

Federally certified bluefin tuna processing facility opens in Eastern PEI

by Stella Shepard

Jason Tompkins is the owner of **One Tuna Inc.**, Canada's only federally certified bluefin tuna processing facility, which opened in 2019.

The tuna processing facility is a short distance from North Lake, which is known as the bluefin tuna capital of the world. Reeling in the giant fish has been part of the community fabric for decades.

Jason describes himself as a results-oriented, decisive leader with proven success in establishing a lasting presence in new markets, identifying growth opportunities and initiating strong business alliances. "We just finished construction of the CFIA-approved tuna processing facility," says Jason.

"It's a huge accomplishment, as we were limited to the markets we could access before we were CFIA approved. The company hires about six seasonal workers and will be hiring more factory jobs as we expand into new markets."

Jason is originally from New Brunswick. His mother is from Grand Manan, NB where he spent time jigging mackerel from the wharf. "Although I grew up around a wharf, I never planned a career in the fish business. I attended Saint Mary's University with aspirations of becoming a commercial banker.

"After working for an American tuna buyer for 10 years, I decided it was time to start my own business. I moved my family to PEI and settled in Kingsboro in 2013 and started **TNT Tuna**, a bluefin tuna purchasing company. As with any startup, things were slow at first and it took time to build up my supply base and customer base."

Right now, the company is shipping into Japan, Korea, United States and across Canada. "We are working to develop new markets in Korea and China.

"TNT Tuna is now one of the most active buyers of bluefin tuna in Atlantic Canada. The company purchases directly from fishermen across the Atlantic provinces during the fishing season, and sends the tuna to active markets around the globe."

Steps to opening the business

Jason took his business idea, his passion and skills sets to the **Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC)** housed out of the **Rural Action Centre** on Main Street, Montague.

He met with **Martina MacDonald**, Executive Director of CBDC East, and **Helen Antle**, Business Development Officer.

The resources at CBDC help budding entrepreneurs like Jason turn a skill and a passion into a viable business or expand an existing business. "Without Martina, Helen, and CBDC, building my new plant would have been impossible," says Jason. "They took a chance on my vision when no one else would."

"**Innovation PEI** helped with a small grant for equipment, and the Federal Department of Fisheries also provided some funding for some of my equipment. My accountant at **Bradley Handerhan** helped me develop my business plan, which was the key to understanding what my goals were moving forward."



Jason Tompkins is the owner of One Tuna Inc., a company that purchases bluefin tuna, and TNT Tuna, Canada's only federally certified bluefin tuna processing facility, which opened in May 2019.

"My advice to anyone considering starting a business is contact the staff at CBDC. They are so helpful at getting all the right people at one table to assist you with starting a business."

Jason is also the founder and co-owner of the **Poké Shack**, featuring locally sourced seafood, located on the Souris Boardwalk.

For more information about **One Tuna** and **TNT Tuna**, contact **Jason Tompkins** at **902-215-8862**.

Visit www.tnttuna.com or www.facebook.com/pg/TNTtuna/posts and www.onetuna.com

For more information about **Rural Action Centre**, visit www.ruralactioncentres.ca

For more information on the supports and services offered by **Innovation PEI**, call **902-368-6300** or visit www.innovationpei.com



Fabrication company competes in the world marketplace and has ongoing hiring needs

by Stella Shepard

Todd Cormier and **Rob Mayhew** started **Eastern Fabricators** in 2013, and in 2017, the fast-growing company moved to the former Georgetown Timber Mill.

The business is a testament that great things can happen in rural PEI. They are an industry leader in designing, building and installing custom-engineered stainless steel food processing systems, which they sell to customers around the world.

A team of highly experienced staff work with clients to identify their unique needs and work directly with clients to improve efficiencies and productivity through the use of innovative technology, design, and most importantly, years of experience in the field.

Six years ago, Todd took his idea of starting a fabrication company to the **Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC)** located on Main Street, Montague for financial and business assistance. He met with **Martina MacDonald**, Executive Director of CBDC East.

"Martina works endlessly to help her clients and her community," says Todd. "If everybody was as helpful and positive as her, the community would be twice as big."

CBDC assists in the creation of small businesses and in the expansion or modernization of existing businesses by providing financial and technical services.

"CBDC gave us our first financing to secure the Pooles Corner location," says Todd. "We opened the doors with two employees. Today, we employ about 85 staff, and we are continually hiring."

Hiring needs

"We are currently looking to hire Mechanical Engineers and skilled Tradespeople. Jobs are posted on the Job Bank, WorkPEI, social media, and other job posting sites."



Todd Cormier, President of Eastern Fabricators.

For more information about **Eastern Fabricators**, call **902-283-3229**.

Visit www.easternfabricators.com or follow the company on Twitter and Facebook.

For more information about services offered at the **Rural Action Centre**, visit www.ruralactioncentre.ca

For more about **CBDC**, visit www.cbdc.ca

For the full article, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Eastern Fabricators**.

