

Mayor Van Johnson Remarks 49th Annual Florida Seafood Festival - 11/02/2012

Once again, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of our families, friends, neighbors, and visitors to the Annual Florida Seafood Festival here in the Historic City of Apalachicola - the home of friendly people.

Today marks the 49th year that this community has had the honor and privilege of hosting the oldest maritime event in the State of Florida. An event, which celebrates and focus appropriately on a heritage that for generations has served as the economic engine of an entire community.

A heritage, that through the years have come under a barrage of setbacks - from natural disasters - to avoidable manmade disasters, such as the practice by BP Deepwater Horizon of choosing profit over safety that led to the Gulf Oil Spill, and the policies set by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - that restricts vital freshwater flow into Apalachicola Bay.

All of which have worn heavily on a beleaguered, but resilient people who only ask for the opportunity to continue in a tradition handed down for generations. A tradition that has instilled pride, dignity and the independence that come from putting in an honest day's work and receiving an honest day's pay.

Today, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you someone who understands this tradition, a staunch supporter of the local seafood industry and one of Franklin County's favorite sons, who has advocated on behalf of this community before congress. I proudly present to you, our very own Franklin County Commissioner Joseph "Smokey" Parrish as this year's Florida Seafood Festival King Retsyo. Standing by his side and serving as this year's Queen and Miss Florida Seafood, is the lovely Miss Christina Collins. Christina is a senior at Franklin County High School and the daughter of Johnny and Cindy Collins. Upon graduating from high school, she plans to attend Florida State University and become a beloved Seminole.

Please give a hardy round of applause for your 2012 Florida Seafood Festival Royalty.