

**TOP STORY** (Continued from Page 1)

Hooper's Island Oyster Aquaculture Company, branded Chesapeake Gold, was started in 2010 by local waterman Johnny Shockley and business partner Ricky Fitzhugh, a former wholesale fish buyer who lives in Cambridge.

"We went from 0 to 100 restaurants in one year," says Shockley, "and we're going to blow that out of the water in the coming year."

Chesapeake Gold grows triploid oysters, which do not reproduce because they have three sets of chromosomes. Shockley says, "They grow fatter and faster because they don't get run down as result of the summer spawning process and are available during all seasons."

With the University of Maryland College Park, the company has already developed the industry's first wet storage system that uses an ultraviolet light to kill bacteria, and the two are working on designing a sorting system. Shockley also hopes to launch aquaculture's first triploid oyster larvae hatchery.

"We're developing an entire industry here as well as new equipment to support that industry," said Shockley. People from as far as Australia have traveled to Dorchester County to see the innovations.

Chesapeake Gold is also a tourism attraction. "We're already working with the Hyatt to bring tours to Hooper's," he said. "We want to offer educational tours just like a winery." New to the industry is Barren Island Oysters, owned by Easton native Timothy Devine. Since high school, he dreamed of creating a business that benefited the Chesapeake,

which led him to sustainable oyster farming.

Searching throughout the bay, he settled on Hooper's Island where his staff of five grows oysters off Barren Island. A loan from the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) helped him get started. Devine also grows triploids which he brought to the tables of several exclusive restaurants in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore for the first time this summer and drew rave reviews.

He likes that oysters can be sustainably raised while providing relief to the wild oyster population. Unlike farm-raised shrimp and salmon that require protein-based feed, oysters are vegetarian, he says, and require less energy and resources because they only eat algae.

A boat ride and words of encouragement from an enthusiastic Johnny Shockley, led Ted Cooney to launch Madhouse Oysters.

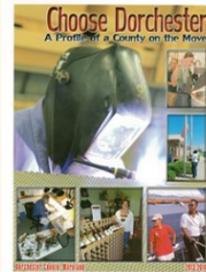
A successful healthcare finance business owner, Cooney originally wanted to grow oysters off his upper Choptank home in Talbot County. After realizing the waters were susceptible to fresh water rains, he also came to Hooper's Island.

For all of Dorchester County's aquaculture entrepreneurs, there is something bigger at stake than just turning a profit. It is about bringing new life to the oyster industry.

As Shockley says, "If this generation doesn't do something, it's gone."

*Article is condensed; however, complete story can be read at [www.ChooseDorchester.org](http://www.ChooseDorchester.org).*

**FEATURED EVENT** (Continued from Page 1)



"Thanks to NewsMedia, The Banner, and each of you in this room, we now have another high-quality, promotional platform featuring profiles of Dorchester's business, residential, recreational and industrial assets," said Haythe.

The full-color, 48-page publication was produced and printed by NewsMedia at no cost to the county thanks to the participation of many partners. Acknowledging both the partners' contributions and NewsMedia's leadership, Haythe recognized the independent media company for working with her office to produce their first profile for a Maryland county.

Haythe pointed to the recently unveiled 'water moves us' branding to stress the importance of advocacy and promotion. "We need to use the many communication vehicles that exist – print and digital, paid and free, direct mail and viral, and trade shows to get our stories of opportunity, industry and quality of life out."

Attendees at the Hyatt unveiling included representatives from businesses featured in the publication, elected officials (Dorchester Councilman Rick Price, Cambridge Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley and Cambridge Councilwoman Jackie Vickers) and members of the Dorchester County Economic Development Advisory Council (Ted Kanatas, Amanda Fenstermaker and Mickey Love). Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) Executive Director Pam Ruff also attended and praised the county for its many economic development and marketing initiatives.

Visit our website to view "Choose Dorchester: A Profile of a County on the Move."

# DORCHESTER Currents

A monthly publication of Dorchester County Maryland

**TOP STORY**

**NOVEMBER 2013**

**Dorchester Leads State in Oyster Farming**



Ask the nation's seafood lovers about where the best tasting oysters are found, and choices from Long Island, New England, Prince Edward Island, and the Pacific Northwest frequently come to mind. If Dorchester County's local oyster farmers have their way, bivalves from the waters of the Choptank and Hooper's Island will soon join that list.

Dorchester County is the hub of Maryland oyster farming. The county outpaces all others with a total of 64 shellfish aquaculture leases out of 322

statewide, according to Karl Roscher, Aquaculture Division Director for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Dorchester oyster farmers produced approximately 1.025 million oysters in 2012, according to reports maintained by DNR. Roscher expects that number to at least double in 2013 with significant increases to follow as new operations come online.

Pioneering the efforts is The Choptank Oyster Company (formerly Marinetics) started by Bob Maze and Laurie Landau at Castle Haven. Known for its prized Choptank Sweets, the company has sold oysters for about eight years. Choptank's early efforts helped to establish the state's aquaculture program.

