



# FISHERMEN'S NEWS

August 2010

*The Advocate for the Independent Fisherman*

\$2.00

## New Satcom Services Drive Productivity

By Ian Canning

The world's most successful commercial fishermen need the latest satellite-based services to help them run their vessels like a business and stay in better contact via high-speed Internet, e-mail and voice communications.

While the rate of maritime usage of satellite communication (satcom) services, including voice minutes, e-mails and data transmitted, has grown at a tremendous rate, costs have not increased significantly because of improvements in the efficiency and quality of satcom services.

### Systems for All Vessel Types

Late last year the Seattle-based *F/V Northwestern* was outfitted with FleetBroadband 500 with AmosConnect Crew from Stratos to manage all onboard email, fax, and SMS communications. The new system lets Capt. Sig Hansen and his crew manage office applications, upload pictures to their families, make Skype calls and upload video to the vessel's website.

While thousands of merchant and commercial fishing vessels have deployed the higher-bandwidth FleetBroadband 500 and FleetBroadband 250 systems, many smaller vessels are examining FleetBroadband 150 (FB150) as an entry-level service. The compact FB150 is ideally suited for vessels requiring single-user Internet access and e-mail. It combines a high-quality telephone connection with simultaneous IP data at up to 150 kbps and SMS texting.

The strongest interest in FB150 is from operators of small to medium-sized fishing vessels, supply ships, offshore utility vessels, barges, tug boats and pleasure yachts, who require quick, online access to critical weather data, port information and suppliers.

Top service providers are continually investing in new applications to help operators derive maximum benefit from

their satcom systems. One recent example is AmosConnect 8, the latest generation of the AmosConnect solution from Stratos, which offers a communications platform for a wide range of services, including e-mail, forms, instant messaging, automatic file transfer and application integration.

### Improving Crew Welfare

To keep up with expectations from operators and crew, Stratos recently introduced AmosConnect Crew CommCenter, the latest version of its AmosConnect Crew solution. It enables personnel at sea to stay in contact with home via calling, email and SMS at affordable, flat global rates – thus helping retain qualified crewmembers. The new software uses the full potential of Inmarsat FleetBroadband and Iridium OpenPort broadband services. It expands beyond e-mail to include prepaid web browsing, prepaid chatting and access to global and local news services.

### New IsatPhone Pro

In July Inmarsat introduced IsatPhone Pro, a lightweight, handheld satellite phone that can provide fishermen with reliable, high-quality voice connectivity in the most remote locations. The unit operates in just about any weather conditions and has the longest battery life in the industry. It also has GPS location data that can be viewed and sent as text or e-mail.

The commercial fishing industry is expected to be among the first to adopt this satellite voice solution, accessed globally on the Inmarsat-4 (I-4) satellites, which are among the world's largest and most advanced communications satellites. Inmarsat satellites operate in the L-Band radio frequency, which is unaffected by harsh weather conditions. The I-4 satellites are paid for, launched and fully operational – and have an expected lifespan well



Sig Hansen outfitted his *F/V Northwestern* with FleetBroadband.

into the 2020s.

Later this year, Stratos expects to introduce attachments – such as a docking station – to help make the IsatPhone Pro even easier to use onboard. Stratos also expects to introduce a prepaid Stratos ChatCard for the IsatPhone Pro to optimize crew-calling convenience. 🐟

Ian Canning is Vice President, Marketing and Product Management for Stratos Global. He can be reached at [ian.canning@stratosglobal.com](mailto:ian.canning@stratosglobal.com).

