

“Lobster 207”: How Self-Employed Workers Found their Voice and Improved their Livelihoods through the Maine Lobstering Union

Megan Larcom, Jenny Weissbourd, and Jeremy Avins

As Dave “Sully” Sullivan looked across the waterfront from a popular pizza place in Portland, Maine, he contemplated what the day meant. This year, 2018, marked his thirtieth anniversary with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (“IAM” or “Machinists”). He had started his career in 1986 as a shipbuilder at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. Two years later, Sully took his first leadership role as shop steward, elected by other IAM members to monitor the collective bargaining agreement. He filled many roles in his career, from local lodge officer for IAM District 4 staff, to directing business representative of IAM District 4. Throughout, he had witnessed the variety of fields in which the Machinists represented workers – legal professionals, aerospace engineers, Air Force One maintenance staff, service contract members, and more – through collective bargaining contracts. In his most recent role as special representative in the IAM Eastern Territory, he had taken on a project to lead an unusual organizing campaign. He smiled with relief as he thought about the roller coaster ride he had presided over for the last five years to support the newest additions to the Machinist community: Maine lobstermen.

Sully wondered if this was the beginning or the end of the Machinists’ experimentation with self-employed and independent contract workers, groups that the union traditionally did not represent. He ordered an iced tea and began to jot questions down on a napkin to prepare for his upcoming meeting with the international president of the IAM. The IAM president had an explicit commitment to “aggressively grow the union and protect the contracts and careers of nearly 600,000 active and retired

This case was prepared by Megan Larcom and Jenny Weissbourd, MIT Sloan MBAs, Class of 2018, and Jeremy Avins, Stanford Graduate School of Business MBA, Class of 2018.

Copyright © 2018, Megan Larcom, Jenny Weissbourd, and Jeremy Avins. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

IAM members.”¹ Sully’s briefing with the president would be an opportunity to capture what lessons the IAM, and the labor movement as a whole, should take away from the experience supporting Maine lobstermen.

The Lobstering Industry

“I am proud to be a fisherman. I’m a fourth generation. It’s a tough industry to get into and stay in.”

— Rock Alley, IAM Lobster 207 President

Lobster 207, formally known as the Maine Lobstering Union (MLU), was both a local lodge of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (“IAM” or “Machinists”) and a cooperative business. It was officially formed as both a co-op and a union in 2013. By November 2017, Lobster 207 represented approximately 550 lobstermen, of which 250 were in good dues-paying standing.² In the course of five years, Lobster 207 had influenced major legislative victories, purchased a wholesale lobster business, and given new voice to lobstermen.

Lobster 207’s organizing efforts were in response to pressures and changes felt across Maine’s lobster industry. The \$500 million industry by annual direct sales of boat catches was an important part of Maine’s economy. In fact, the state accounted for 83% of the lobster landings – the volume of lobsters caught and brought ashore – in the United States. In an economy that remained weakened by the Great Recession of 2008 and with rural GDP growth negative through 2013, what happened in the lobster industry mattered.³

The Maine Department of Marine Resources regulated the lobster industry. It established lobster management zones (mostly rural coastal areas and small islands) and managed lobster licensees. The number of licensees was limited and in 2016 there were 5,664 licensees across classes and apprentice categories.⁴ In Maine, only licensed lobsterman could own and operate a lobster boat. In addition to licensed lobstermen, there were also unlicensed sternmen who were allowed to fish with a licensed captain.⁵ State and national regulations not only limited who could fish for lobster but also specified where fishing could take place, set limits on types of equipment used, and restricted which lobsters could be harvested based on size and if egg-bearing.

The livelihood of lobstermen was directly related to the amount caught during the season and the price paid by buyers on shore. Historically, prices exceeded \$6.00 per pound (lb) when the number of landings was significantly low, typically in the winter off-season. The price dropped to around \$3.00/lb

¹ Biography of IAM’s International President, <https://www.goiam.org/staff/robert-martinez-jr/>, (accessed April 18, 2018).

² Interview with David Sullivan, November 1, 2017.

³ “State of Working Maine,” *Maine Center for Economic Policy*, 2017.

