

Freezer-Longliner Unloads Catch in Kodiak

Monday, 15 July 2013

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/130715._us_intrepid_freezer_longliner.mp3{/audio}

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

More often than not, Kodiak's fishing industry separates the catching and the processing. Most of Kodiak's fleet heads out to sea, collects the bounty, and delivers it either directly to canneries in town, or to tenders that bring it back en masse. But last week a different type of boat was in town, one that pairs the two and processes the fish it catches right at sea.

The U.S. Intrepid is one of two catcher/processor vessels owned by Fishermen's Finest, an independent American fishing company with offices in Seattle. The 185-foot vessel employs just over 40 crewmembers, who process fish right on board. Bob Hezel is the captain of the Intrepid.

-- (U.S. Intrepid 1 :11 "We don't bring in any fresh product. All of our product is frozen at sea. So, mainly when we come in we're shipping a finished type product out that's already frozen.")

Hezel said the Intrepid can hold about 390 tons of finished product, which takes almost 12 hours to offload. The fish is shipped primarily to Asian and European markets.

He said the vessel fishes in the Gulf of Alaska April through July and has frequented Kodiak's port, bringing with it some sizeable economic benefits for the community.

-- (U.S. Intrepid 2 :27 "And we've been employing the local longshoremen to do the offloads out on the trumper in St. Paul Harbor. And then we've been coming in and we've got 40 men on our crew and the other boat has 38. They've all gone up to town and we've bought groceries and they've gotten all the stuff they need at the stores. And then we purchased, gosh how much fuel, it'd be 75,000 for us and 35,000 for the American #1. So over 110,000 gallons of fuel.")

Hezel estimates the vessel's expenses generate more than \$130,000 in revenue for Kodiak, not counting the mandatory fish tax.

In general, Hezel said he and the crew enjoy coming to Kodiak.

--
(U.S. Intrepid 3 :24 "It's a really great town for us. I'm glad to be back here. Because it's groundfish oriented, you know, most of the boats, I know a lot of the local guys here. We've worked on different projects together because we all do pelagic and bottom trawling. We're all fishing basically the same groundfish out here. We don't fish too near Kodiak town, we do a lot of moving around from south of Seward, down to south of Sandpoint.")

In addition to the 40 or so crewmembers, Hezel said the vessel also employs two full time observers.

The U.S. Intrepid left Kodiak on Saturday and is due back in town sometime later this week.