the amount of money paid to name the soccer team's publicly owned stadium.

However, one of the previous paying tenants for the facility formerly known as Civic Stadium did not withhold this information.

From 2001 to 2010, Portland General Electric held the stadium naming rights and the stadium was called PGE Park. And Portland Family Entertainment Limited Partnership, the stadium management group, included the utility company's payment totals in the operating agreement filed with the city.

The first year, in 2001, the naming rights cost \$710,000, growing in subsequent years to \$1,010,555 in 2010, the last year. The publicly owned utility paid \$8.5 million over the 10-year agreement.

The amounts are included in the PGE Park operating agreement documents the city disclosed Thursday to The Oregonian, responding to a public records request.

However, the naming rights agreement between the Portland Timbers and Jeld-Wen Inc., also disclosed Thursday by the city in response to a public records request, does not include the amount paid to call the stadium Jeld-Wen Field. The amount was redacted from the agreement the Timbers submitted to the city.

On Thursday, the Timbers submitted to the city a copy of the operating agreement between the Major League Soccer team and Providence Health & Services, which as of last week has a 15-year deal to call the stadium Providence Park. That agreement, which is also expected to have the naming rights amounts redacted, will likely be made public by next week, city officials said.

The Timbers and Providence announced Feb. 17 the MLS soccer team's stadium would be called Providence Park. Jeld-Wen Inc., which had paid for naming rights of Jeld-Wen Field since 2011, took on the reduced status as a Founding Sponsor of the club.

Timbers officials believe the naming rights fee can be private and have chosen to redact the information from documents submitted to the city.

"It's our collective wish it remain a private piece of information," Timbers chief operating officer Mike Golub said last week, adding that city officials as well as sponsors would prefer the amounts remain confidential.

"It would inhibit our ability to do business if this was publicly known," Golub said.

"I think it behooves private business of any type for private information to remain private," Golub said. "Our fans are intensely interested about everything Timbers and that's great. Most supporters would say good community and business sponsorships with iconic companies like Providence ultimately translate to the resources we put onto the field, which is good for everybody."

Portland General Electric, from 2001 to 2010, made its naming rights payments to Portland Family Entertainment, also known as PFE. The partnership between PFE and the city called for PFE to pay rent to Portland, a cut of ticket sales and a share of the group's profits.

The 48-page naming rights agreement between PGE and PFE covers an array of marketing issues beyond naming a stadium. Among the many details, it covers television time (sponsorship mentions on soccer broadcasts), print positioning ("prominent" PGE logo identification on the cover of the Triple-A

baseball team's yearbook), and mascot appearances (16 baseball games, 6 soccer games; PGE supplies the mascot.)

While the May 2011 agreement between the Timbers management and Jeld-Wen redacts the naming rights selling price, the 32-page document reveals that Jeld-Wen had a 12-year naming rights agreement. It started in 2011 and was scheduled to run through 2022.

The agreement includes additional payments Jeld-Wen would have to make for each playoff round won by the Timbers and if the team won the MLS. Those amounts also are redacted.

The agreement details a procedure that Jeld-Wen would follow to rename Jeld-Wen Field while the Klamath Falls window and doorframe company retained naming rights.

It is not clear from the agreement, however, what procedure was put in place to accommodate an outright transfer of naming rights if Jeld-Wen wanted to back out before 2016.

A "Payment for Early Termination" clause, however, says Jeld-Wen could terminate the agreement after the 2016 season by paying the Timbers an early termination payment. The payment amount is redacted.