

**TODD ROSSETTI**  
**Co-owner, Quality Poultry and Seafood – Biloxi, MS**

\* \* \*

Date: September 5, 2008  
Location: Quality Poultry and Seafood – Biloxi, MS  
Interviewer: Francis Lam  
Length: 38 minutes  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Project: Ethnicity in the Seafood Industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast

**[Begin Todd Rosetti Interview]**

**00:00:02**

**Francis Lam:** This is Francis Lam for the Southern Foodways Alliance. Today is Friday, September 5, 2008. I'm with Todd Rosetti at Quality Poultry and Seafood in Biloxi, Mississippi. And today we're going to be talking about his experience in seafood processing and sales. Todd would you please state your name, age, and occupation?

**00:00:18**

**Todd Rosetti:** Todd Anthony Rosetti; I'm 37 years old. I'm the Manager/Second Owner in the business of Quality Poultry and Seafood.

**00:00:29**

**FL:** And Todd where were you born?

**00:00:31**

**TR:** I was born in Biloxi.

**00:00:33**

**FL:** And your family; was your family from here as well or did they come from somewhere else?

**00:00:37**

**TR:** All my family came—originally came from Biloxi as far as myself, my—my dad, my grandfather. My grandfather's relatives came from Yugoslavia which is you know right across from Italy which is Croatia.

**00:00:53**

**FL:** And how did they get involved—this business from the literature I've seen has been around for a long time. How—how did they get involved in this business?

**00:01:05**

**TR:** How did who get involved?

**00:01:05**

**FL:** I'm sorry; your family—how did your family come to start this business?

**00:01:08**

**TR:** My grandfather was a fisherman originally and we were originally in the poultry business which we killed chickens and processed chickens onsite at our old facility and he was always—had been a fisherman and went—went to Seattle before he actually started our business down here and fished in Seattle with the salmon fishery and came back down here. When he came back down here they started processing fish and chicken in two different—two different houses. Well after that we kind evolved into mainly seafood. Seafood overcame everything as far as the—the biggest part of our business. It evolved from killing chickens onsite to getting them processed elsewhere so we wouldn't have the—the two things being processed in the same facility to where we are now—well not really now but in our old facility we went from processing like I said—we

went from processing chickens into letting the manufacturer or the growers process the chickens to us starting doing seafood. And when we started doing seafood he started you know catching catch and selling it and then we started buying from other people who were catching product—oysters, fish, shrimp, all the different things that was coming out of—out of the Gulf here. And then it actually evolved into pulling products from other areas of the United States to pulling products from all over the world, so—. It's kind of basically how—how it evolved.

00:02:53

**FL:** So your—your grandfather you said earlier, he was just doing poultry?

00:02:58

**TR:** Correct.

00:02:58

**FL:** And was personally a fisherman until he went to Seattle and did more fishing there and came back and decided to do both sides—both poultry and seafood.

00:03:07

**TR:** Right; right.

00:03:09

**FL:** But you still do poultry here as well?

00:03:10

**TR:** Yes; we do. Yes; poultry is—I would say poultry to seafood—well seafood probably is 70-percent seafood and probably 30-percent poultry is the ratio that we do now.

**00:03:24**

**FL:** And you only work with chicken?

**00:03:27**

**TR:** We do chicken; we do turkey; we do quail; we do—really whatever the customer requests you know. We can—we can get anything—pheasants, we can get ostrich, we can get all kind of exotics—whatever they like.

**00:03:40**

**FL:** Anything with feathers?

**00:03:41**

**TR:** No; uh-um, I mean yeah we can get anything with feathers but it's not—it won't come here with feathers [*Laughs*]. Yeah; we'll get products—all the things that come in here are already processed.

**00:03:51**

**FL:** So this is—you do wholesale and distribution and—but not any cutting or butchering or slaughtering here?

**00:03:57**

**TR:** We actually still do cut but only specialty cuts, you know. If a customer requests a—you know chickens cut a certain way where they want a split or cut and quartered or—or different—you know specialty cuts like that we can cut that. The mass produced cuts—eight and nine piece are done at the plants—at the processing plants. So we used to cut all the chickens here; we used to cut every—every bird that came in was a whole chicken that we cut. And so but you know as labor has changed we've got away from—from that and it's done nothing but by machines now.

