

FOR LOBSTER FISHERMEN IN SOUTHWEST NEW Brunswick, following the start of the season on November 8. Fishermen are fearing that the dependence on larger catches every year to make up for the downturn in prices and higher fuel and bait costs will lead to a crash when the harvest eventually levels out or drops off.

"It's turned into a volume fishery," says Laurence Cook of Seal Cove, Grand Manan, who is chairman of the Lobster Sector of the Grand Manan Fishermen's Association. Most fishermen are looking for a dollar figure that will allow them to live comfortably and are fishing as hard as they can for "as long as they can." If the price doesn't come back up after Christmas, fishermen won't be able to afford to keep fishing. "Right now we're living on the fat we stored," with the money fishermen put in the bank in previous years, he says.

Stuart McKay, manager of Paturel International's operations on Deer Island, says catches "are way ahead of last year," perhaps 30% to 40% higher, although he notes it's too early in the season to confirm the numbers. Fishermen around Deer Island have been bringing in catches of

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Brownfield projects breathe life into underutilized sites

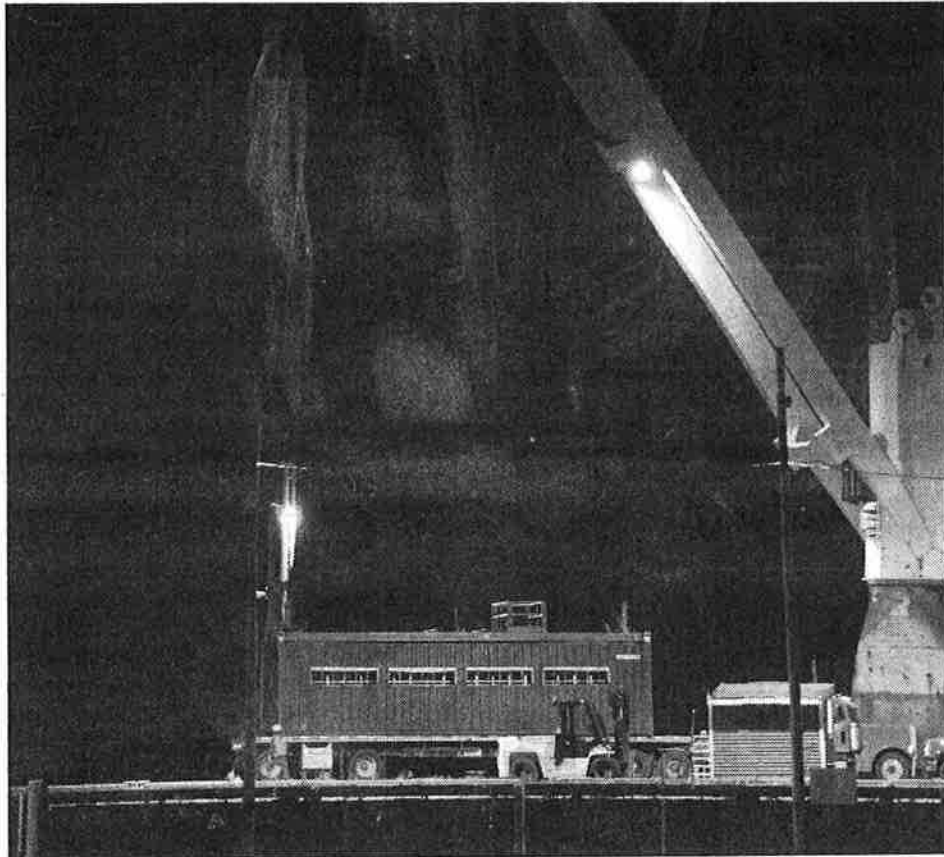
by Lora Whelan

U.S. Route 1 winds along the coast of Washington County passing through towns and small cities that often have the vestiges of a more vibrant transportation-based industry left behind. A garage in Jonesboro sags on its foundation and leans precariously towards the highway. Another garage in Pembroke stands vacant as it waits for a buyer to see new promise in its prime highway location. In Eastport an old waterfront factory made of concrete sends great slabs of its flat roof crashing to the ground during the winters.