⁴ “Lobster Landings and Other Charts from State of Maine Department of Marine Resources,” *prepared by IAM*, February 15, 2017.

⁵ Women who fish for lobsters typically also refer to themselves as “lobstermen” or “sternmen” and the term “lobstermen” is inclusive of the licensed captains and their sternmen.

in the peak of the summer hauling season.⁶ According to one IAM leader, many lobstermen believed that collusion influenced what prices they received at the dock, in addition to the market-based reasons for price fluctuations.⁷ See **Exhibit 1** for historical price and landings data in Maine.

In addition to seasonal price fluctuations based on supply, vertically integrated companies and conglomerates had affected the industry. Unlike in prior generations, most of the owners and operators of the businesses in Maine that bought and processed lobsters were no longer people that lived in the same small communities as the lobstermen. For example, one of the world's largest seafood suppliers was Thai Union, which owned brands like Chicken of the Sea. As a firm executive noted, "Thai Union's vertical integration has been key to our division's success in the shrimp, tuna, and pasteurized crab categories. We are excited about the growth possibilities of a similar relationship in North Atlantic lobster."⁸ Forum Capital, a real estate conglomerate with Russian founders, invested in companies with ties to lobster harvesting in Maine including East Coast Seafood, Garbo Lobster, and Maine Fair Trade Lobster.⁹ The lobster supply chain had become increasingly global.

The Maine Lobstermen's Association ("MLA"), while seemingly a logical ally for traditional Maine lobstermen, represented diverse interests of players across the lobster industry value chain, including trap and stock suppliers, boat builders, insurance firms, restaurants, and financial services, as well as lobster wholesalers and retailers. Thai Union and Forum Capital affiliates were listed as members in the MLA directory.¹⁰

Needs of the Lobstermen

"They [lobstermen] were realizing the worst price for their catch, and they literally could not afford to go [out] ...they were in a place, whether they thought organizing was a good way to combat it or not, they knew something needed to be done... they were voicing their frustration about the obvious thing: price. But another huge piece was all the things that regulate and dictate how they go to work every day. They've never formally had a way to get involved and have a voice in their own industry."

— Joel Pitcher, IAM Organizer

Lobstermen faced a number of pressures that threatened their way of life. They were self-employed. They worked for themselves or shared in the catch of boats they fished on that were operated by licensed lobstermen. They sold their catch as price-takers to buyers on shore, putting them "at the mercy of wholesalers who are in charge of global distribution."¹¹ The business of fishing was one often passed

⁶ "Lobster Landings and Other Charts from State of Maine Department of Marine Resources," *prepared by IAM*, February 15, 2017.

⁷ Interview with Neil Gladstein, January 10, 2017.

⁸ "Thai Union Group Expands Further in North America with Acquisition of Canadian Lobster Processor," *Thai Union Group*, July 5, 2016.

⁹ Maine Fair Trade Lobster, <http://www.mftlobster.com/mftl-about>. (accessed December 3, 2017).

¹⁰ Maine Lobstermen's Association, <http://mainelobstermen.org/membership/business-directory/>. (accessed December 3, 2017).

¹¹ "Bank of Labor - Lobstermen Local 207 Video," *Wide Awake Films*, 2017.

on through family tradition and defined communities up and down the coast of Maine, especially “Downeast” (the northeast, rural coast of Maine). Lobster fishing drove the economy of small communities just as much as it defined the identity of the men and women who captained or worked as sternmen on the lobster boats.

In 2012, in-season lobster prices hit a twenty-year low of \$1.80/lb, compared to typical seasonal rates of \$3.00-\$4.00/lb, due to the large volume of lobster landings.¹² In parallel, environmental groups were trying to limit where lobstermen could fish and pressuring regulators to require use of new and more expensive boat and haul equipment. Lobstermen were legally unable to band together to be price-makers due to anti-trust laws, and they did not have a strong, coordinated voice across neighborhood lobster advisory councils, let alone in the Maine Statehouse. When lobstermen were talking about not fishing due to the low prices in 2012, voices in the local press argued that this could be a violation of anti-trust laws. The commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources warned “that an organized work stoppage may be illegal” and the state of Maine would take action “against any criminal behavior”.^{13,14}

Lobstermen wondered what they could do and who they could work with to better their lot in the face of regulatory demands, depressed prices, and a changing industry landscape.