**00:04:33**

**FL:** When was that transition?

**00:04:35**

**TR:** Hmm; I would say probably back in the—probably the late '80s, the late '80s is when that you know took place and then we went from doing probably on a week's time we were cutting you know probably 600 boxes of chicken and then it just—the labor issue you know it was more cost-effective to—to get it done at the processing plant versus having to worry about the labor you know showing up to cut chickens and so forth. Kind of machinery took over the manual labor.

**00:05:15**

**FL:** And who do your customers for the poultry tend to be? Are they restaurants or are they institutions? Are they—?

**00:05:22**

**TR:** All of the above. I mean, we distribute to restaurant chains, we distribute to institutions, we distribute to casinos—any mom and pop chain, really virtually anybody who wants the product. I mean we'll distribute—we have our minimums, but we—you know distribute to anybody. You know we actually sell to the public also if we have, you know, a retail customer that wants to come in here and buy. You know poultry and seafood, I mean we—we accommodate them in—in any way we—we can.

**00:05:48**

**FL:** But then you said at some point the—the ratio of the business changed, sort of inverted and now seafood is much—seafood has been much more of your main product. When—when was that transition and why was that?

**00:06:03**

**TR:** I would actually say that—that transition took place in the—that was probably right around the early—the early '90s. I would say you know early '90, '91, '92 right in that area—right in that area of time. Really basically when the casinos came into this area they required and demanded more out of their vendors; they you know required us to search out products for them, you know bring in products that we were not used to carrying. You know: exotics versus, you know, products that are brought from all over around the world. You know at first these people were wanting us to bring in you know Hawaiian products and wanting us to bring in New Zealand products and stuff from—stuff from California and so forth. Now they—they're—they're kind of getting to where they want more of the local seafood you know. They—they come to Mississippi and they want Mississippi products or wild-caught products of Mississippi. They're trying to get away from these farm-raised products and trying to get—they're more—

they like more of the wild-caught products because of the flavor profile and antibiotics that you know have been put into farm-raised products. Basically you know that's how—how it is—how it's evolved.

**00:07:33**

**FL:** And these are primarily the casinos you're talking about who are really creating much more of a demand for the local product?

**00:07:39**

**TR:** It's casinos and some of the local—the local restaurants. They—they have—the casinos actually demand more you know like I said when they first came in there they demanded more of worldwide products. And now they have evolved into getting domestic products; now the—a lot of the casino chefs have got out of the casino business because they don't like the—the—the hours, the long hours, the weekends you know and they've opened up their own restaurants and they cater to the locals just as well, so all the locals want the domestic products.

**00:08:17**

**FL:** And at this point is the—can you say if there's a majority or—or what the sort of ratio of the product you carry is local fish versus international fish or—or farmed fish?

**00:08:27**

**TR:** I would say it's probably a mixture of 50/50. I mean because we—we do—do a lot of import product but we do it with, you know well mainly all our shrimp is domestic product, so it's—it's probably about a 50/50 ratio when it comes to the products that we stock and carry.

**00:08:46**

**FL:** And I assume the vast majority of your business is wholesale, because down at the retail counter it—it looks like most of the stuff on the retail counter is—is Gulf fish right?

**00:08:55**

**TR:** Correct. The majority of our business is wholesale business, but you know ever since you know some of the hurricanes have come in and wiped out some of the smaller businesses that we've had—we've had an increase in demand for domestic products and for just fresh product in general because there are that many fewer seafood markets that's around these days.

**00:09:23**

**FL:** So let's—let's get back to this facility; it's—it's a large facility obviously. What are—what are all the things that you do here?

**00:09:32**

**TR:** Basically we process a few chickens. We you know process shrimp as far as taking raw product and cooking it and distributing it. We do the same thing with crawfish; we you know buy live crawfish and cook crawfish. We buy crabs, live crabs and cook crabs and sell them. Basically we're in a—a situation where we're a full-line distributor for seafood products and poultry products and you know the different things that we do here we process and sell either wholesale or retail.

**00:10:06**

**FL:** the stuff that you do—that you do process here is that—when you're talking about processing in shrimp is that by hand or is it mechanical?

**00:10:13**

**TR:** Most of it is by hand; most of it is by hand. We have some Vietnamese ladies that come in and hand-cut shrimp that we—we send to get IQF at a facility right down the road. We take and filet fish you know. That's a big part of our business, you know, cutting fresh fish, whole fish, a lot of the fish has been coming in as far as product that we pull in from other parts of the world comes in already filleted out because it's cost-effective to pull it in that way due to the fact of you don't pay that much on freight. You don't pay you know for a whole fish which weighs 100 pounds versus buying you know the—the filets that might weigh you know 30 or 40 pounds off of it.

