



# THE QUODDY TIDES

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## Millennium Marine celebrates opening by Edward French

Along with celebrating the Fourth of July, the residents of Eastport and surrounding communities also celebrated the opening of Millennium Marine USA's boatbuilding facility in Quoddy Village on July 4.

At the opening, Cory Guimond, president of Millennium Marine, said the operation, which currently employs 12 people, will be at full capacity in a couple of months. The company is expected to employ 45 or more people by the end of the year. "We will continue to employ more people in the decades to come," he stated.

Millennium Marine has been based in Escuminac, N.B., and Guimond said he moved the business from Canada for several reasons, including: the increasing value of the Canadian dollar since 2005, with the exchange rate making it more efficient to build boats in the U.S., and the limitations on selling boats for carrying cargo or passengers if the boats were made in Canada.

Some 70% to 80% of Millennium's boats have been exported into the U.S., and he said he is "happy to build them here now" for the U.S. market, while the company will continue to sell boats in Canada. Millennium also will "try to recapture the market share in the North Atlantic," selling boats into the United Kingdom, Ireland and other countries. Having the port at Eastport "opens up those opportunities," he noted. In addition, he is looking into the Mediterranean market, also using the port to ship the boats. While the company's "bread and butter" is the a commercial fishing boat called the "Millennium," Guimond said he is planning to enter the pleasure boat market with a 35-footer that the company expects to start building within a year.

Guimond said he chose Eastport for his business in part because of the former Guilford mill's large, vacant building that provides "all I wanted" for building boats. He also noted the lack of a skilled workforce in New Brunswick and that Eastport is close to his home in Canada. "I've never been this pumped since I've done anything business-wise," he stated. He added that he is "very pleased" with the workers he has hired. "It's been 20 years since I had a team like this."

Guimond thanked many people for their assistance in getting the project started, including the state and federal delegation, County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald, the city council, Millennium's board of directors and others.

Bob Peacock, who acted as emcee during the event, noted that Millennium Marine is bringing "a Canadian heritage and a Maine-built boat" to the city's 400-year-old boatbuilding tradition.

Senator David Burns of Whiting read a letter of congratulations from U.S. Senator Susan Collins, who noted that the 50 new jobs that are projected and continued expansion will help with the local economy. Adding that boatbuilding is a way of life in Maine, she stated, "I'm proud to see that tradition alive and well 200 years later."

Eastport Port Director Chris Gardner quoted the saying that a rising tide lifts all boats, adding that with the addition of the boatbuilding company "you have more boats here to float." He said the reason that the project is important is because of the children in the county, who now have more opportunity to stay in the area. He said the company's setting up business in Eastport is "a true success story" for the county and its children.

Mary Repole, president of the Eastport City Council, noted that Guimond has been hiring local people and providing good paying jobs with benefits, along with a good training program. "The people working here are loving their jobs," she said. "In Eastport we try to remember our history and our heritage, and nothing does that more than what Cory is doing here now."

Gubernatorial candidate Eliot Cutler noted that the project was not just put together by politicians, but that the people in Eastport "worked together to get things done." He stated that the ribbon-cutting event was a celebration of "the audacious and creative recovery that Eastport is undergoing," adding that to reverse the economic decline in the state people will "need a vision like you have in Eastport."

Those attending the opening were served dinner under a large tent and enjoyed tours of the facility, music by Melissa Cushing and Elijah Brice and a door prize of two lobster dinners donated by Bob Delpapa of the Eastport Chowder House.

The public open house and picnic scheduled for July 5 was cancelled because of Tropical Storm Arthur and the loss of power. It has been rescheduled for Saturday, July 26, from 1 to 4 p.m.

July 11, 2014 (Home)

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