

Fish farm goes to college, gets 10 years tax-free

By John Mason Columbia-Greene Media | Posted: Thursday, December 17, 2015 2:30 am

GREENPORT — The Hudson Valley Fish Farm, located on Route 9, is partnering with Columbia-Greene Community College to create 29 new jobs and invest \$4.25 million.

The fish farm is one of 16 businesses Gov. Andrew Cuomo listed Wednesday that are taking advantage of his Start-Up NY program.

The program establishes tax-free zones close to colleges and universities for businesses willing to create jobs by expanding or locating in New York state.

There are now 157 companies statewide participating in the program that offers businesses the opportunity to operate 100 percent tax-free for 10 years.

The fish farm will build and operate North America's largest land-based, egg-to-plate Steelhead salmon farm, the governor said.

The fish will be antibiotics-free, chemical-free and fully certified organic, said company Executive Assistant Kimberly Sedano.

"This is going to give us some of the assistance we need to best invest in this project for the long term," she said. The recirculating aquaculture system will mean the fish are fully sustainable and pose no threat to the environment, she said.

Sam Chen, the company's head of corporate and business development, said the partnership with Columbia-Greene means, "We'll be able to work with students, bring in skilled jobs to this area, and launch North America's largest, land-based Steelhead salmon-farming system — everybody else farming salmon is doing it in pens; we're doing it indoors in tanks."

The college has an Environmental Studies degree that will dovetail with the Startup program.

"It's an exciting time for us," said Columbia-Greene President James Campion. "It means that our students who are interested in environmental studies, sustainable food production and



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technologies that will pave the way to a much different future for everyone will have the opportunity to work with a visionary company that will partner with us on educational programming.”

The college will also provide Hudson Valley Fish Farm with “a great pool of candidates for hiring down the road,” Sedano said. “We’ll get students already studying the things we need.”

For hiring, she said, “local is our first and foremost priority.”

The project uses cutting-edge technology.

“It’s what the future is going to look like,” Campion said. “As the oceans get depleted of certain fish, they’ll be growing them.”

Startup NY’s internship component will allow students to take on that experience, Campion said.

“It’s exciting to have that approval from the Governor’s Office so we can move forward,” he said. He said having the Startup in place will give the college the leeway to expand to new courses and programs.

“We’ll also partner with another state university college for students who want to get their Environmental Studies degree and then transfer,” Campion said.

The plant is located at the Route 9 site formerly operated by Local Ocean, and before that, Atlas Cement.

Chen predicted construction should be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2016.

“We already have some fish in there,” he said. “We brought in eggs a while back.”

The pathogen-free eggs are hatched in incubators, Chen said. Each section of tanks in the facility represents a different stage in the Steelhead’s life.

“Once they’re hatched, they go into nursery tanks,” he said. Next, they go into the smolt section, then the juvenile and finally the grow-out sections. The hatchery, nursery and smolt sections have been completed; the last two will be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2016, he said.

The tanks are 10 feet deep. Right now, Chen said, the fish are in tanks that are 25 feet across; the largest tanks will be 45 feet across.

“We are excited to work together to grow one of the tastiest pacific salmon on the market in one of the most sustainable farming methods possible,” he said.

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