

New restaurant provides local employment in Eastern Kings

by Stella Shepard

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Word of a new restaurant is fiddling its way through Eastern Kings county. **Dale Lattner** and **Dennis Manning** opened the **Fiddlin Lobster** in Rollo Bay in November 2008. It's an appropriate name for a restaurant located in an area well-known for fiddle festivals.

"Location is important when opening a restaurant," says Dennis. "This is a high-traffic highway with amazing scenery on route. Travelers go right by our door to the car ferry to the Îles de la Madeleine, Basin Head Beach and East Point. We are located directly across the highway from the **Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival** site. World class golf courses are just a short distance away."

The owners

Dale and Dennis are former residents of Timmins, Ontario. The couple are life and business partners. They owned and operated a successful hunting and fishing lodge for 10 years in northern Ontario. Plus they have 25 years of experience in the tourism and restaurant industry.

"We decided the timing was right to sell our hunting and fishing lodge because of a decline in tourism in the area," says Dale. "We sold our lodge in 2008 but we were too young to retire. We had to decide what else could we do."

PEI business opportunity

"We have vacationed on PEI over the years," says Dennis. "Also, many guests who stayed at our lodge said they had visited PEI and planned to return. We often wished for the opportunity to live year-round on the Island because each time we visited, we fell in love with PEI. So we sold our lodge, packed up, and moved here."

"We began searching for a restaurant with a small community atmosphere. We were driving through Rollo Bay when we saw a for sale sign on a former business with a connecting house. It was the perfect place for our business and our home. Within eight months, we sold our lodge, moved to PEI and opened a restaurant."

The restaurant

Fiddlin Lobster is open year-round and is closed Monday and Tuesday in the off-season. The licensed restaurant includes a bakery, a loft and a gift shop. Dale and Dennis also offer a catering service and host private parties.

They took a piece of northern Ontario with them to PEI. The restaurant has a buffalo head with enormous horns decorating a wall. Displays of black bears and other wildlife are tucked at the back of the restaurant.

"In the quiet of winter the place is bustling with people enjoying country casual dining," says Dale. "Our menu is tailored for the local population. Tourists will come and go, so it's the local population we aim to please. We continually change out menu and offer many healthy fresh prepared food choices and gluten free products as well."

Community support

"PEI reminds us of northern Ontario," says Dale. "The people are very friendly and welcoming. We love it here. It felt like the community gave us a big warm hug when we opened Fiddlin Lobster. We buy local PEI products for our menu items when possible. All of the materials for the renovations of the restaurant were locally purchased."

Hiring locally

"Dale and I are the chefs and we work full-time in the kitchen," says Dennis. "We presently have 10 part-time staff, some of whom are almost full-time. All the staff live in the area. We anticipate business will be busier during the summer months. Staffing will increase as needed. We are willing to train. We plan to continue supporting the community by hiring locally."



Dennis Manning and Dale Lattner recently opened the **Fiddlin Lobster** in Rollo Bay. "Opening this restaurant was the window of opportunity we were wishing for," says Dale. "Our children are grown. Now we have the chance of following our dream of having fun starting a business on PEI."

For more information, contact **Dale Lattner** and **Dennis Manning** at 743-2058.

Employee becomes the owner as the company grows

by Patricia Roy

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Revolution Media is a communications company based in Summerside which began in 2000.

Chris Palmer joined the business in 2003 and became owner in 2004. "We get to do some pretty cool work here," says Chris. "We have been recognized across the country for what we do. We have won a number of national and provincial awards."

"The company is all about visual communication," says Chris. "We deal primarily in web and print development. We think outside the box and provide marketing and communications solutions for our clients."

"Ninety percent of the business is web design. We also cover printed material, which is usually in support of the website. For example, when businesses launch a new website, they may need business cards or flyers that reflect what is on the website. We also provide strategic planning to support efforts to increase clients' revenue."

His background

Chris graduated from **UPEI** with a **Bachelor of Business Administration** and is currently enrolled in the university's executive-style **MBA program**. Like many Islanders, he reluctantly left the Island to find work. Chris owned two Internet service companies at different times and locations. Before he joined Revolution Media, he was the Operations Manager for a Maritime Internet provider.



Chris Palmer is owner and manager of Revolution Media.

"I couldn't wait to get back home," he says. "And now this business works hard to help provide career opportunities for people who want to stay on the Island and for those who want to return."

The company

Eight employees work in the company's Summerside and Charlottetown offices. Revolution Media covers four areas: **graphic design, web programming, marketing and consulting**. Chris currently does the marketing and consulting work.

"It is important for the designer and programmer to work together because their work has to complement each other," Chris says.

Future hiring

"Winter is an extremely busy time of the year for our business. Many take advantage of the cold weather to see what is needed to attract visitors to their websites and businesses. Right now we have more work than we can comfortably handle and we will be hiring more staff soon."

Chris says he will be hiring at least three people within the next six months. Applicants would need to have completed appropriate programs and courses in the field of **graphic design, web programming or strategic consulting**. "Besides the experience gained through their studies, previous work experience is not required," says Chris. "We want people who want to make a difference."

For more information, contact **Chris Palmer** at 436-5060 or visit www.revolution.ca

www.employmentjourney.com