

Salt to be imported through Eastport

BY JOHANNA S. BILLINGS
BDN STAFF

EASTPORT — The New England Salt Co. of Winterport is expanding its operations Down East in hopes of supplying road salt next winter to municipalities here, in northern Maine and in the maritime provinces of Canada.

New England Salt President Steve Clisham said last week that the company signed an agreement “a couple weeks ago” with Federal Marine Terminals, which runs the port for the Eastport Port Authority.

Clisham said the company will

know by midsummer what new municipalities it will be serving because local governments typically solicit bids for road salt from May to July.

“We want to concentrate more on the Down East area and northern Maine,” he said.

The company already provides salt to an estimated 100 to 150 municipalities, he said.

Clisham declined to say what the company’s revenues are but said he hopes the expansion can add 15 to 20 percent to the bottom line.

New England Salt will continue to import salt from South Ameri-

ca and Morocco. Last year, his firm imported 85,000 tons of salt through Searsport, Clisham said.

The expansion won’t change the company’s operation in Searsport in any way, he said. He also does not anticipate any problems selling salt over the border in Canada.

Clisham said New England Salt has two full-time employees. Other employees are moved from Clisham’s other companies — Clisham Construction and Maine Materials Inc. — as needed. For instance, Clisham Construction workers will continue to deliver salt to customers.

New England Salt considered expanding into Eastport before, but it instead ended up investing last year in additional storage space near Searsport, he said.

William Massow, the company’s vice president of operations, previously said that the closing of the PotashCorp salt mine near Sussex, New Brunswick, that was announced in January was important, but not the only reason behind New England Salt’s expansion to Eastport.

New England Salt has been “toying with the idea” of expansion for a year and a half, he said.

Massow said the company chose

Eastport because it is the deepest port on the eastern seaboard and it has a newly constructed conveyor system and scales.

“We are very pleased to have [New England Salt] come on board,” Chris Gardner, Eastport Port Authority executive director, said this week.

New England Salt’s presence will mean the new \$10 million conveyor system, finished in 2013, will be put to use to unload ships carrying salt.

Clisham estimates the company will import its first shipment of salt through Eastport sometime this summer.

Maine gas prices hold steady at \$2.10

BY DARREN FISHELL
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — The average price of regular gasoline in Maine remained basically flat last week at an average of \$2.10 per gallon, as the national average fell.

The price tracking website GasBuddy reported that the average price of a gallon of regular gas in Maine was 0.7 cents higher than one week earlier, while the national average dipped 1.2 cents, to \$2.04 per gallon.

Gregg Laskoski, a senior analyst for GasBuddy, said in a news release that the drop came from high refinery output and stored inventories that smoothed the transition to a lower-emitting and more expensive summer blend of gasoline.

“The healthy inventory in advance of demand has helped flatten prices, but we don’t expect that to last when summer travel kicks into high gear,” Laskoski said.

The average per-gallon gasoline price in Maine, as of Sunday, was 30 cents lower than one year ago and about 24 cents higher than one month ago. Maine’s \$2.10 per-gallon average was higher than New Hampshire’s, \$2.01, and Vermont’s, \$2.09.

GasBuddy and the U.S. Energy Information Administration projected prices will remain lower on average this year than in 2015, despite the expected rise in crude oil prices, political and tax uncertainties and the removal in December of a 40-year ban on exporting crude oil from the United States.

In March, the Energy Information Administration significantly dropped its forecast of monthly gasoline prices, putting its expectation for May at \$1.99 per gallon, down from an original forecast of \$2.49 per gallon in January.



ABIGAIL CURTIS | BDN

Kathleen Cravens of Ellsworth came to Belfast on Friday to check out the new Main Street location of Fiddlehead Artisan Supply. “I love this shop – it’s always worth the drive,” she said. “It’s filled with color and inspiration.”

Main Street shuffle

Belfast in ‘good health’ as longtime businesses expand

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

BELFAST — Call it the “Main Street shuffle.”

Change is afoot in the heart of Belfast, with two businesses from Knox County opening up shop here and with other longtime downtown enterprises moving from one location to another.

“This is good health,” Belfast City Planner Wayne Marshall said Friday. “It’s a sign that people are willing to come to Belfast and invest, and that other businesses were doing well enough that they wanted to expand. I take all those as being very much positives.”

The shuffle began late last year when Abby and Jeff Gilchrist, owners of Fiddlehead Artisan Supply, decided that they wanted to expand from the space they were renting at 159 High St. and purchased a building on lower

Main Street. This spring, the Gilchrist family have been refurbishing their new building’s storefront space and opened in the new location, about a block away from the old location, on April 1.

Abby Gilchrist said Friday that the new space has about 2,500 square feet, about 800 more square feet than they had previously, and it will allow the couple to add a dedicated classroom space for quilting and crafts. They also will be able to expand their line of art supplies.

“It’s really great to be on Main Street,” Gilchrist said. “I’m really excited to be in the thick of it.”