**00:10:59**

**FL:** And how much—how much of the seafood do you boil?

**00:11:08**

**TR:** Hmm; actually having to put a pencil to it, [*Laughs*] I couldn't tell you. The numbers were pretty big you know. Just you know during crawfish season I know we were probably doing you know close to 30,000—40,000 pounds of crawfish a week you know and you know shrimp we process a lot of shrimp you know. We may process 8,000 to 10,000 pounds a week of shrimp you know and—you know crabs, you know crabs is just really a—mainly a retail item but I mean we probably do a couple thousand pounds a week of crabs also. Yeah.

00:11:43

**FL:** That's a lot of seafood. Do you like eating seafood?

00:11:48

**TR:** I like eating seafood but I see it so much I'm kind of getting tired of it after a time.

*[Laughs]*

00:11:52

**FL:** So actually let's get back to you; and let's get back to the fact that—so your family owned this business for—?

00:11:59

**TR:** Fifty years—fifty—fifty-two years something like that.

00:12:02

**FL:** So certainly well before you were born. Obviously you're—and you—how long—when actually—can you talk about when you actually personally got into the business?

00:12:14

**TR:** I personally got in the business in—in excuse me—in '93. I graduated from Southern Miss in Marketing in '93 and I worked here all my life ever since I was small, you know. I was in the back cleaning fish and you know heading shrimp and grading shrimp and doing different things of that nature with shrimp items ever since I was little. I mean I can remember when I was working and you know I would go home and didn't get paid for a week and you know would—

would come and say dad you forgot to pay me and that was when you made \$60 a week and— and didn't—didn't—you had to do so much stuff. But I don't know what else we were talking— what other questions.

**00:13:03**

Oh I graduated like I said in '93 from Southern Miss and I came in here and then in '93 as a matter of fact I graduated on a Friday and I worked Saturday morning here, so I mean basically it's a family business and I've been in it since '93 you know almost six days a week. So that's what—been at it 15 years now and that's pretty much what I can tell you. *[Laughs]*

**00:13:33**

**FL:** Did you always think that you would come back to—come back to the business after you graduated from school?

**00:13:37**

**TR:** Yeah; I mean I wanted to you know broaden my skills or try to broaden skills that you know I thought that I would need for when I got out you know to come back in and take care of—of the business. I—originally I had started out in a nursing program. My mom was a nurse and I had always looked into being you know a nurse and you know I saw—foresaw things that was going to happen on the horizon and my dad had gotten sick my last—last year at school, which I had already changed my mind since then but that really put the icing on the cake with me coming back into the business and—and doing things that you know I foreseen what was going to happen with the casino industry you know and the—the growth and development that happened in this area you know when the casinos opened.

00:14:24

**FL:** So you talked about your father being sick but originally like I know—I mean nursing and you talked about seeing sort of a change in that market and that inspiring you to come back to the business. What—what exactly was that change and—and what was that inspiration to come back into the business?

00:14:41

**TR:** Well they talked about legalizing gambling and so forth and you know once the people actually made a commitment to it I think the first casino was opened up in '92 but there were you know—it had been talked about for three or four years beforehand and like I said my first year in the—in the nursing program and my dad said, “Well you know you might want to reconsider what you’re taking your major in because of what’s going to happen in the future.” And we decided you know together that—that was in my best interest to pursue a different career and which I did and now here I am today. *[Laughs]*

00:15:19

**FL:** And is there a favorite part to the work that you do here?

00:15:23

**TR:** I couldn't say there's one thing that I—that I particularly have a favorite. I mean I like talking to the customers and seeing how you know—how the things that I do for them makes them happy and makes their business a success, so I can utilize those skills in the other parts of other people's business that would help them you know develop—develop different restaurants, different businesses, casinos—whether it's a casino, a mom and pop restaurant or a chain, you

know communicating with different people and showing them different ways to do things and to try to give them knowledge that will help them you know make their business a success is where you know I get my justification of what I do.

**00:16:06**

**FL:** So that just sounds like building relationships with your clients and—because that doesn't sound like an official part of your—your job with them right as someone who sells them fish and seafood right but that sounds like the kind of relationship you have with them personally of working with them?

