

**WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL
PRESS RELEASE**



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MEDIA CONTACT: Laura Orleans, Director, 508-993-8894, info@workingwaterfrontfestival.org

**2008 WORKINGWATERFRONT FESTIVAL SLATED FOR SEPTEMBER
Performers include Alaskan Fisherpoet, Norwegian folk dancers and Menhaden Chanteymen**

New Bedford, MA, June 10, 2008— The 2008 Working Waterfront Festival takes place in New Bedford, America's largest commercial fishing port, on Saturday and Sunday, September 27th & 28th. This free, family-friendly event opens the waterfront to the public with a rare look into commercial fishing, America's oldest industry. More than simply a celebration, the Working Waterfront Festival is a unique opportunity for the public get a first hand look at the culture and traditions of the commercial fishing industry and for the working waterfront community to tell its own story. The event presents all that goes into bringing seafood from the ocean to the table in a way that is hands-on, educational and fun.

The 2008 Line up includes performers from as far away as Alaska and Norway as well as a group of retired menhaden fishermen who keep their unique tradition of African-American work songs alive. **Dave Densmore** has been a life long fisherman having trolled the west coast for salmon and Albacore, otter trawled for bottom fish, and fished Alaska for Black Cod and Halibut, King Crab, Tanner and Dungeness Crab. In the 1970s he began writing poetry about his life as a fisherman which he will share at this year's festival. Sixteen dancers from several folk dance societies in Norway will perform traditional **Norwegian folk dances** accompanied by live music. Norwegian immigrants were pioneers in establishing the local scalloping industry and Norwegian Americans continue to be the backbone of the local scallop industry as fishermen, boat owners, shoreside business owners. On the Northern Neck region of Virginia, a group of men in their 70s and 80s has been keeping alive an uncommon legacy of African-American work songs sung on the water. As young men, they worked aboard fishing boats where they pulled up by hand nets teeming with menhaden from the waters of the Chesapeake and Atlantic singing chanteys to coordinate their movements. Today the **Northern Neck Chantey Singers** proudly share their tradition at festivals across the nation.

The theme of the 2008 Festival is ***Connecting Communities, Preserving Ports***. Festival programming will explore the connections between working ports, the interconnectedness of ports and their larger communities and efforts to preserve working waterfronts around the country.

The **Working Waterfront Festival** is a project of the **Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA**, a non-profit organization. The FREE festival, a family friendly, educational celebration of New England's commercial fishing industry, features live maritime and ethnic music, fishermen's contests, fresh seafood, vessel tours, author readings, cooking demonstrations, kid's activities and more. It all takes place in New Bedford, MA, America's #1 fishing port, on the fourth full weekend of September. Navigate to us at www.workingwaterfrontfestival.org.

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