

Blue Moon & Battered Bull Visit Clayton's New Deep Water Port



****Special thanks to Tom Dalton & Doug Johnston for the photographs****

Clayton attracting raft of mega-yachts

'IT'S PRETTY NEAT': Expanded docks, village hospitality lure several luxury vessels to stop

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CLAYTON — A tide of mega-yachts is sailing into the village from all over the world this year.

"This is kind of new to us right now. It's just surprising. And it's pretty neat," village Trustee Dennis H. Honeywell said.

Mr. Honeywell said the village had 65- to 75-foot yachts visiting in the past,

but never yachts of such magnitude.

The surge of luxury yachts visiting the village is something new that was made possible by the improvements to the village docks, and assisted by the hospitality that the village showed the 164-foot Lady M last month.

When Lady M visited, Mayor Norma J. Zimmer and other village workers gave the guests a special tour around the historic downtown and guided them to lesser-known scenic spots on the St. Lawrence River.

"We treated them like kings," Mr. Honeywell said.

The municipal government did not make any money for its services, since docking is free at the municipal docks and the tour was a courtesy.

However, Mr. Honeywell said, such visits have a positive impact on the village's businesses.

Mr. Honeywell said the 18 guests on Lady M bought fresh fruit from nearby farms, had meals at local restaurants, visited the museums, shopped and played golf. He said a visitor on such a luxury yacht spends an average of about \$2,000 per day.

"They also made a substantial contribution to the Antique Boat Museum," he said.

Mr. Honeywell said the "captains' network is a tight-knit group," and word about a good spot to visit in the Thousand Islands region spreads pretty fast.

Since word has gotten out, two more luxury yachts made a visit: the 192-foot Blue Moon cruised in last Thursday and the 172-foot Battered Bull on Monday. Yet another yacht, the 112-foot New Moon II, is expected to sail in Saturday.

"I'm sure this is a precursor of more to come in the future," he said.

The mega-yachts also are an attraction for village residents. Mr. Honeywell said the crew of the Blue Moon has been friendly to the crowd, which was eager to learn more about the luxury yacht.

"They will tell you anything except who's on board," he said.

He said the village spent more than \$1 million in grant money to renovate the municipal docks and plans to further enhance its security next year with surveillance cameras.