Formation of the Local Union

In December 2012, a lobsterman in Vinalhaven, Maine was describing the challenges facing his profession to his brother, who worked in a shipyard nearby and was represented by IAM District 4. Hearing the lobsterman’s frustration of being unable to influence his own livelihood, the brother suggested a meeting with the Machinists.

After receiving approval from IAM headquarters in Washington, D.C. to explore this non-traditional organizing lead, Sully, in his role as business representative for IAM District 4, met the lobstermen in Vinalhaven. He brought with him Joel Pitcher, an IAM organizer who was skilled in understanding and aligning shared interests between people on the ground. Pitcher also came from a family of Maine fishermen.

The IAM District 4 team quickly realized that this would not be a traditional organizing drive since there was no employer to bargain with. However, Sully, Pitcher, and their colleagues in Washington, D.C. thought that forming a relationship with the lobstermen was worth exploring. Organizing lobstermen would fit with the broad union goals. IAM sought to empower workers by bringing them together to collectively promote their own interests which included having more control over who

¹² Sullivan, 2017.

¹³ Eric Russel, “Are lobstermen keeping their traps shut?” *Portland Press Herald*, July 14, 2012.

¹⁴ Anna Maine, “Lobstermen stop fishing due to low prices,” *The Working Waterfront Archives*, July 10, 2012.

profited from the value of what they produced, develop a stronger voice in the legislative arena, and maintain the viability of their communities. The Eastern Territory vice president and the IAM's international president approved Sully's request to start this unusual organizing campaign. IAM District 4 received assistance from the union, including financial support to hire Pitcher as a full-time organizer and access to the wide range of research, communications, legal, training, and other IAM resources that were normally made available to organizing campaigns.

In early 2013, Sully and Pitcher hosted open meetings for lobsterman to gather and share their experience and challenges. They provided structure to the gathering, but made it clear that the lobstermen would have to take the lead in organizing themselves. By February 2013, 99 lobstermen had signed A-cards, authorizing representation by the IAM.

At the end of March, the IAM District 4 team brought a contingent of lobstermen to the William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center in Maryland. There, the IAM team laid out both history and strategies to "navigate the rapidly changing world of work in the 21st century."¹⁵ The goal of the trip was to help the lobstermen develop a strategy for building their own political and economic power and to understand tactically how to organize a membership base. The trip not only did that, but it also highlighted the cultural alignment between the lobstermen and the Machinists. As did traditional IAM members, lobstermen viewed themselves as workers engaged in strenuous and dangerous work, seeking to provide for their families. In between training sessions, the IAM team and the lobstermen shared an outing to explore the local crabbing industry (and to eat crabs, of course). Based on the positive feedback from participants, IAM District 4 held two more of these training sessions to involve more lobstermen who wanted to engage in the organizing effort.

The group of lobstermen returned to Maine. Soon, with the aid of Pitcher, who they referred to as "Organizer Joel", the group of unionized lobstermen grew through many phone calls, community meetings, discussions at the docks, and home visits. The organizing activities took a tremendous amount of hard work. According to Pitcher, some people in coastal towns had misperceptions about who the union was, equating them to the "mafia" or to outsiders who were not lobstermen. Those perceptions had to be overcome. Pitcher shared at one point that "you have to work to get into those families...build trust...it's face-to-face, on the phone, talking to them all the time, for five years."¹⁶

In the summer of 2013 the lobstermen began referring to themselves as "Lobster 207," a nickname for IAM Local 207. The name was chosen because 207 was the area code for Maine and the organizing of lobstermen had expanded up and down the entire Maine coast. Soon thereafter, lobstermen began

¹⁵ IAM Winpisinger Center, <https://winpisinger.iamaw.org/about/>. (accessed December 3, 2017).