These are just a few of the projects that have undergone brownfields assessments since 2009, when Washington County Council of Governments (WCCOG) received a \$400,000 brownfields assessment grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Hindering the sale of many underutilized properties that have a past involving hazardous fuels and chemical processes is the possibility of site contamination. Summing up the program is Todd Coffin of GEI Consultants, who works with WCCOG on the assessments. "The idea of the brownfield projects is that they benefit the

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AROUND THE WORLD. Under a full moon, the Clipper Mariner loads cows and horses for Russia and pulp for Turkey at the Eastport breakwater. (Edward French photo)

Restaurants turn to local food for authentic and fresh flavors

by Lora Whelan

Causing a restaurant cook's heart to sing is no small matter, so when Marilu Scott of Eastport's Bank Square Pizza and Deli rhapsodizes about the quality of the 200 pounds of tomatillos and 40 pounds of jalapeños she purchases from farmer Robin Follette of Seasons Eatings Farm in Talmadge, those who sit down for her authentic Mexican dishes know they're in for a treat. "Absolutely spectacular," says Scott of the standing order she has with

Follette. "They make the best salsa we've ever tasted," She waxes eloquent about the pectin content of the tomatillos and the hiccup-inducing heat of the jalapeños.

Scott is one of a number of restaurant owners who are embracing the farm-to-restaurant experience and who are snapping up whatever they can to enhance their cooking and the gustatory experience of their customers. "Given a chance to buy locally, we'll do it," Scott says. She'd be

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Wreath season off to warm start

by Susan Esposito

The wreath-making season is under way, and both large and small operations are busy getting their products to market.

Dugald Kell Sr. of Kelco Industries in Milbridge says his business will be making and selling from 60,000 to 70,000 wreaths, trees and centerpieces this holiday season to customers all over the country. "Seventy percent of our business is supplying berries, bows and other items,

and our normal crew [numbers] around 50," says Kell. "But right now it's 140. This time of year all people want is wreaths."

Over the years, Kelco has built up a large clientele and can count on the dependability of many customers who place orders year after year. Kell, age 81, founded Kelco Industries back in 1955 and says he's still having fun at work, but this sea-

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WOOD CHIPS (from page 1)

company's shipments will be "compatible with existing surpluses of fiber," using under-utilized species and qualities of wood, according to Shepahan Chute of Great Northern Timber. The wood will be obtained from Washington, Hancock and Penobscot counties in Maine and from New Brunswick. He says the volume of the shipments through the port "will be driven by the surpluses." The volume and the number of ships expected annually are not yet being released by the company.

Chute also declines, at this point, to indicate where the wood will be chipped. The chipping operation will be similar to the company's operations in Sheet Harbour, N.S., and Dalhousie, N.B. He says the company was drawn to ship out of Eastport because Eastport, Dalhousie and Sheet Harbour are all about equal distance from each other. "This allows us to even out production," he says of shipments through Eastport.

Also during the executive session, the port authority board met with Bert Martin and Roger McIver of Woodland Pulp LLC, until now the major user of the port. Gardner says the port authority is "sensitive to their needs" and wants to "make sure we're not hurting one customer over another." He says the Woodland mill officials were not favoring a particular customer, but rather the board wanted to exercise due diligence in making a decision that could have a potential impact on the mill. He adds, "With wood products, everybody's mindful of pressures that can be put on the fiber basket." He says that point was one of many considerations that the board weighed during its deliberations in selecting a company. Great Northern Timber will be sending wood chips from sources on both sides of the border. It is believed Timber Biofuels would have been sourcing its wood from Maine.

For the port, the new business will mean a couple of new jobs maintaining the chip pile and more work for the longshoremen.

"It broadens our wings even further," says Gardner of the diversification of the port, which is now also regularly shipping out dairy cows.

Cruise ship visits

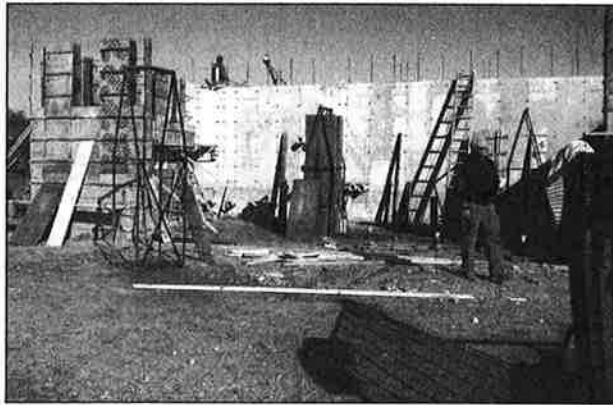
A report from Chris Brown on upcoming cruise ship visits to Eastport notes that the 184-foot *Grande Caribe* of Blount Small Ship Adventures, which can carry 96 passengers, will be making three visits next summer, on August 3-4, 14-15 and 25-26. The 644-foot cruise ship *The World*, which has over 250 passengers, will be visiting on October 9.

