



Pen Bay Medical Center
MaineHealth

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O'Hara Corporation

How important is community to the O'Hara family? Consider this. When Maine's commercial fisheries began to fall off in the 1990s, the Rockland-based O'Hara Corporation didn't just send its large fishing fleet in search of a more productive port in Alaska. Instead, the 112-year-old company affirmed its commitment to Rockland, reinventing itself – and creating new jobs – by building the Journey's End Marina.



More recently, the O'Hara Corporation reaffirmed that commitment by making a major gift to support the renovation and expansion of the Emergency Department at Pen Bay Medical Center. The new Emergency Department will improve patient flow, incorporate updated technology for diagnosing and monitoring high-acuity patients, and address the growing demand for psychiatric and addiction services. The new facility will include additional exam rooms, including rooms designed specifically for behavioral health emergencies. Fundraising for this project continues.

"As a family, we have a longstanding history in this community," said Casey O'Hara, the fourth generation of O'Hara to be involved in the business. "The lesson passed down to me and my brothers is that our success is dependent on the community: schools, roads and bridges and most importantly the people that work and live here. So it means a lot to us when we're able to take our success as a company and funnel that back in to the community. I can't think of a better way to do that than by supporting a project that will benefit so many."

Joanne Billington, a member of the local board and chair of the Development Committee, thanked the O'Hara's for their gift. "The Emergency Department offers excellent care, but it requires a significant upgrade to continue providing the health care our community needs," Billington said. "The O'Hara Corporation has been creating jobs and making our communities a

better place to live since the 1940s. With this gift, they now make our communities a healthier place to live.”

With a loan from his father, Francis J. O’Hara started the Atlantic and Pacific Seafood Company in Boston in 1907, eventually moving the business to Rockland in the 1940s as the O’Hara Corporation. In 1942, the company sold 13 of its 17 vessels to the U.S. Government for use in World War II.

After the war, the company added new boats to become one of the largest fishing fleets in the world. In the years that followed, Frank Sr. would become president and eventually chairman of the board, a position he still holds today. Frank Jr. rose to president. Today, brothers Frank III and Casey O’Hara both serve as vice president and Nick O’Hara is the Northeast general manager.

The company saw its biggest expansion after the move to Rockland. Not only did it continue to commission trawlers and various other steel and wood fishing vessels, it expanded its ice business and established a processing plant on Tillson Avenue.

Then, in the 1990s, the East Coast groundfish catch declined, and the Rockland fleet shrank as boats left for West Coast. O’Hara sent many of its boats to Alaska and began managing the fleet out of offices in Seattle.

Shrinking catches also forced many of Rockland’s fish processing plants to close, leaving acres of vacant land on Rockland’s waterfront. Not ready to abandon the community it had called home for 50 years, O’Hara Corporation began acquiring the land and turned it into Journey’s End Marina.

“Instead of packing up shop, we slowly acquired these pieces of property where fish processing plants used to stand and converted them to yacht storage, a facility for commercial and lobster boat repair and office space,” said Frank III, who lives and works in Seattle to be closer to the fleet in Alaska.

Today, Journey’s End operates as a full-service marina with 30 full-time employees. Said Frank O’Hara Jr., president of the company: “We’ve never liked the idea of seasonal jobs, so we put our resources into the marina to create year-round jobs. We’re proud of our ability to stay in the area.”

O’Hara Corporation also employs two full-time people at O’Hara Lobster Bait in Rockland and a dozen crewmembers operating two herring fishing vessels, F/V Starlight and F/V Sunlight, out of Rockland Harbor.

The company has five vessels fishing off the Alaskan coast, and it operates 11 scallop boats out of New Bedford, Mass. O’Hara operates one of the larger scallop fleets in the world.

And still, the focus remains local. Asked what he might say to others who are considering a gift in support of the Emergency Department, Casey said: “I can’t think of a better way to touch the lives of people in our community. With your help, we can have state-of-the-art health care right here on the coast of Maine.”

