

WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL PRESS RELEASE



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Native American fishing and farming traditions to be presented at 2009 Working Waterfront Festival: Inupiat whalers, Choctaw fisherfolk/farmers and Aquinna Wampanoag to share traditional culture

New Bedford, MA, September 4, 2009 --This year, the Working Waterfront Festival welcomes several new participants, brought to the festival through the New Bedford Whaling Museum's participation in a program called ECHO. ECHO (Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations) is a federally funded project, directed by the Department of Education that connects cultures in Massachusetts, Alaska, Hawaii and Mississippi. Many of these connections were created by the whaling industry in the 1800s.

Sharing the Harvest brings to New Bedford Joe and Nancy Leavitt, two traditional subsistence whalers and hunters from Barrow, Alaska, and Trudy Jimmie and Pearlie Thomas, two subsistence farmer/fisherfolk from Choctaw, Mississippi to share their stories of harvest, their traditions of basketry and beadwork and their tales of survival. They will be joined by Jonathan Perry who will share Wampanoag maritime traditions.

Two local fishermen, Captain Chris Wright and Captain Toby Lees brought the New Bedford story to Mississippi's Indian Fair in early July and Captain Eva Liput traveled to the Trade Fair near Nuiqsut, Alaska in late July. This idea arose from the parallel activity of recording the stories of elder whalers in Barrow, elder fishermen in New Bedford, and fishermen and farmers in Choctaw. We figured if the stories are important enough for the locals to preserve, they're interesting enough to share with other harvesters of the oceans and fields.

The Working Waterfront Festival is an award winning, family friendly event celebrating the history and culture of New England's commercial fishing industry. The free festival presents all that goes into bringing seafood from the ocean to the table in a way that is hands-on, educational and fun and features: live music, children's activities, cooking demonstrations, vessel and harbor tours, fisherman's contests, author readings, film screenings, local seafood, festival bookstore, maritime artisans marketplace & more. While continuing to focus on commercial fishing and other port industries, the 2009 *Working Waterfront Festival* will consider connections between fishing and farming communities. Plans for this special program include an open air market featuring local produce and fresh seafood and cooking demonstrations highlighting traditional community recipes; panel discussions, author readings and film screenings which explore common issues; and occupational demonstrations of fishing and farming skills. This year's Festival dates are September 26th & 27th. Complete details at www.workingwaterfrontfestival.org