

# **CHESAPEAKE SEAFOOD STORAGE PLANT IS COMPANY'S FIRST IN VIRGINIA**

As Reported By MIKE SAEWITZ, The Virginian-Pilot  
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It is cold in here.

As in five-below-zero cold.

Low temperature is the hallmark of Preferred Freezer Services' new 173,000-square-foot facility, which had its grand opening Monday at 2700 Trade St. here. The \$30 million warehouse will eventually employ as many as 45 workers.

This is the first warehouse in Virginia for the expanding company, one of the nation's leaders in cold food and seafood storage. Preferred Freezer Services also has land in Suffolk for a second warehouse, company officials say.

The Chesapeake facility can store as much as 41 million pounds of product, said Preferred's sales manager, Geir Myklebust. Much of the space will be taken up by seafood, although "we're going after the meat and poultry business more and more," Myklebust said. There is a U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection area on the site.

At the grand opening ceremony, the company had a seafood raw bar with shrimp and oysters surrounding an ice sculpture of a polar bear, which is featured on the company's logo. Chesapeake Councilman C.E. "Cliff" Hayes Jr. and Acting Economic Development Director Tom Elder were on hand to see the chilly warehouse.

A massive loading dock area is 42 degrees, Myklebust said.

Myklebust had to hand a heavy neon orange coat to a reporter before entering the freezer, which has a storage capacity of as much as 6.9 million cubic feet. Originally from Norway, Myklebust is wearing just a suit coat.

A cold blast of air overwhelms those who venture in the freezer.

"This is the money-maker for us," Myklebust said, pointing to rows of 60-foot-high storage racks that line the freezer.

Believe it or not, some workers wear T-shirts in the freezer, Myklebust said. However, they hop onto a machine called a Condor (\$250,000 a pop) that reaches up to remove the product from the racks.

Inside the Condor, the temperature can reach as high as 80 degrees - they have heated cabins.

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