

Florida Organic Aquaculture groundbreaking under way in Fellsmere | Photos, Video

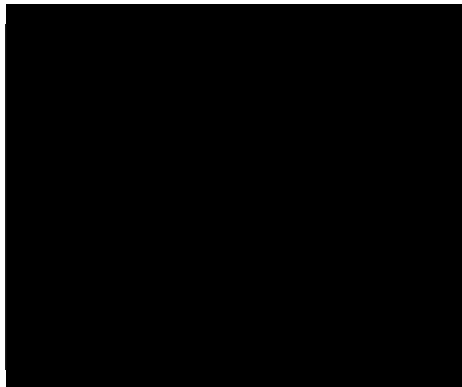
By Eric Pfahler
Posted April 29, 2013 at 5:58 a.m., updated April 29, 2013 at 2:29 p.m.

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Images of the construction underway at Florida Organic Aquaculture in Fellsmere on Wednesday, April 24, 2013.



Florida Organic Aquaculture

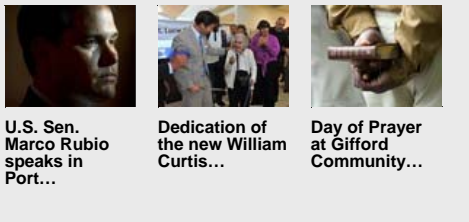
FELLSMERE — Fellsmere City Manager [Jason Nunemaker](#) talks about Florida Organic Aquaculture both as an individual economic success and an asset that can be used to help draw other employers to the city.

Florida Organic Aquaculture plans to make a \$13 million capital investment in Fellsmere and hire 60 to 70 employees to harvest and sell fresh sushi-grade colossal shrimp. The company also will house the nonprofit Florida Aquaculture Foundation, which will serve as a research and education component.

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Shrimp farm's groundbreaking set for April 29

Who: Florida Organic Aquaculture

What: The company plans to harvest and sell fresh, sushi-grade colossal shrimp and hire 60 to 70 people.

When: 10 a.m. April 29

Where: 15369 County Road 512 in Fellsmere

Guest speaker: U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla. is slated to be the featured guest speaker for the event, which originally was scheduled for mid-May.

Cost: The company plans to make a \$13 million investment and raised another \$3 million for working capital.

Average wage: The company plans to hire about 60 percent of its workforce from unskilled workers. Entry level positions earn \$13.75 per hour. Other jobs will range to \$90,000 per year for senior scientists.

Project completion: Plans are to have the first pole barn completed by the end of June. The second will be built either late 2013 or early 2014 and the third will be completed once the company is profitable.

Florida Organic Aquaculture also could be part of a larger economic shift in western Indian River County after helping to bring in a new network of natural gas pipelines built by Florida City Gas. The company is having a groundbreaking Monday, but work already has started.

The shrimp business could serve as a template for the rural community where other area agricultural landowners could be looking to diversify their crops, Nunemaker said.

"We're trying to emphasize and accentuate what we have," Nunemaker said. "We're not trying to compete with let's say Port St. Lucie, that we're going to be the next bio this or that. So we're creating our own little niche, so I think it works really well for us."

The project will be built over 120 acres and initial plans are for three pole barns that each stretch 3 1/2 football fields.

The first barn should be completed by the end of June, Florida Organic Aquaculture CEO Clifford Morris said. Morris said savings on construction costs could lead to an additional pole barn.

Morris said the company has letters of intent with local restaurants to buy the shrimp, and the company has plans to eventually license the technology so others can use it.

Florida Organic Aquaculture hopes to have its first harvest at the facility in November. The company had a test harvest of 1,800 pounds of shrimp at Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. Morris said the produce was donated to restaurants as a goodwill gesture.

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Healing Circle held at Unity of Fort Pierce 7 p.m.

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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The groundbreaking and open house allowed a fascinating look at the future of aqua culture. The City of Fellsmere should be proud to have the \$13 million complex in their community. Kudos to the City for their vision of the future.

If the groundbreaking "party" was an indication of the professionalism the company will use to run its business, they will have a long and successful future. It was a classy events hat was well attended and well organized.

Kudos to all that made yesterday's event possible.

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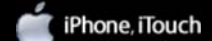
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