

While Fuglafjørður remains a leading port of call for the pelagic fishing fleet—offering the most comprehensive service for it in the Faroe Islands—the port authority continues to seek investors for a new freezing plant.

THE NEW mayor of Fuglafjørður, Sonni á Horni, appears confident that a freezing plant to produce pelagic fish for human consumption will eventually be set up in what remains one of the busiest pelagic ports in northern Europe. His optimism is shared by Rólant Højsted, harbormaster of the Port of Fuglafjørður, who agrees that such a facility “will come sooner or later,” regardless of the blow received a couple of years ago when such a processing plant, originally intended for Fuglafjørður, ended up elsewhere.

The Port of Fuglafjørður has long been the Faroe Islands’ undisputed hub for the pelagic fishing industry—a position built since the early 1960s when the Havsbrún fishmeal factory first opened for business. Over the years a cluster of services has developed to place Fuglafjørður in a league of its own, with several local businesses becoming top-notch in their respective fields. Above all, a well-oiled collective of providers and operators has helped create an



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Harbormaster Rólant Højsted; Mayor Sonni á Horni (below); View of Fuglafjørður (opposite, bottom).

FUGLAFJØRÐUR STICKS TO PLAN ON FREEZING FACTORY

unmatched service infrastructure that attracts large number of domestic and foreign vessels to the port.

Of the 766 ship calls received last year (2012), foreign vessels represented more than one-third, according to Port of Fuglafjørður statistics.

Much of the traffic is related to the Havsbrún factory, the only one of its kind in the Faroe Islands to manufacture fishmeal, fish oil, and feed for farmed salmon.

While many pelagic vessels continue to land some of their catch as so-called industrial fish, the trend is in the

direction of landing more to freezing plants that produce fish for human consumption. As of today, two such freezing plants exist in the Faroes, located at Kollafjørður and Tvøroyri, respectively.

According to the Port of Fuglafjørður, there is a commercial need for one more such freezing plant in the country, considering the large amounts of pelagic fish that is being caught in and around Faroese waters. And that plant should be located at Fuglafjørður.

“Perhaps that freezing plant should have been built long time ago,” Mr. á Horni said. “It’s still not here, even

though all requirements exist; so we continue to develop our plans and improve wherever necessary. We are still convinced that the plant will come sooner or later. We have investors, both domestic and foreign, who are genuinely interested but nonetheless they seem to be waiting for the right moment.”

The business environment has lately been affected by growing political risk on multiple levels, ranging from domestic politicking on food fish and jobs, to international controversies regarding the distribution of catch quota in the north-east Atlantic.

“Some of our potential investors could be worried about possible negative reactions in their home countries, should they be seen as supporting the wrong country in the dispute between the EU and Norway on the one side and the Faroe Islands and Iceland on the other. So we hope for a quick resolution of the issues. That would be likely to remove some of the psychological barriers that we are seeing at the moment.”

BENEFICIAL REVENUES: Meanwhile the growing amounts of pelagic food fish has led to soaring demand for freezing and cold storage facilities in the Faroe Islands.

“As far as concerns the storage capacity of Bergfrost, I understand they will have it increased significantly this summer,” Mr. Højsted said.

“Yes,” Mr. á Horni added, “things look good at Fuglafjørður. We have everything that the pelagic fishing industry needs, whether for landing their catch, receiving bunker fuel, mending their nets, repairing mechanical or electrical equipment, taking water, supplies, anything.”

Meanwhile Fuglafjørður’s relatively new bunker station is generating significant traffic, much of it discreet and quiet.

“It’s really quick in, quick out,” the mayor said. “Many of the vessels are hardly noticed, especially if they arrive in the night or during the weekends. The fuel station is situated quite far from

Port of Fuglafjørður

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Harbormaster: Rólant Højsted

Leading pelagic fishing industry port with more than 1000 meters of total quay length; quayside depths up to 14m.

Excellent natural harbor, accessible in all weather conditions.

Facilities include fish meal, oil and feed production plant, cold storage, trawl and purse seine net manufacturing and repairs, mechanical workshops inc. authorized Baader processing machinery maintenance, electrical repairs, hydraulics, provisioning.

Bunkering: MGO, HFO, blends.

town and the time it takes to fill up the tanks is very short.”

The town of Fuglafjørður has doubtlessly benefitted from port revenues. With excellent cultural venues and a high number of national-league sports teams, the community prides itself on both its industriousness and its artistic flair.

Said the mayor: “We have been good at developing policy areas that are perhaps not immediately noticeable, such as sewage and wastewater management. On the other hand, there are a few, more visible items, including school buildings, that need urgent attention.”