¹⁶ Interview with Joel Pitcher, November 1, 2017.

paying dues as Affiliate members of the IAM. At one point, members of Lobster 207 actually voted to raise dues from the floor by \$10 per month.¹⁷

By the end of 2013, the union known as Lobster 207 was formed. The initial spark to organize was depressed prices. However, as the fishermen came together with collective frustrations and learnings from the experience of the Machinists, they realized that they would be able to push back on more than just low prices at the shore. They would also be able to collectively push back against how they were being pressured by regulators, environmental groups, and conglomerates. Lobster 207's goals are presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 *IAM Lobster 207 goals*

- Build collective power of Lobstermen as IAM members.
- Create a State-wide co-op to market lobsters, for union lobstermen to share in profits of MLU Co-op.
- Provide economic viability for lobstermen and their communities.
- Support lobstering as a career choice for next generation.
- Support Maine businesses and the Maine economy.
- Increased political power and influence over regulation, locally and statewide.
- Engage in environmental activities to protect lobsters, their habitat, and the ecosystem of the Maine coast.
- Engage in other IAM union activities.¹⁸

As Lobster 207 took shape, Sully and Pitcher worked with the elected leadership – all lobstermen – to build the power of members. Looking back at what happened next, it was clear that the IAM and Lobster 207 had two stages of wins: first political, then economic. Although this sequence of building power through short-term political wins followed by economic ownership proved effective, it was by no means planned.

Political Wins

While economic pressures were the initial rallying call for the lobstermen, it was a tough issue to tackle for a few reasons. First, demanding higher prices on shore from buyers would be futile as market prices were not set locally and were influenced by global supply and demand. Even if there was some collusion

¹⁷ The IAM cannot subtract dues payments from a paycheck as is typically done in an employer-union-member relationship because lobstermen are paid at the docks or by middlemen buyers. Therefore, IAM representatives have to chase down lobstermen to actually collect dues checks, a tough endeavor in a state with one of the longest coastlines in the United States.

¹⁸ IAM also integrated Lobster 207 in other union activities like it would any other IAM Local. For example, Lobster 207 participates in the Maine State Council of Machinists that includes the IAM locals in Maine from the wide variety of industries. Lobster 207 also works with the Maine AFL-CIO. Additionally, Lobster 207 has sent delegates to the IAM Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. and Lobster 207 President Rock Alley spoke at the IAM's quadrennial Convention in Chicago, Illinois in 2016.

going on concerning the price paid at the dock, it was impossible to identify who the key price setters were. Second, as independent workers, lobstermen would violate anti-trust restrictions by embarking on any coordinated efforts to demand a minimum price.

The Lobster 207 team prioritized building political power in the short term. Political organizing allowed lobstermen to directly influence regulations that were inhibiting their livelihoods and, in doing so, demonstrate value to lobstermen who might join the ranks. The lobstermen drew directly on IAM tactics to influence the industry. Lobster 207 members testified at hearings and spoke with their legislators. They introduced new legislation and responded to existing legislation. Groups of lobstermen showed up at Maine's capitol in Augusta finding their voice in their organized, larger numbers. Maine's relatively small population of 1.3 million, coupled with the fact that lobstermen were based on the coast, far from the capitol, made this a particularly powerful feat. By being part of the IAM, the lobstermen not only benefited from support of other IAM locals in Maine, but their legislative activities gained the backing of other unions in the state. The result of this strategic initiative and tactical actions by members was immense. **Figure 2** lists some of the political victories to which Lobster 207 has contributed.

Figure 2 Political Victories

- Introduced bill that passed into law, protecting lobstermen on military duty from losing their license while on tour (2013).¹⁹
- Partnered with the Sierra Club to defeat a project that would have allowed dredging by the Army Corps of Engineers in the Penobscot Bay.
- Pressured legislators to oppose or support bills that would directly affect lobstermen: loosening of dragging restrictions on fishermen, electronic monitoring of fishermen, and limited increase in lobstermen license fees to fund a marketing collaborative.
- Helped defeat a Right to Work bill that would have prohibited employers from requiring employees to join a union or paying dues (2015).²⁰
- Encouraged and supported members to run for office, with one member, Robert Alley, elected and re-elected as State Representative and many members elected to serve on local lobster councils.