But when they moved in, the Chocolate Drop Candy Shop and Harbor Artisans had to move out. Owners of the candy and ice cream shop, which had been open at that location for more than 20 years, said that it initially was hard to find a new home. But last fall, Bryant Hall, the proprietor of

The Cool Spot ice cream store, decided to give up his lease and the owners of the building quickly contacted Dave Crabiel of the Chocolate Drop Candy Shop. He expects the shop to reopen there by mid-May.

“We were just happy to find another spot on Main Street,” Crabiel, the co-owner of the business, said. “They’re rare, and they go quickly. I remember back in 2009 when there were seven to 10 empty storefronts. Since then, there’s been [no vacancies.] It’s been absolutely fantastic for the town. It seems right now we have a good mix, and we’re very excited. Very much looking forward to the summer.”

Belfast Harbor Artisans still is searching for a new home in the city, according to a post on the gallery’s Facebook page.

“We are still searching for a new home in Belfast and we won’t

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How to get rid of your old paint

BY RUSS VAN ARSDALE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NORTHEAST CONTACT

When consumers buy paint, Maine environmental officials would like them to do three things: buy the right amount, find ways to use it up and reuse or recycle whatever paint is left over.

Helping to make those goals possible is a program called PaintCare, which started several years ago by the paint industry’s trade association. Maine is part of the program, which includes seven other states and the District of Columbia.

At last count, there were about 90 sites in Maine participating in PaintCare. Consumers can bring unused paint in tightly sealed containers — no larger than five gallons — to one of the sites, where they’re collected on pallets.

Latex paint goes to a recycling facility in Illinois (there currently are no large volume recyclers in the Northeast).

Oil-based paint is considered a hazardous waste, although industry officials are talking with a recycler in Ontario about sending Maine’s oil-based paint there.

Somewhere in our basement is a package of drying agent; when added to the dregs of a can of paint, the stuff will harden it, allowing it to be thrown out with the trash. Multiply our leftover paint with that in basements across Maine, and you’re talking about a lot of paint. Industry officials estimate that 10 percent of all paint that’s purchased is not used and that a good deal of that could be reused or recycled.

The nonprofit ReStores run by Habitat for Humanity accept donations of paint, among other things. The stores sell the paint along with other donated home improvement goods at reduced prices. Other than a few informal recycling efforts, there seems to be little other reuse of our unneeded paint.

That fact prompted the start of the PaintCare effort, which kicked off Oct. 1, 2015, in Maine.

John Hurd of PaintCare says more than 1,000 pallet-size boxes of paint have been collected since then. He says PaintCare pays the bill for towns and cities that collect paint at their transfer stations and hold it for recycling. Hurd told me he’s interested in talking with other municipal officials about increasing the number of drop-off sites.

The Maine Legislature passed a bill in 2013 that approved the PaintCare program. The law includes fees to help pay for the collection; those fees are 35 cents, 70 cents or \$1.60 depending on container size, for paint that’s sold in Maine.

Both Hurd and Andrea Lani

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Caribou restaurant owner wins award

BY CHRISTOPHER BOUCHARD
AROOSTOOK REPUBLICAN & NEWS

CARIBOU — Michelle Hanson and the Frederick’s Southside crew have been working hard to maintain the Caribou restaurant, delivering signature dishes ranging from chicken melts and homemade doughnuts to pizzas with special crust and sauces. Now, Hanson’s efforts are being recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

On March 16, the SBA announced Hanson as the winner of the Woman Owned Small Business of the Year Award for Maine.

“I’m thankful to my crew, family and everyone who helped me get where I am today,” said Hanson. “Without them, I wouldn’t be recognized at all.”

Hanson also expressed special thanks to Jamie Cyr, her restaurant’s salesman.

“Jamie has taken special time

to go over things I didn’t understand when I was first starting out,” said Hanson. “He has been very patient while working to get me up to date on everything.”

According to an SBA press release, Hanson was nominated by David Spooner of the Northern Maine Development Commission.

“The SBA could not have chosen a more fitting business for Maine Woman Owned Small Business of the Year,” Spooner said in the press release. “Michelle Hanson is the face of Frederick’s Southside and brings a positive energy to everything she does.”

Frederick’s was established in 1985 by Fred Hackett, a prominent entrepreneur in the community who owned numerous local restaurants. Frederick’s main draw was that it strictly served homemade meals, a tradition that Hanson maintains to this day. Hanson worked for Fred while going to college, and says he was a “respected



CHRISTOPHER BOUCHARD | AROOSTOOK REPUBLICAN & NEWS

Michelle Hanson, owner of Frederick’s Southside, recently won the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Woman Owned Small Business of the Year award for the state of Maine. Hanson stands behind the front counter with her two children Paul and Danielle, who often help with the restaurant.

member of the community.”

In 1989, Frederick’s was purchased by Ralph Hanson, who later married Michelle in 1993.

“I became part of Frederick’s once I married Ralph, and from that point on I tried to stay behind the scenes. I mostly did paper-

work back then. In 2012, Ralph took ill and passed away. From that point on, my goal was to maintain the restaurant in hopes that our son Paul would show interest in operating the restaurant.”

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