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BAHAMIAN TRADE MISSION

In search of the big catch

By Natalie Myers,
 PBN Staff Writer

Third in a series on a four-day trade mission to the Bahamas.

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Chris Lee and I got an early start yesterday. He is director of North Kingstown-based Sea Fresh USA.

We met in the hotel lobby at 7:30 a.m. to wait for the drivers arranged by the U.S. Embassy. They were transporting us to Atlantis, the largest resort and private employer on New Providence Island, which is dominated by the City of Nassau.

Atlantis is the mother lode for the two product exporters taking part in this four-day trade mission to The Bahamas. The trip was organized by Maureen Mezei, the international trade director at the R.I. Economic Development Corporation, and Maj. Michael Manning, coordinator of the R.I. National Guard's year-and-a-half old State Partnership Program.

John Nunes of Newport Vineyards had met with alcohol and beverage purchasers for the Atlantis on Monday. Lee was meeting with the resort's seafood purchasers.

What makes Atlantis doubly interesting for Lee is that, in addition to supplying 28 restaurants within the resort, the seafood purchasers also buy food for 10,000 aquatic animals in a giant aquarium that holds more than 5 million gallons.

The animals eat about 1,300 pounds of seafood per day, according to Todd Kemp, senior collector for the water features department at Atlantis. Squid makes up by far the largest portion of the food fed to the marine life – and that is perfect for Sea Fresh USA, because squid is the company's largest export.

But before the Atlantis purchasers can decide anything, Lee must ship a sample of his product to them so they can test the quality. He also must provide price points, especially for the restaurant chefs, because



PBN PHOTO / NATALIE MYERS

CHRIS LEE, director of Sea Fresh USA, pitches his company's products to Todd Kemp, senior collector for the water features department at Atlantis, whose aquatic charges consume 1,300 pounds of seafood each day.



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THIS JELLYFISH is among the roughly 10,000 creatures who occupy the 5 million gallon aquarium at Atlantis. The resort is the largest private employer on New Providence Island.

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in denominations of \$25 and up, they can be bought by the public for personal use or as gifts.

Chamber members can choose to redeem the certificates, Stokes said, and those who have, have found a return of many times their investment in dues. Though identified as a membership service, the program also has helped to boost Chamber membership, which is the core funding source for most Chambers.

The day ended with dinner on the waterfront, at Lucianos Restaurant, hosted by the Bahamas Development Bank and the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce.

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