Economic Foundation

Legislative victories were the first phase of success for Lobster 207, and improving economic long-term livelihoods of lobstermen, and their economic influence, was a critical next phase. According to Pitcher, success for Lobster 207 meant not just having a voice in Augusta, but also helping small communities thrive and uniting lobstermen across the coast. The IAM helped the lobstermen of Lobster 207 incorporate as a statewide marketing co-op called the Maine Lobstering Union (MLU) in

¹⁹ "Maine Lobstermen Score Victory; Poised for Another," *IAM*, June 13, 2013.

²⁰ "Maine Senate Defeats Latest 'Right to Work' Bill," *Portland Press Herald*, June 15, 2015.

September 2013.²¹ This would exempt the lobstermen from anti-trust restrictions and allow them to work together to be price-setters rather than price-takers. **Figure 3** lists the proposition of becoming a statewide co-op, which was technically a Fishermen's Collective under federal antitrust law, a Fish Marketing Association under Maine law, and a cooperative according to the IRS.

Figure 3 Components of Becoming a Statewide Co-op

- Exemption from anti-trust restrictions.
- Members are also Lobster 207 union members.
- Election of IAM Lobster 207 board would also serve as MLU Co-op Executive Board to oversee business.
- Members vote on major developments, and are not liable for local union's debt or obligations.
- Profit-sharing for members who sell their lobsters to the MLU.
- Group buying to reduce costs to Lobster 207 lobstermen: insurance, ropes, traps, fuel, bait, loans, mortgages, etc.
- Influence over future of industry as larger economic player.

The legal distinction of becoming a co-op enabled Lobster 207 members to collectively own a business to market their catch and engage in other business activities, such as processing, without violating anti-trust laws. Instead of having no control over what happened to their catch once it was sold at the dock, Lobster 207 members now had the ability become the "middlemen" who could negotiate wholesale prices based on a larger volume than any single fisherman could offer. Lobster 207 members would share in the profits of the co-op. To be a member of the MLU, one must hold a Maine lobster license or be a sternman, join Lobster 207 as an associate member, live in Maine, and be over 18.

Business Trajectory

While winning political victories in Augusta and building up membership across the coast, Sully began the long process of figuring out how to turn the marketing cooperative into a functioning business. Luckily, the Pettegrow family in Trenton, Maine, three hours north of Vinalhaven, had heard about the efforts of the lobstermen. The Pettegrow family owned the Trenton Bridge Lobster Pound and had been in both the restaurant and wholesale business for four generations. The family liked the mission of Lobster 207 and agreed to sell their wholesale portion of the family business to the lobstermen through their cooperative, the MLU.

²¹ There are many different types of cooperatives. A marketing co-op allows farmers and fishermen to jointly sell what they grow or catch and engage in related activities (such as processing). The farmers and fishermen own the marketing co-op. They are not employees. Land O'Lakes and Ocean Spray are two well-known marketing co-ops. Other common types of co-ops are producer co-ops where the employees make the goods or provide the services of the employee-owned business, and consumer co-ops, such as food co-ops.

In February 2017, Lobster 207 voted at a general assembly meeting to purchase the wholesale operations of the Trenton Bridge Lobster Pound, hire the existing CEO of the family business, and fund the transaction with an innovative financing package. Resulting from the \$4 million acquisition, Lobster 207 owned a building with two large indoor pounds for storing lobsters and space for its sorting operations, trucks, other equipment, a fenced-in cove that could be used as an outdoor lobster pound, and land to expand. More importantly, the pound's wholesale business was already operating and had a recurring customer base of restaurants and distributors transporting the lobsters near and far. Purchasing an existing business and hiring an experienced operator allowed the lobstermen to continue doing what they did best – haul lobsters – while capturing more value from the lobster value chain. See **Exhibit 2** for a diagram of how the lobstermen interacted with the new wholesale business.

