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An \$800,000 municipal pier at Pine Point gets an enthusiastic thumbs-up from the working waterfront, where it will improve the lives – and competitive edge – of commercial fishermen.

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SCARBOROUGH — For commercial fishermen at Pine Point, the old way to load and unload gear was a back-breaking process, which put them at a disadvantage against competitors from other harbors.



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Dave Corbeau, Scarborough's harbormaster and marine resources officer, stands on the new pier at Pine Point. Completed this spring and opening last month, the \$800,000 improvement was paid for with a combination of grants and town funds.

Photos by Tim Greenway/Staff Photographer



The new municipal pier at Pine Point in Scarborough has two hydraulic hoists that can help load gear and bait directly from trucks to boats, saving time and effort.

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It often involved loading bait, fuel and gear into totes, lifting them individually into skiffs and then ferrying the loads out to their moored boats.

"The way we used to do it, by the time we got everything loaded and ready to go, you're already worn out," said Chris Rule, one of the 35 or so commercial fishermen who keep boats off Pine Point, at the outlet of the Scarborough River.

A new municipal pier, completed this spring after about seven years of planning, is making life a lot easier for Rule and the others who make a living off lobster, clams, shrimp and bluefin tuna.

The wooden pier, 14 feet wide and 220 feet long, allows fishermen to load and unload their boats regardless of the tides. They simply drive their pickup trucks onto the pier, where two hydraulic hoists are available to help them move equipment and bait directly onto their boats. Water and electricity are available, as well

"It's huge," said Rule, 45, captain of the Jessie Kay. He lobsters year-round out of Pine Point and started as a sternman here when he was 12.

"Lobstering keeps getting tougher. Our operating costs have skyrocketed," he said. "This makes our work much more efficient, much easier. Before, we could lose days of fishing because of the tide."

The \$800,000 pier opened for use last month, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for Aug. 10. The old municipal pier, a 6-foot-wide structure built in 1971, remains adjacent to the new one, and will continue to be used.

"It's my hope to secure for the next generation an opportunity to work and make a living on the water," said Scarborough's town manager, Tom Hall. "This was a classic partnership."

The town began pursuing money for a new municipal pier around 2004. It compiled \$165,000 in grants from the state Department of Transportation's Small Harbor Improvement Program. In 2006, the Town Council authorized as much as \$400,000 for the pier. The final piece of funding, \$252,500, came from Land for Maine's Future in 2009.

Construction began in November and ended in May. Since then, contractors have been finishing a punch-list of minor work at the pier, said Dave Corbeau, the town's harbormaster and marine resources officer.

Corbeau was the driving force for the project. His office is at the foot of the pier, next to the Pine Point Fisherman's Co-op.

"Looking at other harbors and the way they do business, we were so far behind," Corbeau said.

"This pier is going to save the fishermen time, and it's going to save their backs," he said. "It gets us caught up to where some other places are."

Scarborough has about 35 commercial fishermen, 26 commercial clam diggers and 220 recreational clam diggers.

Besides helping commercial fishermen, the pier will benefit recreational boaters, fishermen and the community as a whole, Corbeau said. Several floats are available for boaters to tie up for a variety of purposes, from changing oil to picking up passengers or having a meal at one of Pine Point's restaurants.

A committee will be formed to address how the pier will accommodate various types of users, Corbeau said. Ultimately, rules will be established for hours, storage and user fees. Revenue will pay for annual maintenance for the pier, hopefully taking that burden off taxpayers, Corbeau said.

Hall, the town manager, was previously the city manager in Rockland, where one of his top concerns was balancing the various needs along the working waterfront. He is confident that Scarborough's new pier will be a source of pride.

"I do expect we are going to have to formalize it," Hall said of the pier access in general. "I think there are ways to accommodate all users."

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