

WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2008 WORKINGWATERFRONT FESTIVAL SLATED FOR SEPTEMBER Theme to explore challenges facing working ports

New Bedford, MA, August 1, 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.

The theme of this year's Festival is *Connecting Communities, Preserving Ports*. Commercial fishing communities are facing a host of challenges to their traditional way of life including development pressures, off-shore aquaculture, government regulations, pollution and inflation. Some ports have disappeared, others are struggling for their very existence, and some have been successful in confronting challenges.

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. Performances of music from around the globe (including Cajun, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese and African-American) reflect the ethnicity of the nation's fishing communities. Cooking demonstrations highlight regional dishes such as leftover shrimp boil salad from Grand Isle, Louisiana and Smith Island Cake from Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. Fishermen from dozens of ports describe fisheries as distinct as shrimping on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, crabbing in Kodiak, Alaska and purse seining for menhaden in Virginia during a panel discussion called *A Fishery in Every Port*. Individuals from ports around the country share the challenges facing their communities including regulations, pollution, waterfront development and the economy as part of a panel called *Pulse of the Ports*. The *Dock-u-mentaries Film Tent* features raw footage and short documentaries chronicling a multitude of fisheries and fishing communities.

For the past four years, the festival has worked to educate the public about the rich culture of commercial fishing. This year's event will help visitors understand their connections to the industry and their role in ensuring its future. The event will also provide a forum for members of commercial fishing communities from around the country to celebrate their history and culture, present their skills and knowledge and share challenges and best practices in continuing their culture.

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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