The lobstermen would not have been able to finance the wholesale acquisition business without the support of the Machinists. Local banks were hesitant to lend to the MLU co-op because Maine's lobster industry was an economically and politically sensitive one. The union identity of MLU was perceived as disrupting the industry status quo. In fact, three local banks rejected proposals by MLU to acquire an existing wholesaler because of the sensitive industry dynamics. Sully had to call on the IAM's relationship with Kansas-based Bank of Labor to proceed with the acquisition.²²

The Bank of Labor supported the banking and investing activities of unions and affiliates. The bank was able to provide a loan to help finance the transaction and provide a large line-of-credit.²³ Roughly half of the \$4 million deal was financed by the bank's loan and line of credit, which was secured by the property, plant, equipment, inventory, and the insured accounts receivable of the wholesale business. About 25% of the acquisition was financed by unsecured loans from other IAM locals. The remaining 25% came from a note from the seller. The transaction could not have been completed without a backup letter of credit from the IAM Grand Lodge (headquarters) to provide additional assurances that the Bank of Labor would be repaid in the event that the business collapsed and the collateral securing the loan and part of the line-of-credit turned out to be less than the expected value.

The elected eight-person Lobster 207 executive board were also the officers of the MLU and had oversight over the cooperative, including its management and operations. The board brought forward major decisions that required voting – such as expansion investments – to the general membership at special meetings. Through Sully, the IAM District 4 provided support for Lobster 207 organizing and MLU operations assistance as needed through a space and services agreement with the MLU. Under the guidance of the board, the support of IAM, and the leadership of the existing CEO (who stayed on

²² Bank of Labor, "Lobstermen Local 207," 2017, <https://vimeo.com/221494530>.

²³ In the lobster industry, lobstermen are paid in cash; yet the wholesale business does not normally receive payment from its customers for 30 to 60 days. The wholesale business may also hold onto lobsters as inventory for reasons such as letting soft shelled lobsters that have recently molted develop a harder shell. Thus, a wholesale business needs a line-of-credit to deal with the buying of lobsters in cash yet having assets tied up in accounts receivable and inventory.

in his position post-acquisition), the lobstermen planned to grow the MLU's wholesale business in two phases.

The first phase was to operate the wholesale business with increased access to member boats and to market the lobsters differently. Prior to the acquisition, the business purchased lobster from only 30 boats. Post-acquisition, the business was purchasing lobster from 130-member boats.²⁴ The business was also newly branded as "union lobster," drawing orders from union consumers nationwide and attention from local casinos who were interested in sourcing from Lobster 207 because several members were Native American. Lobster 207 had a website that supported online ordering and marketing on social media channels. The business was able to deliver a large order of fresh lobster to a contingent of tech workers at the popular Burning Man festival in Black Rock City, Nevada, a story that was picked up by high-profile media outlets like USA Today.²⁵ See **Exhibit 4** for marketing presence on Instagram.

The second phase of Lobster 207's business growth, which as early 2018, had not yet been executed, included expanding purchasing into other areas where members were located and eventually expanding statewide. The wholesale business used existing infrastructure of small middlemen to buy lobsters from its members in Joesport/Beals, Vinalhaven, and Mt. Desert Isle, only. The ability to buy across the state would attract more members to the cooperative and union. The ability to share profits would also influence member appeal. The executive board faced debt repayments, operational expenses (including roughly 30 employees' salaries), and capital investment costs that might need to be prioritized for long term success – which might require withholding dividends to members in the short term.

Looking Forward

As an established force in the state capitol and the owners of a functioning business, the members of Lobster 207 had a unique path in front of them. They needed to collectively advocate for their interests in a changing industry, manage the direction of a wholesale business, and grow their membership base to ensure the strength of their political and economic position.

In a short period of time, the lobstermen had demonstrated the ability to advocate for their interests and grow their membership. Members continued to plan runs for elected office and respond to industry-specific legislation. IAM organizers continued to visit lobstermen at their ports and in their homes, up and down the Maine coast.

The wholesale business was reportedly profit-positive at purchase and there was no indication that the business cycle and profitability had changed post-acquisition. However, union leaders and lobstermen could not underestimate the tension that arose as lobstermen transitioned from self-employed workers

²⁴ Sullivan, 2017.

