TOP STORY *(Continued from page 1)*

stressed how "customers today want healthy, locally grown and sustainable protein, and pledged to 'do whatever I can' to support the transformation of an old guard Maryland industry to serve restaurant patrons."

(Continued from page 3)

For more information, call the Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Training at 410-228-4360 (x-5850), or the Cambridge Center at 410-228-5754.

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT
Dorchester Aquaculture Company Expands

Claude Anderson, founder and CEO of Waterland Fisheries, never lets adversity get in his way. Following the tremendous loss of thousands of his tilapia stock in December when a portion of his roof collapsed, Dr. Anderson resolved to not only restore his Hurlock-based aquaculture business, but to persevere with plans to expand operations.

Those expansion plans are gaining momentum as the former Florida education official, political strategist, and entrepreneur gets ready to market and distribute his latest fresh fish farmed in Dorchester County. In less than four months, Anderson expects to be selling barramundi -- popularly referred to as "Asian sea bass," a mild, flaky white fish to restaurants and distributors throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

Anderson modified his existing tanks and added additional ones to raise this new species prized for its delicate flavor, firm texture and healthy properties. "We're setting up our systems now to sell directly to grocery stores, restaurants and distributors within a 100 mile radius," said Anderson. He anticipates doubling the jobs at his Hurlock plant to 12 or 13 by the end of the year.

Visit www.WaterlandFish.com or call (301) 564-6075.

Dorchester County Economic Development
5263 Bucktown Road
Cambridge MD 21613

Sign-up at www.ChooseDorchester.org to receive this monthly e-newsletter

CHOOSE dorchester
Opening Doors for Business in Dorchester County

SEPTEMBER 2013

TOP STORY

Startup Maryland Pitch tour Rolls into Dorchester County

When the Startup Maryland 'pitch bus' pulled into the parking lot at Hooper's Island Aquaculture company early on September 10, the fishery was already teeming with activity. From oysters sizzling with garlic butter, bacon and cheese and a three foot high Chesapeake Gold logo ice sculpture filled with bivalves on the half shell, to employees packing cardboard boxes with the company's signature oysters in the newly renovated processing center, dozens of people were on hand to welcome Startup's passengers to Dorchester County.

Led by and for entrepreneurs, Startup Maryland rallies entrepreneurs and economic development stakeholders to connect, celebrate, coach, and help raise capital for new and innovative enterprises. Co-Chaired by Mike Binko, CEO of KloudTrack, and

Julie Lenzer Kirk, Executive Director of the Maryland Center for Entrepreneurship, the 2013 tour kicked off in Ocean City the day before.

This year's Dorchester stop was the result of Chesapeake Gold's Johnny Shockley's pitch in 2012 when he was one of 168 entrepreneurs who shared his startup story during the inaugural tour. Recalling that first encounter, Binko said he was "blown away when he heard Shockley's pitch by the innovations taking place on Hoopers Island." He credited Shockley and Ricky Fitzhugh for transforming an 'old guard seafood industry' and reminded the crowd that their efforts reverberated far beyond Maryland.

After welcoming Startup to Hoopers Island, Shockley stressed the importance of sustaining and growing the region's fishery industry and his commitment to 'take it to the next level' for future generations. Shockley acknowledged and introduced Steve Phillips, President of Phillips Seafood and area native. Phillips credited Johnny and Ricky with their food safety and sanitation technologies and for serving the 'best product on the market anywhere.'

Tim Sagoo, President of Congressional Seafood, a Chesapeake Gold distributor,

(Continued on page 4)

WHO'S HIRING?
One-Stop Career Centers Serves Employers

While many businesses know that Dorchester County's One-Stop Career Center provides hiring assistance for job seekers, fewer are aware that the office also offers employers numerous recruitment and personnel services.

Operated by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR),

(Continued on page 2)

CHOOSE dorchester
www.ChooseDorchester.org
ChooseDorchester is the monthly newsletter of the Dorchester County Economic Development Department. For information or suggestions, contact info@ChooseDorchester.org or call (410) 228-0155

WHO'S HIRING? (Continued from page 1)

the Cambridge-based Center has grown the past few years to expand resources and increase support for businesses looking for recruitment and training assistance. A key program of their business services is the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).

DLLR launched MWE, a comprehensive, interactive systems for employers to post, manage and promote job openings. The free interactive job listing service currently features approximately 275 Dorchester County jobs. From nurses and healthcare specialists to sales associates and metal fabricators, the service has been successfully used by dozens of county employers. DLLR's staff is working to increase the number of employers utilizing this free service by proactively promoting it through company visits and outreach. Statewide, more than 10,000 employers have posted job openings through the MWE.

Employers using the Workforce Exchange locally include retailers, health care facilities and manufacturers. According to Eastern Shore Business Representative Art Reeside, Dorchester employers Protenergy, Cambridge International, Chesapeake Bay Hyatt Resort, Interstate Container and JM Marshall have all successfully recruited and placed employees in their companies using the MWE.

Businesses can also utilize the centers to access to employee recruitment and screening; post job openings; receive and forward applicant resumes; pre-screen and refer qualified job seekers; and information on tax credits, labor market and labor law. Additional employer services include job profiling, individual recruitment plans, group and individual counseling, skill assessment and occupational profiling, and employer seminars.

