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**Decommissioned Omega Protein Vessel Given New Purpose
as Artificial Reef in Gulf of Mexico**

MOSS POINT, Miss. (Omega Protein) – June 10, 2015 – Omega Protein’s retired fishing vessel *Barataria Bay* began its next life as an artificial reef in the Gulf of Mexico this morning. The nearly half century-old ship was safely sunk approximately 20 miles from the mouth of the Pascagoula River, off the coast of Mississippi, where it will now benefit ecosystems and sport fishermen alike. It is the latest collaboration between the company—the largest harvester of menhaden in the Gulf of Mexico—the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR), and nonprofit organization Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks in creating new marine habitats in the Gulf of Mexico.

The initiative, part of the DMR’s ongoing artificial reef program, aims to increase the diversity and abundance of local fish species along the Gulf Coast by developing new habitats, which serve as both a safe haven and a spawning ground to allow fish species to proliferate. At the same time, the program benefits recreational anglers by creating new fishing hotspots for popular game fish.

The *Barataria Bay* was first stripped of all parts and any hazardous materials in preparation for its final voyage, accompanied by a convoy of local fishermen, business leaders, and state legislators all on hand to witness the historic event. *The Barataria Bay’s* exact location will be kept secret for one year, to allow the reef to develop undisturbed.

“Ensuring there is a diverse and productive ecosystem is something that everyone who makes their living from the Gulf should strive for,” said Kenny Hebert, General Manager at Omega Protein’s Moss Point, Mississippi facility. “Omega Protein is proud to continue our partnership with the state of Mississippi to further this essential goal.”

The *Barataria Bay* is the latest Omega Protein vessel to be sunk for the purpose of creating a new reef, as the company is a regular ecological collaborator with the Mississippi DMR. In November 2009, Omega Protein sunk another one of its retired

long-time fishing vessels, the *Great Wicomico*, off the coast of Mississippi for a separate reef project. A third Omega Protein vessel, the *von Rosenberg*, was sunk in May 2000.

Much like the *Great Wicomico* and the *von Rosenberg*, the *Barataria Bay* has a long history of service with Omega Protein. Originally built in 1967 for one of Omega Protein's predecessor companies, Gulf Protein, the *Barataria Bay* operated for over 40 years, fishing for menhaden in the Gulf of Mexico. For much of that time, it was crewed by three generations of the Dameron family. Captained from its inception until 1982 by Wesley Dameron, the *Barataria Bay* would see Wesley's son, Dale, work on the vessel, and his grandson, Michael, become its captain in 2003.

"When I was a child I would play and pretend that I was working on the boats; little did I know that one day I would become a captain, and my first boat would be my grandfather's old boat," said Michael Dameron. "I am very proud of my family's fishing heritage and hope that it continues long after me."

After a long and distinguished career, *Barataria Bay* was decommissioned in 2013. In its new role as an artificial marine habitat, it will continue to benefit the fish and the fishermen of the Gulf of Mexico for years to come.

About Omega Protein

Omega Protein Corporation (NYSE:OME) is a century-old nutritional company that develops, produces and delivers healthy products throughout the world to improve the nutritional integrity of functional foods, dietary supplements and animal feeds. Omega Protein's mission is to help people lead healthier lives with better nutrition through sustainably sourced ingredients such as highly-refined omega-3 rich fish oil, specialty proteins and nutraceuticals.