

Marine

News

NOVEMBER 2025

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“G4”

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Johnson Stevens leads
Stevens Towing's
Shipyard Growth*

Boat of the Year
William E Moran

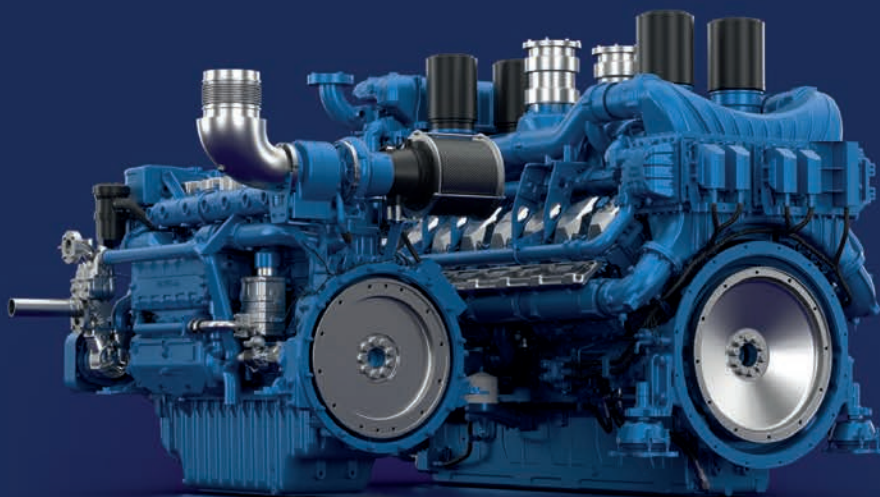
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The Bull Run Begins

Ballast Water
A Great Lakes Scrum

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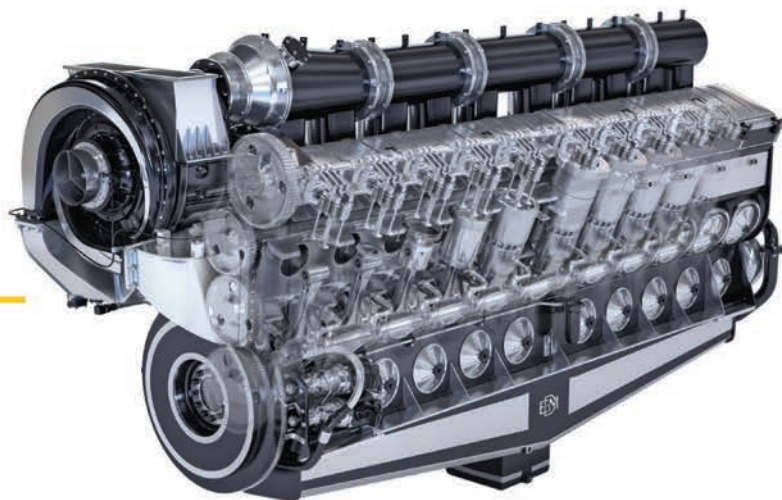
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On the Cover

Based on Yonges Island, SC, Stevens Towing is a 4th generation multi-faceted maritime company, with a rapidly growing shipyard business, as Johnson Stevens explains.

(Cover photo courtesy Stevens Towing Company)



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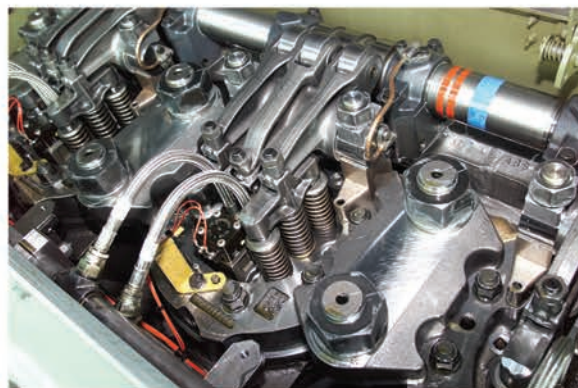
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Editor's Note



Greg Trauthwein, Editor,
trauthwein@marinelink.com

What, exactly, is a 'Great Boat?' As a personal boat owner – which is certainly not directly relatable to commercial ownership – my definition is quite simple. A 'great boat' is one that:

1. Fits my needs.
2. Fits my budget.
3. Is designed and built by quality companies with strong track records.
4. Is outfitted and updated with quality, proven products.
5. Stays in service with minimal unexpected downtime.

