



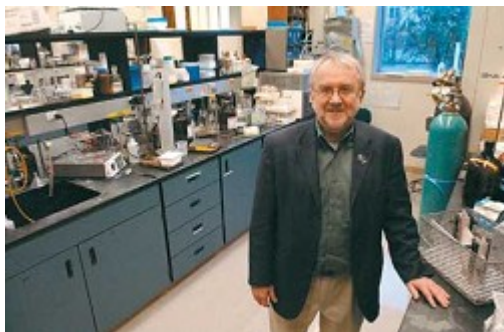
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## Seafood Lab director will miss North Coast as he heads to Portland

*Dr. Michael Morrissey accepts position at the OSU Food Innovation Center*

***By CASSANDRA PROFITA***

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After 16 years as director of the Oregon State University Seafood Lab and a community leader, Dr. Michael Morrissey is leaving Astoria.

Morrissey has accepted the superintendent position at the OSU Food Innovation Center in Portland, where he will oversee a broad effort to

support the \$17 billion food industry in the Pacific Northwest.

It will be hard to leave his job at the Seafood Lab, he said. The lab has undergone a massive expansion, formed landmark partnerships and produced a wealth of valuable research under his direction. It will also be tough to leave the town where his children grew up and where he and his wife have formed good friendships, he said.

"There's no question one of the hardest things besides leaving the job is leaving the community," said Morrissey. "Astoria has become a wonderful place to raise a family and make connections, and you know as you make them they're going to be lifelong connections."

Shortly after Morrissey was hired as director, the OSU Seafood Lab outgrew its laboratory on 35th Street in Astoria, thanks to home-grown research that proved Pacific whiting could be processed onshore and marketed as surimi and other products. Millions of state dollars were directed toward developing a shore-based industry, and the seafood lab went from three people in 1990 to 25 in 1994. The lab still hosts a Surimi School every spring.

"Right off the bat, that was a great example of how industry cooperation and university research with funding from the state can create an opportunity for coastal rural

development," said Morrissey. "Good research can have an economic impact."

When the new lab was built on Marine Drive in 1997, it became part of a city planning effort that put the Duncan Law Seafood Consumer Center, Astoria Aquatic Center and the Astoria Gateway Cinemas where the county fairgrounds used to be.

"What was formerly not the most appealing site became a bustling group of buildings with lots of activity," said Morrissey. "That's when we became internationally recognized as one of the best seafood research labs in North America. We became a part of more and more conferences about seafood research, and we had a spanking new lab to show off to all our guests."

In 2000, Morrissey was key to the formation of a unique partnership between OSU and ShoreBank Pacific, which is now called the Community Seafood Initiative. The initiative has put university research to work for the region's fishermen and processors looking to develop and market seafood products.

"There is no other partnership like it in the U.S.," said Morrissey. "Over the last three years that has become the hallmark - and it is sustainable. It's not just about (me) or others who may leave. It will continue to generate funds and support the community."

"One of his legacies is obviously the Community Seafood Initiative and this partnership with us," said Mike Dickerson, deputy director of ShoreBank Enterprises. "On a local level, it looks like a building. On a regional and national level, what we found out is we were the first institutions to try to figure out how to bring capital and research to the table for communities and businesses. That was unique at the time and is still, frankly, quite unique."

Dickerson said Morrissey was instrumental in building the partnership and positioning it within the university to make it relevant and productive.

"He's an innovator," said Dickerson. "In addition to being a professor and a scientist, he's an entrepreneur and thinks like one, and he brings that sense of relevance to his work ... I would not underestimate his presence in the future. I think that his intention is to continue to figure out how to expand the university's engagement with communities. He has already engaged us in conversations on how we can continue to grow our partnership."

When the Seafood Consumer Center started up, Morrissey divided his time between the Center and the Seafood Lab, working to establish the community education center that now contains the Seafood School. The school now supports the center through catering, classes and the efforts of Chef Eric Jenkins.

With Morrissey at the head, the Seafood Lab has graduated more than 50 graduate students, published more than 130 journal articles, nearly 40 book chapters and six complete books. It has also obtained three patents and created numerous value-added products that have helped the seafood industry compete in a global market.

Morrissey is now looking forward to the potential to improve competitiveness in the entire Pacific Northwest food industry as the head of the Food Innovation Center, an OSU partnership with the Oregon Department of Agriculture that has goals similar to the Seafood Lab.

He will continue to travel to Astoria periodically to serve as interim director of the lab for at least six months.

Morrissey said he has had fun working with all the "characters" in the fishing industry, who proved to be good partners for the lab.

"To me what's exciting is what's happened to Astoria," he said. "In the last 10 years, it has been growing in the right direction. It's gone from a town you pass through on your way to Seaside or Cannon Beach to a destination. There is an upbeat feeling about the community."

"I don't know what it will be like without him," said Tod Jones, who coordinates with the Seafood Lab on the Select Area Fisheries Evaluation project. "He's just always been here like a warm blanket. He's brought the Seafood Lab a long way. He's a man of vision and talent, and he knows how to get things done in the world of grants and program development."