**00:16:20**

**TR:** Yeah; it's personal relation but that's what part of this business. I mean it's no more—we're more of a service industry now than it is just a sales industry, you know. It's—it's the realm of everything that you do as far as you know providing the service of six days a week to some of these customers there, providing them with good quality products and providing them on a daily basis and knowing that they can depend on you and—and have these good products for them, you know the quality of products that they're looking for.

**00:16:52**

**FL:** And do you have a least favorite part of the work you do?

**00:16:56**

**TR:** I don't like working six days a week but it kind of comes with the job. [*Laughs*]

00:17:01

**FL:** Well what about when you were a kid—when you were a kid down there and you said like heading shrimp and cutting fish; was there a particular task like that you—that you liked or—?

00:17:09

**TR:** I just—I've always liked being around the fish you know. I like to fish myself; I love to go out and fish and that's I mean I—I've always liked the fish part of it but I like dealing with the shrimp because there's you know so many—so many different aspects of shrimp that you deal with and you've got head-on shrimp, you've got peeled shrimp, you've got peeled and deveined shrimp, tail-on and tail-off; there's just so many different things that you can do with shrimp and so many different ways you can sell shrimp I mean that—shrimp is just a broad category you know. I don't know; I mean I may not have made a whole lot of sense but I just like dealing with shrimp. *[Laughs]*

00:17:45

**FL:** Actually I have a question about shrimp that I've been asking a lot of people. So here in the Gulf we have the brown shrimp, the white shrimp, the pink shrimp, hopper shrimp—do you—

00:17:56

**TR:** And razorbacks.

00:17:57

**FL:** And razorbacks, what—what are razorbacks? Can you talk about that?

00:17:58

**TR:** It's a certain shrimp; you have a razorback and you have a rock shrimp also that you haven't mentioned and that's just different types of shrimp. It's not as common; it has a real good flavor. Razorbacks don't get real big. Rock shrimp do get bigger and it is a delicacy to some people. And it's very, very hard to get at certain times of the year.

00:18:25

**FL:** What about the pink, white, and brown? Are there differences between those?

00:18:31

**TR:** Some people say there are; some people say there aren't. You know it's just really personal preference; brown shrimp they say is better boiled. White shrimp they—is what everybody really wants; everybody likes white shrimp for some reason. Nine out of ten people that come into your facility, you know, they want white shrimp but I don't know. Shrimp is shrimp. *[Laughs]*

00:18:57

**FL:** Do—is it because of something they've heard or is it some kind of marketing thing for white shrimp or—?

00:19:02

**TR:** Mainly it's something that they've heard, you know. I could fry up a brown shrimp and fry up a white shrimp side-by-side and you couldn't tell the difference. You know, I mean pink shrimp that's—they say a pink shrimp has got—has a little bit sweeter flavor but that's you know I think the shrimp flavor is common to the area that it's caught in. You know you don't—you're

not going to get a sweet-flavored shrimp out of the you know Mississippi Sound, Alabama, or Texas or Louisiana Sound. They catch pink shrimp in Key West; that's Key West Pinks, that's why they call them that. And it's a whole different bottom, a whole different feed that they feed off of you know; it's just a whole different—whole different you know shrimp and their habitat.

**00:19:46**

**FL:** So when you buy your local product anyway do you buy it directly from fishermen? What's—how do you—how do you get that product?

**00:19:58**

**TR:** We buy directly from fishermen; yes. I mean they have their own boats and they bring them up here by truck and we have docks back here on the Bay that we—we buy off of also.

**00:20:12**

**FL:** And what dictates how much you're able to pay for a catch?

**00:20:13**

**TR:** What dictates—quality of shrimp—one; freshness, you know, basically quality and freshness all in the same, but you know overall appearance. You know you have different needs for different shrimp.

**00:20:32**

**FL:** And so—so when someone pulls up with their catch you actually have to go down or—or one of your staff members goes down and they inspect the catch and check the quality of it and they name a price at that point or is it—is it more standardized than that?