Now that I think about it, perhaps it is directly relatable to commercial boat ownership! With that, our Boat of the Year this year is Moran's William E Moran, designed by Robert Allan Ltd. (RApport 2800 series), built by Master Boat Builders and powered by Caterpillar 3516E EPA Tier IV diesels (6,770 bhp combined). According to **Sean Perreault, COO, Maritime Services, Moran**, this is the first vessel in the company's next-generation class, purpose-built to meet the demands of modern port operations, support evolving customer needs, and advance Moran's goals for safety, efficiency, and environmental responsibility. These next-generation tugs will be among the largest in the fleet and "represent a leap forward in our ongoing commitment to providing best-in-class maritime solutions." There are many exciting breakthroughs in vessel design, construction, alternative fuel economy and efficiency around the country and around the world. Are they 'great'? Only time will tell.

Another historic company – Stevens Towing – graces the front cover of this edition, or more specifically **Johnson Stevens**, the 4th generation of family to run the company since it's founding in 1913. To me Stevens Towing is a fascinating U.S. maritime industry story, a diverse maritime company with its own fleet and also a small but quickly growing shipyard operation. I visited Yorges Island, SC, last month to get further insight from Stevens and his team on the current path and future direction of the company.

Finally, kudos to **Captain Jim Weber** for taking me on a test ride in late September on his new Pilot Boat, delivered from Baltic Workboats in Estonia to service Gardiner's Island off the Hamptons in New York. A relatively short but sometimes volatile run, this boat is the literal lifeline of a private island that depends on maritime transport for everything. Captain Weber, a retired U.S. Coast Guard Bosun Mate Chief and certified surfer, is candid in his evaluation of the boat, tech and boatbuilder.

Marine News (ISSN# 1087-3864) is published bi-monthly (6 times per year) by Maritime Activity Reports, Inc. 118 E 25th St. New York, NY 10010-1062. Periodicals Postage Paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES send address corrections to Marine News 850 Montauk Hwy. #867 Bayport, NY 11705

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Marine News

(ISSN#1087-3864) (USPS#013-952)

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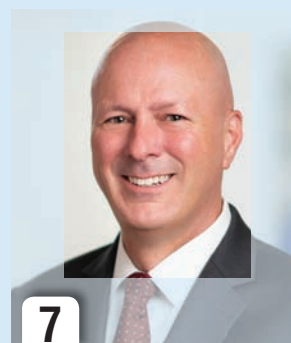
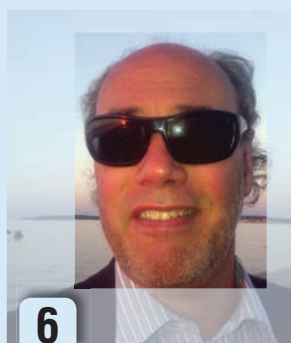
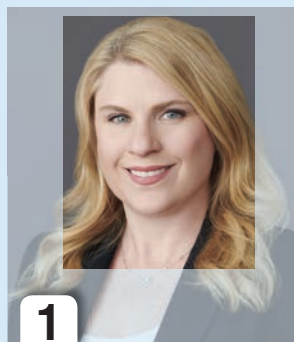
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she has written news and features for a range of maritime, engineering and science publications. She has completed a Master of Science research degree in marine ecology as well as diplomas in journalism, communication and subediting.

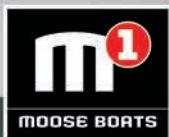
6 Barry Parker

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Training a Brain Built on Instant Answers

By Heather Combs, CEO, Ripple Operations

In a previous article,

we explored how shrinking attention spans demand new approaches to training. But attention is only part of the story. Memory itself is changing. Today's mariners, like the rest of us, live in a world of instant answers, with tools like Google, Siri, and now AI agents and copilots. Instead of storing knowledge, the reflex is often to look it up. This profound shift changes what training should emphasize. Rather than focusing exclusively on rote memorization, maritime training must now strengthen applied judgment, critical thinking, and the ability to act decisively when time is short. Generations of mariners were trained to commit vast amounts of information to memory. Today's reality is different. Information is everywhere, always available, and instantly searchable. But at sea, you may not have the luxury of time, or connectivity. In a man-overboard situation, there is no time to consult a manual. Immediate, instinctive action is non-negotiable. At the same time, expecting a mariner to memorize every technical detail of a modern marine engine is unrealistic. Training, therefore, must distinguish what must live in muscle memory from what can be reference-driven.

What Must Be Muscle Memory

Certain skills and knowledge must be automatic. Emergency signals, lifeboat launching steps, fire response procedures, and man-overboard recovery actions need to be drilled until instinctive. When seconds mean the difference between rescue and tragedy, hesitation is not an option. These are the areas where repetition and rote memorization remain essential.

Lessons from Aviation

Aviation offers a useful parallel. Pilots and copilots spend countless hours practicing emergency responses until first actions are instinctive. But when something unusual occurs, like an engine malfunction outside the norm, or cascading system failures, they do not rely on memory alone.