"We were selling oysters before oyster farming really existed in Maryland," says General Manager Kevin McClarren, a Cambridge resident who came to Choptank in 1999 after growing fish in New England. "I think

we've done more for Maryland aquaculture than anybody."

Purchasing spat from the University of Maryland's Horn Point Laboratory, Choptank grows its oysters on floats along the shores of LeCompte Bay. Throughout their development, the oysters are pulled from their floats, washed, and tumbled to clean the shells of fowling organisms and to create the desired deep cup shape.

Mature Choptank Sweets can be found in top restaurants from New York City to North Carolina and as far west as Cleveland. Whole Foods Market shoppers can also purchase them at seafood counters. Choptank sales total will be just under a million in 2013.

Choptank also sells oyster floats and spat to individuals looking to grow oysters at their dock to filter nearby waters, but McClarren keeps his eye on the commercial product. "We really focus our efforts on being a great food producer," he said, "just grinding out the best oysters available."

*(Continued on Page 4)*

**FEATURED EVENT**

**Banner Publisher Unveils Choose Dorchester**

County business leaders and elected officials joined Independent NewsMedia's Publisher Daryl LaPrade, Advertising Director Dave Cannon, and Dorchester County Economic Development Director Keasha Haythe at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay October 31 to unveil "Choose Dorchester: A County on the Move."

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## AQUACULTURE Dorchester County Leads State in Oyster Farming

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's (UMCES) oyster culture facility at Horn Point and its partners produced more than 1.2 billion oysters during the 2013 production season. This is the first time any oyster hatchery nationwide has produced more than one billion Eastern oyster spat in a single season.

"The success of this year's hatchery production demonstrates that with the necessary infrastructure and support of our oyster restoration partners, the Horn Point hatchery and its new oyster setting facility are capable of producing the spat that these facilities were designed to produce," said Horn Point Laboratory Director Mike Roman.

One of UMCES' key partners, the Oyster Recovery Partnership, successfully processed and deployed more than 700 million hatchery-produced oyster spat to Harris Creek. The remaining 500 million spat were produced as part of a program designed to train watermen to produce oyster seed for use in their oyster farming operations and to enhance the public oyster fishery.

UMCES's oyster cultivation facility at Horn Point is the largest oyster hatchery on the East Coast. It is a focal point for oyster restoration and research in Maryland and the region.

*Article reprinted in part from UMCES. For complete story visit: [www.UMCES.edu](http://www.UMCES.edu).*

## AGRICULTURE Laytons Savors Harvest

It's been almost nine years since the Layton family first started planning for their now award-winning vineyard. Setting their sights on Maryland's growing viticulture industry – and on becoming the county's first winery –

they planted their first vines in 2007 and by May of 2010, cut the ribbon on the beautiful new tasting room.

Less than five years since uncorking that first bottle of Layton's Chance wine, the business continues to thrive, exceeding production and distribution goals in 2013. This year's harvest produced 12,000 gallons including 29 tons of grapes grown by their farm and another 14 tons from other vineyards around the shore.

"This year's crops will yield over 60,000 bottles of wine, a significant increase from our first year's production of 7,000 gallons," co-owner Jennifer Layton says. She estimates year over year growth has averaged 10% annually.

In 2013, they concentrated on expanding their distribution network both in Maryland and into Delaware. With 55 outlets currently, Jennifer wants to increase their range and add a dozen more stores where customers can purchase their products.

"The closer the store is to our Dorchester County location, the more of our wine they sell," Jennifer says, citing Snow's Turn on Route 16 and Best Wine & Spirits on Route 50 as their two top outlets.

More than 'value-added' agriculture, Laytons – like many wineries throughout the country – has become a thriving destination for tourists and residents alike. At least 30,000 people have visited the Vienna operation to purchase wine, tour the vineyards or attend one of their many festivals and special events.

Next year, Jennifer hopes to experiment with other varieties to see what grapes they may want to plant in the future. "We look at what grows well and have found that hybrid grapes such as Chardonelle, Cabernet Franc (a vinifera) and Marquette are best suited to Dorchester's soil and weather."

With room to grow, the vineyard could add eight acres to the 14 existing and another 8,500 gallon tank to more than double their production under the state's current laws.

The family's farming operation, including the vineyard, employs six people full-time and five part-time tasting room staff. During the harvest, they hire an additional five people.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DCTC Increases Students & Programs



Enrollment at the Dorchester Career and Technology Center (DCTC) is on the rise and with new programs slated for the 2014-

2015 school year, Principal and County Career and Technology Education Supervisor Kermit Hines is excited about the opportunities available for local students and employers.

"In the next five years, I think we're going to see a huge presentation of the investment the county has made in this facility and these programs," he said.

