

# Fellsmere aquaculture project making a splash | Photo gallery

By Janet Begley  
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Students from the College Preparatory Academy of the Treasure Coast are shown a tub containing mature colossal shrimp during a groundbreaking ceremony for the Florida Organic Aquaculture facility Monday morning in Fellsmere. The company is building two large pole barns, each of which will contain 20 ponds where an estimated 2.5 million pounds of colossal shrimp will be grown annually.

## Florida Organic Aquaculture Groundbreaking



1 of 16

FELLSMERE — Hundreds came to rural Fellsmere Monday morning, excited to get their first-look at a \$13 million project by Florida Organic Aquaculture to grow and sell fresh sushi-grade colossal shrimp.

“You can see the splash this project is making,” said Indian River County Commissioner [Wesley Davis](#). “We have the ability to produce an agricultural commodity that brings dollars into the community. We have such an asset here.”

Located near SunAg on County Road 512 in Fellsmere, Florida Organic Aquaculture is building a 4.2-acre pole barn that will be utilized to grow the shrimp, with a first

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harvest expected by the end of 2013.

"It's taken us about six years to get to this point," said founder and CEO Cliff Morris. "For five-and-a-half years, I've been running on adrenaline. Now, I'm running on excitement."

Morris said he never heard of Fellsmere before Helene Caseltine from the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce suggested he visit with Fellsmere City Manager [Jason Nunemaker](#).

"I accomplished more with Jason in two weeks that I did in two years in Palm Beach County," said Morris. "I can't praise the City of Fellsmere enough. We want to be the spark that kindles a fire in Fellsmere and the entire region."

Nunemaker said the aquaculture project is the third of three projects that have recently been unveiled in his small, rural community. He cited the new National Elephant Center and the Army-funded ROTC challenge course as two other ways Fellsmere is encouraging economic development within the community.

"It is a perfect fit," said Nunemaker. "And I love the idea of foreign investment. You have folks coming from all over the world and investing in the United States and Fellsmere in particular. It gives us a shot in the arm."

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson was scheduled to deliver the keynote address for the groundbreaking but was called away on a family emergency. Replacing Nelson was former Florida State Sen. Ken Pruitt, who joked that perhaps the shrimp could be an offering that Nelson, who is a Democrat, takes to Washington to make peace with Republicans.

"It is a buzz that Florida Aquaculture has been created here in Fellsmere," said Pruitt. "We are very happy you chose the City of Fellsmere for this incredibly important venture."

Indian River County Chamber President Penny Chandler said the aquaculture project is a great example of the success that can be achieved when business and government collaborate.

"Florida Organic Aquaculture has selected the perfect location to capitalize on shrimp production," said Chandler. "Citrus, arugula and now colossal shrimp," she said.

Mayor Susan Adams, who runs Marsh Landing Restaurant in Fellsmere, said she tasted samples of the shrimp during a test harvest.

"It's a fabulous product," said Adams. "Not only can you grow anything in Fellsmere, now you can also grow shrimp."

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**Pierce Friday July 6 at 7pm**  
Unity of Fort Pierce

**Creative Night at VSA in StuART!** 7 p.m.  
VISIONARY School of Arts, 1650 S Kanner Hwy. Stuart

**Chess at the IRC Main Library** 12:30 p.m.  
Indian River County Main Library

**Cardio Heavy Bag Class** 8 p.m.  
Sebastian Karate Fitness & Self-Defense Center, 13428 U.S. 1, Sebastian

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