



NEWS RELEASE

Seventy Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBS) - reliable distress signaling, are now available to commercial fishing enterprises in southern Labrador between L'Anse au Clair and Cartwright, through a living memorial project by the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company and its partners.

Friday, May 27, 2022

L'ANSE AU LOUP, LABRADOR - The Labrador Shrimp Company is one of Newfoundland's most successful fish processors, operating five processing plants and employing hundreds of fish harvesters and plant workers. The Company is locally owned by fishers of L'Anse au Clair to Cartwright Region and is focused on sustainable development with emphasis on job creation and premium, quality production. The Company is locally known as the Labrador Shrimp Company (LSC) and has operated for over forty years. It has concentrated long-term practices on the development of national and international partners and is a proud supporter of youth, and volunteers as well as Daffodil Place, the Janeway Foundation, and many other charitable organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Seventy commercial fishing enterprises in southern Labrador between L'Anse au Clair and Cartwright will receive an EPIRB. This is made possible through a living memorial to two young harvesters who lost their lives while fishing on the *Island Lady* on September 17, 2021. Marc Russell, aged 25 from Mary's Harbour, and Joey Jenkins, aged 30 from Lodge Bay, failed to return home to their community and were never found.

The Labrador Shrimp Company is spear-heading the project in collaboration with the Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA), Fish Harvesters' Resource Centre (FRC), Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB), and the Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW-Unifor).

QUOTES

"We can all make a difference in our words and actions....and it doesn't matter who you are or what you do, everyone matters. At the Labrador Shrimp Company, everyone matters and when two of our young harvesters were lost at sea in 2021, and continue to be lost, it had a great impact, not only on their families, but also on our business and the community. It was the first time in forty years of operation that we experienced such a tragedy.

Fishing is our business and the fish harvesters who are shareholders in the Labrador Shrimp Company are like family and their safety is important to us. Workplace health and safety needs to be at the forefront everyday regardless of nature of the work and the hazards and risks involved. Because one loss of life, is one too many!

One way we thought we could make a difference so that this type of tragedy doesn't happen again, it to make reliable distress signaling devices, specifically Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBS)-, available to every commercial fishing enterprise in southern Labrador between L'Anse au





Clair and Cartwright.

The Labrador Shrimp Company, is making this contribution of up to 70 EPIRBs, and maybe even more if they are required, as a living memorial to the memory of Marc Russell and Joey Jenkins, the young harvesters who were lost at sea when their vessel, *The Island Lady*, failed to return to port on September 17, 2021.

To make this project a reality, the Labrador Shrimp Company is partnering with a coalition of stakeholders who also have a vested interest in the well-being and safety of fish harvesters; namely the Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA), Fish Harvesters Resource Centre (FRC), Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB), and the Fish Food and Allied Workers (FFAW/Unifor).

This living memorial EPIRB project is an investment by the Labrador Shrimp Company and its partners. By having partners it helps to highlight this initiative and by that it may entice others in the industry to help their fishermen as well.” - **Gilbert Linstead – General Manager Labrador Shrimp Company**

“Our son Marc and his crew member, Joey Jenkins were lost at sea on September 17, 2021, while removing their cod nets from the water near Battle Harbour, Labrador. They were tremendous young men whom many saw as the future of the commercial cod fishery in Labrador. They were smart, hardworking, capable, and well-respected by their friends and fellow fishers, but most especially they were well-loved by their families. We can tell you, having personally experienced it, that the emotional toll and anguish of losing a child at sea is immeasurable. It is a pain that defies comprehension, and we hope no other family ever has to experience this pain.

We do not know what happened on September 17, 2021, and we live with the reality that we may never have answers to our questions. Each day, we live in the aftermath of a tragedy that is permanently etched on our hearts and in our minds. It is something we will live with for the rest of our lives. Our goal is to ensure it never happens to another fish harvester. Losing Marc has taught us the fragility of life, the need to savor every moment, and the importance of improved safety measures within the fishery, especially the inshore fishery.

This living memorial project by the Labrador Fishermen’s Union Shrimp Company is an essential element in the future prevention of fishing tragedies, because no fish harvester should ever be lost at sea. We need to protect our fish harvesters, no matter the cost. An EPIRB on every vessel will ensure that tragedies like ours will be prevented.” - **Dwight and Jeanette Russell – Fish Harvester and Parents of Marc Russell**

“Fish harvesting is dangerous work and we have to do everything possible to make this industry as safe as possible. This project by the Labrador Shrimp Company and their partners, the Coalition of the Fish Food and Allied Workers/Unifor, Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, Fish Harvesters Resource Centre and the Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvester Safety Association is an important advancement in safety in the industry. Now, we as fish harvesters have to do our part.





When an EPIRB is activated, it transmits a signal consisting of an encrypted identification number in digital code containing information identifying the vessel, the date of the incident, the nature of the distress, and the position of the vessel. Search and Rescue can monitor a distress call with extreme accuracy enabling the search and rescue team to reach the specific emergency location. It is important life-saving technology but it will only work if it is properly installed, maintained and registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry.

Thanks to this living memorial project for Marc Russell and Joey Jenkins, every harvester in southern Labrador, between L'Anse au Clair and Cartwright will have an EPIRB in memory of them. It will be our beacon of hope to return home safely." - **Shawn Normore Fish Harvester**

"We have a long history of tragedy in Newfoundland and Labrador where, over the years, many harvesters have been fatally injured or lost at sea while trying to make a living for themselves and their families. *Timely and reliable distress signaling* is the critical first step in activating the search and rescue response system.

The Coalition of the Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA), Fish Harvesters Resource Centre (FRC), Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB), and the Fish Food and Allied Workers (FFAW/Unifor) are committed collectively to working with the Labrador Shrimp Company on their EPIRB living memorial project. We want to ensure fish harvesters have every means possible to help them return safely home. This project will help to address the safety gap on reliable distress signaling in critical situations that currently exists in the industry and will ultimately save lives." **David Decker Chair of the NL-FHSA**

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Photograph by Joey Jenkins





Marc Russell



Marc Russell and Joey Jenkins