**00:20:43**

**TR:** Well there's a market; there's always a market on shrimp just like a market on oil or beef or anything. And there it's really you know it's to each his own how much you can actually pay for shrimp. You know if I need a certain size shrimp then I will—you know may go out on the market and offer you know 40—50-cents a pound higher than the market stands, you know and then you may get thousands of pounds of them and until you're ready to make a change then you, you know keep it the—keep the price the same. [*Phone Rings*]

00:21:25

**FL:** And how do you make your decisions as to what you carry and what you sell?

**00:21:29**

**TR:** It's not my decision. The customer really dictates what—what products I carry. I mean we know our core items that everybody uses—shrimp, oysters, crawfish, crab, and it just depends on how broad you want to expand out on them.

**00:21:44**

**FL:** So like behind me there's a list of different types of fish; you have amber jack, cobia, drum, flounder, grouper, mahi-mahi, etcetera—etcetera. How do you—what are your—when you talk about the customer really dictating is it a matter of people call you up and say I need x-pounds of

this and I need x-pounds of that and that—and then you go and acquire it and do it that way or do you—?

**00:22:06**

**TR:** Well we actually—the—the demand is already there. We know that people are going to want fresh fish and we—we try to pull as much fresh fish as you possibly can without overstocking yourself and—and you know putting too much in here that you're not going to sell, you know, to where you have excess product in here. But basically you know the—the different items that they want, the core items, like tuna, snapper, grouper, mahi, you know cobia, just things that are common to our area. You know people come to Biloxi to eat you know a flounder and speckled trout and snapper and grouper; they don't come to Mississippi to eat rainbow trout, arctic char, you know different things of that nature that is not common to our area.

**00:22:48**

**FL:** And in terms of those products do you—I mean are there Gulf fish or—or just local products generally that you'd like to see more of a market for that you think should be marketed more aggressively or no?

**00:23:01**

**TR:** Not really; I mean the—everything that comes out of these waters has—has a home for it. I mean any fresh product—yeah; at—at certain times there's more fresh product than—than—or more product that we'd like to – inventory, I should say – but usually eight out of 10 times throughout the year whatever you buy you know as far as fresh product while it's coming in, it's normally sold you know within the—within the next year—before the next year turns out, the

next season you know starts. You know there may be some sizes of shrimp that may be long as far as you know different size and people—you know people don't really want little-bitty small shrimp anymore, you know. So those sizes have got to be – not “problem-sizes” – but just people that—are sizes that are excess in people's freezer by—at the end of the year, so you know but they discount them down and take their losses and—and go from there.

**00:24:02**

**FL:** And speaking of losses, in the conversations I've had with a lot of different people who have been involved in this industry, particularly with shrimpers or—or ex-shrimpers actually, over and over I hear people being—sounding sort of pessimistic about the future of the industry, pessimistic about whether or not they would be able to continue going—going out and making a living trolling for shrimp and I think everyone—every one of them said that you know they don't want their kids going into this business; they're not—you know they're just not really hopeful about it. What—what is your thought on that?

**00:24:38**

**TR:** Well they, you know it's been a dying industry for a period of time, and if—if it wasn't for the Asian shrimper to come into the industry then there wouldn't be an industry, period. Because 98-percent of the boats that you see fishing – whether it's a wooden boat, a steel hull boat, whether it's you know 25-foot or 125-foot – it's of Asian origin you know and if they wouldn't have stepped into this industry I feel like that—that the industry you know it wouldn't have been dried up; I mean there's always going to be shrimp and people catching shrimp. I mean you've got the Frenchmen from the Point down here that are from Louisiana that—that unload down here that you know supply with a good supply of shrimp but the majority of the product that's

being caught is from the Asian and they stepped in I would say probably 12—12 years ago—12—15 years ago and it's probably been a little bit longer than that—probably 18—maybe 20 years ago that they stepped in and kind of rejuvenated it—the seafood industry. But the way the price of fuel has gone up and the catch—the limited catch that they are catching it—it—it doesn't equal out. I meant they go out and—and go spend you know for instance \$2,000 to go catch shrimp which you know by the time they run out of fuel they may only have you know \$1,500 worth of catch. It's just a—it's a losing battle. If the Federal government doesn't step in and subsidize them probably within the next five years something is going to have to be done. I mean they'll—it'll be—it won't be over with but it's just going to be very, very limited. It will be a commodity; you know the price of shrimp will go through the roof for a domestic product and the import product will prevail because of the labor you know that they have to harvest these shrimp in foreign countries and—and the farms that they actually grow them in, you know and the—you know they can—all their—all their factors are things that they have to deal with as far as labor and fuel and all their different costs that they have involved with it are cheaper than in the United States, so—. They can produce a cheaper shrimp and sell it at cheaper prices and people are going to pay cheaper numbers if they can buy it—you know in different areas it's—shrimp is shrimp.