Located at 627 Race Street in Cambridge, the Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 am-4 pm. For information, contact Reeside at 410-822-3030, x-307, or Workforce Development Specialist Ruth Trovato at 410-901-4152.

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT
Dorchester's General Stores

Reids Grove, Simmons, Woolford, Hoopers Island, and Lewis share a unique bond. From Rhodesdale, Cambridge and Taylors Island to Hoopers Island and Hudson, they are five of Dorchester's remaining general stores. A sixth – Bucktown – no longer sells sundries, but is instead a destination and information center for visitors exploring Blackwater, the Harriet Tubman National Byway or any of the many waterways in the county.

Dorchester's general stores are all part of a once thriving quilt of small businesses across America. While some of this genre have continuously operated for hundreds of years (the oldest recorded one is believed to be Gray's General Store which opened in Rhode Island in 1788), their dwindling numbers can be attributed to many factors including increased suburbanization and the rise of inexpensive 'big box' stores.

Fortunately, these landmark stores continue to serve the County's rural communities. Many have evolved as destinations beyond the resident population, selling hunting and fishing supplies at Taylors Island to hunters or serving an outstanding meal to visitors at Lewis's University Restaurant.

Most of the county's five remaining stores are family owned and operated, employing anywhere from a few family members at Reids Grove up to a few dozen people during the high seasons at larger stores like Woolford and Simmons.

One of the smallest such landmarks is Reids Grove Country Store, recently recognized by comptroller Peter Franchot for being a "great grocery store and gathering place." Re-opened in March 2009 by Tom and Donna Bradshaw, the tiny shop a few miles north of Vienna, was owned and operated by Donna's grandmother, Anna Ruth Foxwell for four decades.

Bradshaw credits Joy Loeffler, a former Dorchester First program coordinator, as "instrumental in helping us navigate the cumbersome zoning regulations and red-tape to be able to live and work here." In the 22 years the store sat vacant, zoning restrictions almost proved their undoing until Loeffler -- a one-time planning board member -- found a way to move forward. Bradshaw's entry into elected office was the result of his experience trying to open a small business and his resolve to make it easier for businesses to operate in Dorchester County.

Reids Grove's merchandise includes a little bit of anything a community resident, farmer, field worker, or transient trucker might want. From baby aspirin and orange juice to detergent and delicious home baked desserts, the small store serves as a popular spot for grabbing breakfast or a sandwich to go. Donna's ever-present applesauce cake is a perennial favorite as customers stop by every day for a slice, half or whole.

Another Dorchester couple celebrating four years as general store operators this month are Youngman and Jennifer Collins. Jennifer, a county native, pastry chef, and culinary school graduate, purchased the Lewis General Store in 2009 with her husband, Youngman, a California native and fellow professional chef.

Together, the two have continued the general store tradition -- while adding their unique stamp in the form of a gourmet restaurant. Located on Hudson Road, 11 miles west of Cambridge, the 138 year-old white clapboard building stocks groceries, sundries and wine. A half-dozen tables and cast iron stove invite customers to linger over coffee or lunch.

Youngman and Jennifer showcase their culinary chops five nights a week when their University Restaurant serves Neck District residents and out-of-town visitors alike in its 28-seat room off the back of the store.

To celebrate the Collins' four-year anniversary, the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce will hold their monthly Business After Hours reception at the Lewis General Store, 1042 Hudson Road on Monday October 7, 5:30-7:00 pm. For information and to RSVP, email robin@dorchesterchamber.org or call 410-228-3575.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Chesapeake Customizes Workforce Training Programs

Since opening their doors in 1967, hundreds of thousands of mid-shore residents have walked through Chesapeake College's doors. Whether earning an associate degree or professional certificate, enrolling in one of many credit and noncredit continuing education courses, or attending any number of concerts, gallery openings or plays, the College has been an educational, economic and cultural anchor for almost 50 years.

For employers and employees, Chesapeake has also been a key partner in higher education and workforce development. Between the college's Queenstown Campus and Cambridge Center, more than 9,000 people were enrolled in Continuing Education programs in 2012.

The College's strong emphasis on workforce development will continue to play a critical role in the coming years with the adoption in July of a new 5-year strategic plan. Under President Barbara Viniar's leadership, one of the college's six stated goals - to strengthen the regional economy - will be a priority of the Division of Continuing Education & Workforce Training.

Michael Dugan, Dean of the Division, will continue to oversee efforts to strengthen the college's reputation as the workforce development partner for area employers. The Division works with businesses to design, develop and deliver tailored training programs. In addition to designing customer-specific courses, Chesapeake workforce specialists conduct individual needs assessments and strategic planning assistance.

Some of the college's more popular continuing education and workforce training programs include those in healthcare, manufacturing and tourism. Courses are designed to certify and/or train residents in higher growth employment opportunities such as: Food Service/Culinary Management, Assisted-Living Management, Dental Assistant, Medical Administrative Assistant, Medical Coding Specialist Certificate, Medical Transcription, Nursing Assistant, Personal Fitness Trainer, Pharmacy Technician, Hotel/Restaurant Management, Welding, Truck and Bus Driver, Veterinary Assistant, and Wedding Planner.

(Continued on page 4)