²⁵ Marcella Corona, "Enough to Share? At Burning Man, a Group of Googlers Shipped Live Lobsters to Desert," *USA Today*, September 1, 2017.

to quasi-owners and managers of a business. The capabilities required to run a business and operating as a wholesaler were uncharted territory for the lobstermen.

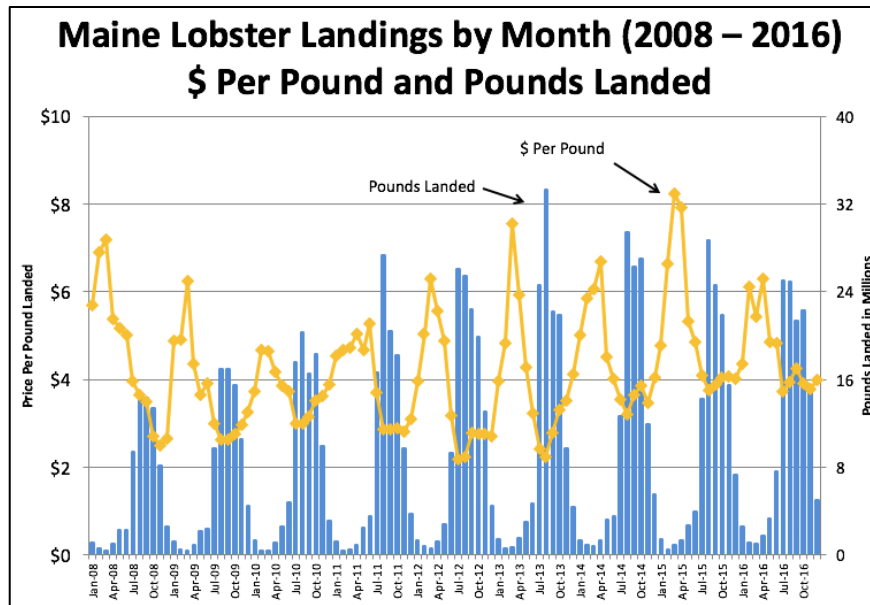
Since the wholesale business was still in its first year of Lobster 207 / MLU ownership, it remained to be seen how successful it would be in generating long-term economic gains for members. The executive board decided on how to allocate profits back into the business or to members, after paying financing costs from the acquisition. Members who sold their lobsters through the MLU, either directly or through their current shore-side buyers, would receive dividends according to their contributed share of the total lobsters sold. The first profit sharing decision would be made sometime in 2018, based on annual sales to-date of the wholesale operation. In the meantime, the lobstermen had demonstrated economic power in nudging middlemen buyers on shore to sell to the MLU. The IAM started organizing lobstermen in late 2012 when they were angry about how low the price at the dock was. The average price that lobstermen received throughout the state was 52% higher by 2016, the highest level since 2006.²⁶

Looking ahead, Sully would be responsible for shepherding the IAM's relationship with the unusual organizing campaign of Lobster 207, its co-op, and its wholesale business. He contemplated the lessons learned from Lobster 207's journey. In particular he wondered:

1. How should the lessons learned be communicated within the larger Machinist organization and across the labor movement?
2. What unique political, financial, and social capabilities did the Machinists bring in this unusual context?
3. What tensions arose and how were challenges overcome?
4. Was this strategy replicable in other geographies or industries and, if so, what should be done differently?
5. In what ways did self-employed and independent workers, as well as organized labor as a whole, benefit from the outcome of Lobster 207's experience?

