

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
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New business brings Atlantic red crab to Hampton Roads and beyond

Wednesday, June 26, 2013 - You know the blue crab. Now meet the red crab.

That was the message late Wednesday morning when local and state officials gathered at the downtown waterfront to welcome a partnership that is bringing the Atlantic red crab to Hampton for delivery - and meals - throughout the East Coast and Midwest.

L. D. Amory Co. and Graham & Rollins Inc., both of Hampton, have joined Massachusetts-based Atlantic Red Crab Company in a joint venture that is expected to bring more jobs and related business to Hampton.

In a news release Wednesday, Gov. Bob McDonnell said, “the harvesting of deep sea red crabs off the coast will enhance our already sterling reputation (for quality seafood) and provide more outstanding seafood choices for our citizens.”

“It’s a fun day,” said Hampton Mayor Molly Ward, who worked with City Manager Mary Bunting to help the new venture lease a building downtown where the live crabs will be held in special tanks. Ward noted Wednesday that the new partnership “gives us another seafood product” in Hampton and the opportunity for economic growth.

Certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, the deep-sea red crab is harvested year round off the continental coast at a depth of 2,000 feet or more. The crab has a smooth reddish orange shell and a sweet taste that has been likened to snow crabs. The meat is white and has a distinct red pigment on the outside, like a lobster. “Once you try it, you can’t go wrong,” said Meade Amory of L.D. Amory.

The crab boats will take their catch to Amory, where they will be packed and then made available to consumers at Graham and Rollins Seafood Market in Hampton and other retail outlets. Johnny Graham of Graham & Rollins said the new business relies on the expertise of all three companies.

Jon Williams, owner of Atlantic Red Crab Company said in a news release that their hope is to provide Virginians with a year round supply of fresh red crab. “Our goal is to land one million pounds of red crab into Hampton.”

Because the goal is to deliver those crabs live, the company worked with the Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center of Virginia Tech, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and Virginia Sea Grant to determine how water temperature and other factors would affect incoming crabs.

Todd P. Haymore, Virginia's secretary of Agriculture, said the new business should further the state's reputation as a leader in the seafood industry nationally and internationally. Haymore said Virginia is the nation's third largest producer of marine products behind Alaska and Louisiana.

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