

'The finest craftsmanship Maine artisans have to offer'

Boatyard's success recognized by SBA

By Sarah E. Reynolds | Mar 21, 2014

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Photo by: Sarah E. Reynolds

Artisan Boatworks President Alec Brainerd, left, describes restoring a 24-foot Fishers Island sailboat to SBA Regional Administrator Seth Goodall, center, and Bangor Savings Bank Senior Vice President William Dehais.

ROCKPORT — Seth Goodall, Small Business Administration (SBA) regional administrator for New England, visited Artisan Boatworks, 410 Main St., on Friday, March 21, to congratulate the growing business on its success.

"It is important to visit and promote successful SBA companies like Artisan, because it demonstrates that our programs and partnerships are working to help grow businesses and create good-paying jobs in Maine," said Goodall. He added, "Artisan is a success story in Maine and New England and it has found the right path forward by focusing on providing superior craftsmanship and service."

Small businesses create two out of three private sector jobs in this economy and it is important to continue to focus on them to grow our economy, he said.

"Small businesses are growing in Maine and New England, but we must keep working to help them grow and innovate, Goodall said. "Our loan numbers in Maine and New England are strong and the SBA is committed to helping small businesses grow by making our loans more cost effective and accessible."

Business owner Alec Brainerd, the boatyard's president, addressed a group of SBA and Bangor Savings Bank officials and Artisan employees, saying the company's success was owed primarily to its crew of carpenters and painters.

"These guys are simply the best in the world at what they do," he said.

The boatyard employs 12 to 14, depending on the season, and with an expansion planned this summer, expects to add two more, Brainerd said.

He said the company, which he started in 2002, grossed \$1 million for the first time in 2013. The figure, "represents 20,000 hours of the finest craftsmanship Maine artisans have to offer, and it represents well-paying jobs that support hardworking Maine families," he said.

Brainerd credited his firm's relationships with Bangor Savings Bank and the SBA with allowing Artisan to grow sustainably, expanding in 2006 and 2010, with SBA-backed loans through Bangor Savings. This year's planned expansion, starting in June, will add indoor plumbing and offices to the main building.

Bangor Savings Bank Senior Vice President William Dehais said the \$1 million Artisan grossed last year translated to much more than that in the local economy. He wished the firm continued success.

"We like to celebrate small businesses that work," said SBA District Director Marilyn Geroux. Her office wants to promote business success stories to encourage other young entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs, she said.

The business provides storage and maintenance for a number of boats; the owners each spend \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually on repair and maintenance, Brainerd said. Artisan also rebuilds and repairs wooden boats, and builds new ones too.

Much of its materials comes from local suppliers, including sails, wood and veneers and paint, he said.

His biggest challenge is finding employees with a strong work ethic, Brainerd said.

"Mostly we depend on bringing people up from the bottom."

Artisan Boatworks' phone is 236-4231; its website is artisanboatworks.com.



One of Artisan Boatworks' recent restorations is this 1957 lobster boat originally built by Newbert & Wallace in Thomaston. (Photo by: Sarah E. Reynolds)



An Artisan Boatworks employee restores a runabout from the early 1960s built by the White Canoe Co. (Photo by: Sarah E. Reynolds)



From left, Artisan Boatworks President Alec Brainerd, Bangor Savings Bank Senior Vice President William Dehais, and Vice President Eric Belley, SBA District Director Marilyn Geroux and Regional Administrator Seth Goodall celebrate Artisan's success. (Photo by: Sarah E. Reynolds)