



Bohicket slated for major face lift

New owner plans to improve yacht club's exterior appearance, function

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Bohicket Marina Village is operating under a new owner, new name and new business plan. And starting next month the tired-looking facility is set to get a fresh new look.

Bohicket Yacht Club, a largely local investment group, bought the deepwater property last week to kick off its \$15 million redevelopment of the boating, retail and office complex at the entrance to Seabrook Island.

"It's really going to be a showplace," said Pat Welch, a Charleston certified public accountant and one of the principals in the venture.

The new owners plan to replace all the boardwalks, decking and floating docks starting Oct. 1 with ipe, a highly durable South American hardwood that will be treated to give it a teak-like finish.

Also, the 33,000 square feet of retail and office space at the marina site will undergo a major face lift. And the parking area will be landscaped and reconfigured to add more spaces as part of the "river to the road" improvement project, Welch said Tuesday.

The makeover is scheduled to be finished by early next year. Recently rechristened as Bohicket Yacht Club, the facility will remain open throughout the renovations.

"The bottom line is Bohicket used to be a premier marina, and it's just been allowed to go downhill for so many years," Welch said. "It needs some revitalization."

The town of Seabrook welcomed the investment, said administrator Randy M. Pierce.

"We're looking forward to it," Pierce said. "We think it can be a big asset."

Less noticeable changes also are in the works.

For instance, the 185 deep-water slips are being marketed for sale as dockside condominiums, or what Welch called "dockaminiums." About 80 of those have been pre-sold at an average price of \$110,000 to boat owners and real estate investors, he said.

About 60 other slips will be reserved for long- and short-term rentals.

The marina, which faced a stiff legal battle before it was developed in the early 1980s, probably could not be built today. But given its prime location -- near Seabrook, Kiawah Island and the heavily traveled Intracoastal Waterway -- the demand for first-class dock space is there, Welch said.

To address what it sees as a boat storage shortage in the sea islands, Welch's group also plans to seek permission to expand the marina's dry-stack operation by 80 to 100 units. The existing facility has an 18-month backlog for space, he said.

Welch said the project was put together by Seabrook-based real estate developer Mike Casa. The other principals in the ownership group are Bob Bell, Mike Quillan and Ron Welch. The seller was Benchmark Properties, a New York-based investment group.