

Grant could provide fresh seafood to Crescent City

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Local residents and restaurants may be able to buy seafood directly from commercial fishing vessels that come into the port if a Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant competition works out in Crescent City's favor.

The Del Norte and Tribal Lands Community Food Council recently submitted a grant request for \$300,000 that would allow the council to buy mobile fish processing units and the hiring of a part-time worker to manage the program.

"The key objective is to get locally-caught seafood into the belly of local residents," said Amanda Hixson, food program director of the food council.

Each year, the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program, under the umbrella of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, allocates about \$10 million to 40 projects across the U.S.

The grant application falls into one of two categories: The first being more science based, and the latter for technology that promotes the sustainability of U.S. seafood production and harvesting.

“A lot of what gets harvested here gets shipped off to far-away places,” said Hixson, adding that an MPU station would allow local fishermen to filet their products and sell them directly to consumers and local restaurants.

In November, the board of harbor commissioners approved a letter of commitment to be submitted with the grant, and promised to set aside space near The Chart Room and Schmidt’s House of Jambalaya off Anchor Way for up to three mobile structures, each approximately the size of a standard shipping container. One structure would house the fish processing and retail operation and the other two would provide storage space for frozen products.

If the grant is received, the project could evolve into a permanent building to allow for fish processing and retail sales.

According to Hixson, the council probably won’t be notified about who will receive a grant until late next summer, and if awarded the project could go live as early as September 2022.