**00:27:18**

**FL:** But at the same time you were talking about, at least locally, a lot—there being a demand like you said in these casinos that come in and they're national or maybe international corporations; they set up a casino here and over time you saw their demand for local product increase. Do you think that—that demand is strong enough to maybe sustain at least the—the—?

00:27:40

**TR:** That demand is strong but it—it's not enough to—to—that demand will never exceed the supply of product. I mean it just—no way that—that demand—the supply is greater than the demand that's down here in our area.

00:28:03

**FL:** How—how else has the industry changed in the time that you've been involved with it?

00:28:08

**TR:** Well for one, in this area you know the—with the casino development there's less places to unload shrimp. From our facility to the east of us, probably I would say five—four to five miles to—to where the actual Ocean Springs Bridge was—or is now, there used to be probably 10—15 different unloading docks. Now there's none. You know and—you know there's probably four or five—maybe ten unloading docks on the whole Gulf Coast now, so it's just—it's been a dying breed but you know you've got people that's always going to go shrimping and always go fishing you know to—commercial fishermen that's all they know how to do and that's all they've been brought up to do and they have to have places to unload their—their boats by water, you know. It's just too much hassle to get 10,000 pounds of shrimp and put them in a back of a truck and go sell them, you know. They have to have facilities on the water to unload these people.

00:29:14

**FL:** And with the disappearance of a lot of those loading docks though, I mean is that sort of representative of the fact that they are fewer boats out there or—?

**00:29:21**

**TR:** Well yeah; I mean you can look—and look at licenses that were sold within the past three years. Three years ago they had 300 licenses sold you know out of—you know the Department of Marine Resources out of Biloxi; I think last year was around 190 and I think this year was only about 160 so it's been declining you know every year—every year. You know and that one contributing factor, a lot of people lost boats during some of these hurricanes too. You know the national disaster—Katrina, you know there was a lot of boats that was washed up, a lot of boats that were sunk, you know and a lot of these people didn't have insurance on these boats, so I mean that was—at a loss and it's steadily declining.

**00:30:05**

**FL:** And was reopening after Katrina difficult for you?

**00:30:10**

**TR:** It took us about—we opened back up the 11<sup>th</sup>—I think it was the 11<sup>th</sup> of November after the storm, so it was about three months; we actually opened our retail on the 11<sup>th</sup>—our retail market downstairs. Two days after the storm we were selling back to casinos and mom and pop restaurants and people who were feeding Mississippi Power people, FEMA people, insurance people that were in this area, so I mean we were—we were down but we wasn't out, you know. We had—had people who were coming in our backdoor while we were ripping out walls and sheet rock and computers and everything else in the front of our shop.

**00:30:51**

**FL:** So the—the damage that your facility took didn't affect the inventory that you had?

**00:30:56**

**TR:** Yes; it did affect the inventory because we had like two—two and a half foot of water on our dock but whenever the water came up we got our power on our—you know our freezer never went above you know 20-degrees. Everything was still frozen on the inside but it was contaminated with you know the saltwater on it, so the first—all the bottom pallets had to be disposed of and I think we had—I don't know; it was around 20-something, 40-yard dumpsters full of product that we had to throw away, which insurance did not cover.

**00:31:30**

**FL:** And has the market changed or has your business—do you still feel the effects of—of Katrina?

**00:31:36**

**TR:** We do feel the effects of Katrina because of limited housing down here and with rebuilding but as far as people being down here—it's probably back 80-percent of what it was—80-85, maybe 90-percent, but it's not 100-percent back to what it was before Katrina. I don't know that it will ever be that, you know. I mean they're—they're you know developing new places right now but you know as the economy has held up a lot of developments, you know, it's holding up developments in this area also.

**00:32:12**

**FL:** When you talk about the—the lack of housing or the impact that Katrina had on the housing market affecting your business what do you mean by that?