Other business

In other business during the November 21 meeting, board member Bob Wallace asked whether the board should consider if it wants to continue providing tugboats for ships docking at the port or contract out the service. The charge for having a tugboat company bring a tug to dock a ship has been about \$12,500, and another \$12,500 for when the ship leaves. The port authority charges about \$5,000 for docking a ship. With the ships that will be handling wood chips being bulk freighters without bow thrusters, a second tug, more powerful than the small *Abaco* tug, will be needed. The board will consider the issue at its next meeting.

The paving of the bulk material storage yard has been finished by Lane Construction at a price of \$714,000. Gardner did note that a depression in the area allowed for "a skating pond" after a recent rainstorm. He will be taking the issue up with the contractor to have it resolved.

Gardner told the board that he will proceed with negotiating with Federal Marine Terminals about compensation by FMT for use of the bulk material yard that is not paved and is used to store the containers for cows. The port authority will seek an annual agreement with FMT covering the costs for the area, including plowing and sanding.



THE FORMER CONSEA FACTORY in Eastport receives a new construction facelift after a brownfields assessment was performed and the property sold by the city to lobsterman David Pottle of Perry. He will use the site to expand his lobster business. (Photo courtesy of WCCOG)

BROWNFIELD PROJECTS (from page 1)

community by reusing existing buildings and sites with uses that are compatible with the history and culture of the area." WCCOG Executive Director Judy East adds, "They give certainty where there was none — legal, environmental and financial."

"These are assessment funds, not remediation funds," explains East. "But what this does is it takes care of the uncertainty factor. It paves the way towards redevelopment." And that redevelopment is beginning to happen. Eastport's Consea factory site was sold by the city in 2011 to David Pottle of Perry. He is expanding his lobster pound business "one-hundred fold," says East.

Coffin has worked with East on phase 1 and 2 assessments. "We didn't find a lot," he says of the Consea site. "A lot of coast land is fill. It's not squeaky clean." Such a site falls into the "practical solution category," he explains, much like the assessment taking place at the city's Deep Cove property where the Boat School is located and soon to be sold.

"We know it's contaminated from past reports," Coffin says of the Deep Cove property. In the past, wells were closed because of groundwater contamination. "We sat down with the Department of Environmental Protection and said, if it [the use] doesn't really change, can we get some kind of closure without spending a lot of money." Because the use under new ownership will continue to be similar to the past use, a management plan was created that will be incorporated into the property's deed. "We want to be sure that future operations don't pollute," says Coffin. "In all my experience with the pro-

gram and with DEP, the level of cooperation — get in there and figure out a solution — it was enormous," says East.

The Schoppee Garage in Jonesboro is a familiar site to anyone who enjoys the ghostly echoes of past industry. The wood-frame, one-story building hugs a small bit of land along Route 1, just before the bridge passes over the Chandler River. The assessment found that there was only minor residual contamination left from a gasoline leak from many years ago, and hazardous materials inside the garage have almost all been disposed of. According to Coffin and East, the Schoppee family is now in the process of planning what to do with the property, including the possibility of a town park with a stone and plaque marking the site of the former garage. "It's a tiny space, but it could be a pocket park with access to the water," East says.

Two other garages, Antone's in Pembroke and Bridges' garage in Calais, have undergone brownfields assessments and been put on the market. Antone's backs up against the Maine Department of Transportation site that is also undergoing an assessment before the Town of Pembroke negotiates full transfer of the property to town use.

Antone's underwent two assessment phases "because it was an old gas station and it had a body shop. It still had a gas tank present," says Coffin. Because the assessment needed to sample the soil under and around the tank, funds could be used for the tank's removal, at a cost of about \$15,000. "What a great thing it was to be able to do that," says East. An on-site water well and wells on surrounding properties were tested and came back with a clean bill-of-health. After that, Coffin says, interest in the property by prospective buyers increased substantially. The property has since sold.

"That's the beauty of it," says East. "These sites are in such great locations."

WCCOG and Coffin have also conducted assessments of: Machias Laundry, 15 Sea Street and Moose Island Marine, both of Eastport, Harrington Community Center and O'Neal's Garage.



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