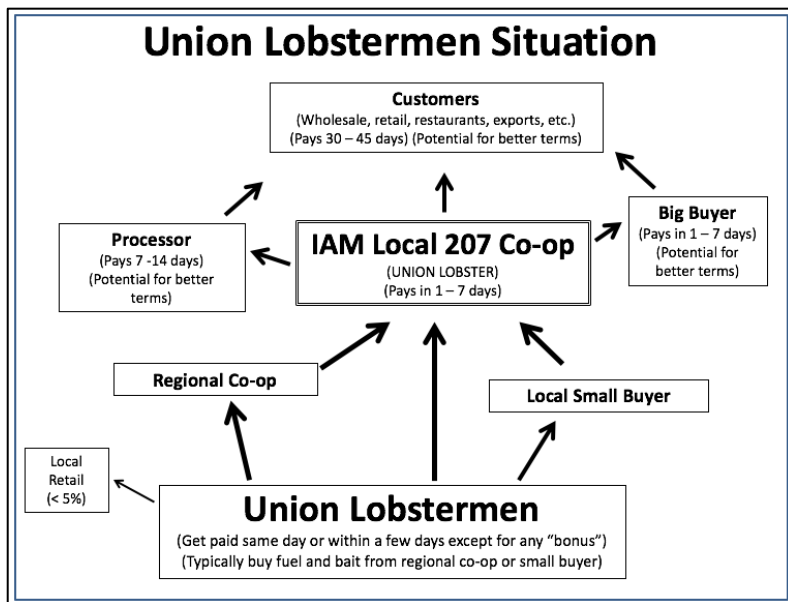
²⁶ "Lobster Landings and Other Charts from State of Maine Department of Marine Resources," *prepared by IAM*, February 15, 2017.

Exhibit 1 Lobster Supply and Pricing



Source: “Lobster Landings and Other Charts from State of Maine Department of Marine Resources,” prepared by IAM, February 15, 2017.

Exhibit 2 Business Ecosystem



Source: IAM Strategic Resources documents.

Exhibit 3 Political Voice at the State House



A picture from the State House in Augusta, Maine, where Maine Lobstermen and District 4 Representatives gather in front of State Representative Mick Devin (D) to protest LD 1549, a bill that threatens the lobster industry.

Source: "Maine lobstermen score victory; poised for another," IAM, June 13 2013.

Exhibit 4 Lobster 207 Marketing



What better way to tell your "Maine" Squeeze you love them?

Lobster Love

February Lobster Giveaway!

Lobster207.com

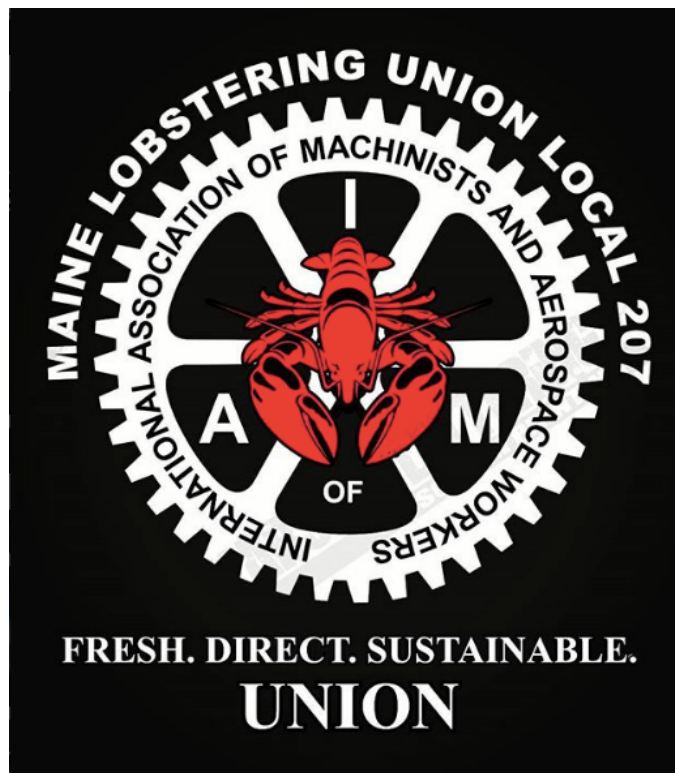
lobster207 • Follow

lobster207 Win Free Maine Lobster, IT IS TIME! February Like & Share contest. We will be shipping a lucky winner FREE Maine Lobster. To enter simply Like & Share. Lobster207.com
#likeandshare #lobsterlove #lobster207 #teamlobster207 #mainelobster #freelobster #unionlobster

byron_bassett_art, lobstercentralhk, pattibillings, mixers_nightclub and mark_flight like this

FEBRUARY 10

Log in to like or comment.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/lobster207/>.