**00:32:20**

**TR:** Well in order to rebuild these places they have to have housing: apartments, you know different places like that—I would say not low-rent housing, but affordable housing that people can come in and afford from other areas to move into this area—they don't have it. They're just starting to develop these things you know after two or three years where they've having housing, where people can move in here. Where you have workers that actually can come in these places and work and you know do the things that it's required to—to run these you know operations. I mean you've got 3,500 to 4,000 people working at you know some of these casinos and they need workers whether it's to—to sweep a floor or to put up a wall or whatever it may be. You know the construction companies need people. I mean you can go look and there's you know *help wanted* everywhere; you know you just don't have the housing for the people to be in this area to rebuild and build the things that's necessary to make it all happen and work and come back.

**00:33:16**

**FL:** And do you have difficulty finding staff for all the positions that you have?

**00:33:21**

**TR:** At times; yes it's just sometimes we do and sometimes we don't.

**00:33:27**

**FL:** And when you do what—what types of positions are tough to fill?

**00:33:32**

**TR:** Hmm; I would say probably our—our hardest one would be truck drivers.

**00:33:42**

**FL:** And the—downstairs you have the retail market and then you also have the café—Bruno's Café. Is that—that your business or do you lease that out to someone else?

**00:33:51**

**TR:** It's a 50/50 agreement that we have with somebody that we're in business with.

**00:33:58**

**FL:** And was that always there; was that always part of the—the idea of this place to have—to have the café here as well?

**00:34:04**

**TR:** Well we rebuilt in '05 and it wasn't in this building but you know six months and then Katrina hit. When we opened back up we had Bruno's as a—was under our—as part of our business just to add an extra and then, after Katrina, we got somebody else to come in because of labor issues of us trying to staff it.

**00:34:30**

**FL:** So what led to the decision to—to add that aspect of the business?

**00:34:36**

**TR:** It was just you know another—another part of you know something that we thought that would be an added extra to—that was needed kind of down here in Biloxi, you know a local business, a local restaurant serving local food.

**00:34:49**

**FL:** So for your—for a long time you had felt like that was—that was really missing in this—in this area?

**00:34:53**

**TR:** Missing in this area—no, but just something that we wanted to do you know something that you know—something that actually that we wanted to do, you know. We wanted to develop our business into something you know more than what it was and that was where—what venue we decided to go into.

**00:35:14**

**FL:** And do you have further plans you're excited about; like what's in the future for you?

**00:35:20**

**TR:** As far as a future we're fixing to go online to order seafood online. We're going into extensive catering and what I mean by extensive catering is doing everything from setting up a table to—to serving somebody a piece of filet mignon. We have moved into that and we're

starting to provide some items in our retail market that—that you don't commonly see to the public—sushi items, stuffed items, just you know a different realm of the business altogether.

**00:36:01**

**FL:** And so five years from now—ten years from now where do you see—where do you see all those things in—in relation to your core business?

**00:36:10**

**TR:** That's a good question because I mean it just depends on how—how well it goes over and how good we market it you know. It's hard to say what's going to happen in 10 years but hopefully it will be a growing—a growing thing and meet the demand of our customers.

**00:36:25**

**FL:** And if the—I mean do you feel that your business is really tied to the fortunes of the shrimping and the—the fishing industry here or at this point do you feel like you're—you're well situated as a business to continue with that but also to continue without it if need be?

**00:36:43**

**TR:** That's kind of a—not a trick question but I feel like we could operate independently but we do need our local fishermen. We have to have our local fishermen. I mean local fishermen is who brought it—you know made the Gulf Coast what it is and you know without them I just—I see the industry as a whole going downhill. It won't die out but it's not going to be what it—what it used to be and I don't think it will ever be what it used to be but it's—it's dying out.

00:37:17

**FL:** What do you think can save it?

00:37:21

**TR:** The only thing that could save it would be more interest in the—the younger generations to get involved with it. If you don't have any interest in it from the younger generations then you know you're not going to have anyone to succeed or proceed—the people who are doing it now.

00:37:40

**FL:** You mean younger people getting into—into fishing or—or different aspects?

00:37:45

**TR:** Getting into shrimping and getting into fishing and getting into oystering—whatever. If you don't have your younger generation getting involved with it and nobody has an interest in it, well the only way that you're going to have an interest in it—if these people start getting more—more for—for their catch, you know increase—making it lucrative to people to go out and fish for these items.

00:38:07

**FL:** Thank you; is there anything else you'd like to add?

00:38:11

**TR:** Not really. *[Laughs]*

00:38:11

**FL:** Well thank you very much Mr. Todd.

**00:38:14**

**TR:** No problem.

**00:38:15**

**[End Todd Rosetti Interview]**