

Governor Snyder makes Aquaculture stop in Delta County.

Delta County, MI--Michigan's Governor, Rick Snyder continued his visit through Delta County by visiting Pisces Fish Machinery, Inc. in Wells, Michigan. On Thursday, the Central UP Aquaculture partnership comprised of the Delta County EDA, Hannahville Indiana Community, and Pisces Fish Machinery hosted a breakfast presentation about Aquaculture and the opportunities it can bring to Delta County, the Upper Peninsula, and Michigan.

Tribal Chairman Ken Meshigaud welcomed the Governor and special guests including the DNR, MEDC, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture. He underscored the commitment of the Hannahville Indian Community to the project and the important ties it has to the rich agricultural history in our area. The group defines aquaculture as raising fish, plants, and other aquatic organisms in controlled conditions to produce a marketable product. They provided statistics on the tremendous opportunity and demand for fish protein. Dave Anthony, Business Director for Hannahville, asked the audience to remember two numbers: 91% and 15#'s. 91% of the seafood consumed in the US is imported. 15#'s is the amount of fish a US consumer takes in each year (only half of the USDA recommendation).

The Governor toured Pisces where father and son owners, Trevor and Mathew Wastell, provided a demonstration of a filet machine in action. Pisces has been providing a full line of services to the fish processing industry since 1983. Their products include fish processing equipment, custom designed machinery, complete plant design, and Aquaculture products consulting. They export over 75% of the products they manufacture all over the world.

With their vast industry knowledge, Pisces connected the group with consultants Israel and Yedod Meil. With aquaculture facilities in Poland, Israel, Honduras, and others; their group is recognized as the world leader in providing tilapia. The goal of the project is a public/private partnership to increase jobs and exports through aquaculture. The first phase of the project will focus on growing Yellow Perch, a species indigenous to the area.

“Aquaculture presents an exciting opportunity to build on our community assets and lead the way to bring a new industry to our area,” said Vicki Schwab, Director of the Economic Development Alliance. “And with that will come a broad spectrum of jobs possible from entry level to advanced analysis. The Central UP Aquaculture team looks forward to the continued exploration on the opportunities we have in Delta County to raise fish for food,” she added.

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