Total enrollment this year is 608, which includes students in the many career tracks offered at DCTC on the Cambridge Beltway (now in its third school year) as well as those in two programs also offered at North Dorchester County High School. Enrollment was 565 in 2012-13 and 485 the year before.

Through federal and state grants and Project Lead the Way, DCTC plans to introduce pre-engineering and biomedical sciences programs next year. Both tie closely with STEM-related job opportunities (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

A Project Lead the Way installment is also planned for all the county's middle schools at each grade level. Hines says Culinary Arts, Homeland Security, Collision Repair, Medium and Heavy/Truck Repair, Welding, Cosmetology and the Teacher Academy are the most popular programs at the school with 15 to a maximum of 20 students enrolled. And he sees two new programs currently

with eight to 10 students – interactive media production and the Cisco Networking Academy – gaining momentum. "Those programs haven't had the word-of-mouth benefit yet," Hines said. "They're upstarts about to take off."

The education and skills gained at DCTC prepare students for job opportunities or further learning at two- and four-year institutions or trade schools.

Hines says a recent survey showed that every body shop in Dorchester County and surrounding counties has a DCTC graduate. In several cases, they own the shop.

All the diesel mechanics repairing buses at Delmarva Community Services went through the program. Culinary students are working the line alongside chefs at the Hyatt, Stoked, The High Spot and many other county restaurants. And manufacturers like GKD and Cambridge International employ graduates.

## REAL ESTATE Hurlock Medical Signs Lease with Nanticoke

Hurlock Mayor Joyce Spratt announced October 7, 2013 that Nanticoke Health Services signed a two-year lease with the Hurlock Medical Center to open physician offices at 302 Collins Street by the end of November. The announcement is welcome to town officials and residents have access to healthcare facilities and services conveniently located at the medical center.

According to Mayor Spratt, "This is huge for Hurlock because we have not had medical care available here since Choptank left in May." She credited Nanticoke and Tom Brown, president of Nanticoke Physician's Network, for their commitment to the community.

According to an October 7 article in The Banner, Nanticoke's offices will be open five days a week. Effective November 17, Dr. John Appiott will

serve as the on-site physician two days a week, and a nurse practitioner will staff the facility three days a week.



## SMALL BUSINESS Cambridge Jumpstarts Small Business Saturday

With the holiday season around the corner, and the fourth annual Small Business Saturday ahead on November 30, Cambridge Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley and Cambridge Council members Hanson, Sydnor, Thomas and Vickers reminded Dorchester County residents to shop local and support the town's retailers and restaurants. They joined hundreds of people downtown for Second Saturday events, ribbon-cuttings and anniversary celebrations November 9.

Sunnyside Shop's Heidi Griebel and Joie de Vivre Gallery's Joy Staniforth had much to celebrate on Saturday as each marked nine and 13 years respectively of owning and operating their businesses in Cambridge. The veteran main street entrepreneurs welcomed Dorchester native and new business owner Ashley Banks.

Banks opened the doors to her beautiful new children's boutique, Sur Jeudi at 511 Poplar Street across from Sunnyside. Stocked with new children's clothes, toys and gifts, the shop is the third local retailer to open downtown the past three months.

In October, Deborah Benisch and Debbie Jackson cut the ribbon on their vintage furniture and collectibles shop, Heart of the Chesapeake Antiques, attached to the Canvasback Restaurant. Two weeks later, George Wright relocated his art and framing shop,

renamed Downtown Frame of Mind, next to the Dorchester Arts Center.

In addition to November's new café opening, the two new businesses scheduled to debut on Race Street in early 2014 are Elliott's Baking and Slick's Barbershop.

For information on these and other businesses, visit [www.CambridgeMainStreet.com](http://www.CambridgeMainStreet.com)

## SMALL BUSINESS Juice Bar, Café & Natural Grocer Underway on Gay Street

Inspired to provide a healthier alternative to Dorchester's "fast food highway," and meet the growing needs of people facing chronic dietary conditions, Chef Patrick Fanning will open Squeeze at 312 Gay Street in Cambridge this month. The new juice bar, café and store will be open seven days a week from 8 am-8 pm.

"I wanted to have a healthy place in Dorchester for people with a vegetarian lifestyle or dietary restrictions such as celiac disease or gluten intolerance," Fanning said. "There wasn't a place to fill this market's needs in our community, and we saw an opportunity to address an important quality-of-life condition."

Fanning's growing epicurean empire includes the popular The High Spot, which opened in 2011 with Brett and Jamie Summers, and Stoked, their most recent venture, opened its doors in March of this year. He is confident his newest operation will provide area residents and employees with more healthful options to dine in, take away, or prepare at home.

Stocked with both organic and specialty grocery items and year-round vegetables supplied by both MR Green, a hydroponic farm in Salisbury, and seasonal harvests from Emily's Produce, the health-food store is located in the back of Squeeze.

Located in the front, the café and take-out menu features wraps, soups and sandwiches. Cambridge's newest dining destination and business is also a jobs creator, employing six to seven full-time people.