They turn to a checklist designed by engineers and regulators, refined through years of simulation and real-world incidents. Even under immense pressure, the checklist ensures no critical step is missed. The maritime industry has its equivalents, from SOLAS-mandated procedures to ISM Code documentation. But unlike aviation, where the checklist is standardized and actively used, mariners may not have equally quick access to structured, practical guidance when an emergency hits.

Training for a Blended Model

This evolution requires trainer to ask new questions:

- Which procedures must be instinctive, requiring practice until automatic?
- Which can be supported with reference materials, provided they are instantly accessible?
- How can drills combine instinctive first actions with the guided steps of an emergency?

By making these distinctions explicit, training programs can direct effort where it matters most. Muscle memory handles immediate response. Structured guidance ensures complex tasks are carried out without oversight. Together, they create a safety net that supports both speed and accuracy.

Mariners don't just need knowledge; they also need judgment. They must know when to act on instinct and when to slow down and follow structured guidance. Training for the future should embrace this blended model, combining hardwired responses with accessible checklists or digital tools. This will require addressing the logistical challenge of creating and distributing rugged, standardized guidance that can be instantly accessed when it matters most. If aviation can rely on checklists to safeguard lives in the sky, the maritime industry can benefit from the same mindset at sea. The lesson is clear: muscle memory and structured guidance are not in competition. They are complementary, and together they give mariners the best chance of responding effectively when it matters most.

Thank you for reading, and until next time, sail safely!



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Column

Washington Watch

Once Implemented, Vessel Incidental Discharge Act Will Usher in New Era of Simplified, Uniform Management Requirements for Commercial Vessels.

By Jeffrey H. Lewis, Cozen O'Connor

With everything going on

around the maritime industry these days—from a Presidential Executive Order to Make U.S. Maritime Great Again, to bipartisan legislation in Congress to boost our shipyards and merchant marine, to the import tariff rollercoaster ride we're all on—it's easy to forget some other important U.S. maritime policy initiatives whose benefits are just over the horizon. One such initiative we mustn't lose sight of is the effort by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act of 2018 (VIDA).

Enacted and signed into law in December, 2018, VIDA is designed to supersede and replace the current patchwork quilt of competing, sometimes conflicting, and often confusing EPA, Coast Guard, and individual U.S. state requirements for the treatment and management of ballast water and numerous other types of discharges that are routine in a vessel's everyday operations. In place of the current jumble of requirements, EPA and Coast Guard, acting pursuant to VIDA, are to establish nationally uniform, environmentally sound standards for the regulation of ballast water and other incidental discharges by commercial vessels 79 feet and greater in overall length. Under VIDA, the EPA is tasked with implementing national performance standards for treatment equipment and management practices for incidental discharges, while the Coast Guard is charged with promulgating implementation, compliance, and enforcement regulations for those standards.

Last October, the EPA issued its final rule for the national performance standards. The effective date of the rule was November 8, 2024, but the performance standards do not actually have force and effect until the Coast Guard issues its regulations. Under VIDA the Coast Guard has until November 8, 2026, to promulgate its implementation, compliance, and enforcement regulations. At the time of this writing, Coast Guard has yet to publish a proposed rule, but when they do it will be important for vessel owner/operators and

other maritime interests to review the proposal carefully and provide the Service with thorough, constructive comments.

It also is of critical importance for U.S. maritime interests to remind the Department of Homeland Security and the Trump Administration more broadly that VIDA was and is deregulatory in nature. It is a bipartisan, bicameral effort to bring order to, clarify, and simplify how commercial vessels manage the multitude of discharges that are a normal part of their operations.

To truly understand the importance of VIDA, it's worth summarizing how the current regulatory mess came to be what it is today. In 1973, when the EPA first implemented the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) under section 402 of the Clean Water Act, it intentionally excluded vessels from the NPDES permitting requirement for pollutant discharges by point sources. At the time, the EPA justified its action with the observation that "this type of discharge generally causes little pollution and exclusion of vessel wastes from the permit requirements will reduce administrative costs drastically."—in essence, the juice wasn't worth the squeeze. In 2005, this exclusion from NPDES permitting was overturned when, as a result of environmental citizen suit litigation, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that excluding vessels as a point source under NPDES was an action by EPA that was outside its statutory authority under the Clean Water Act.

During the 32 years that the NPDES vessel exclusion was in place, Congress responded to growing concerns about aquatic invasive species by enacting the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (NANPCA), and further amended it in 1996 with enactment of the National Invasive Species Act (NISA). NANPCA/NISA requires the Coast Guard, in coordination with the EPA and other agencies, to create and oversee a program for the management of ballast water to prevent nonindigenous species from being introduced into U.S. waters, with ballast water from vessels being the prime vec-

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Column

Washington Watch

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Also prior to the federal courts' overturning of the EPA's exclusion of vessels from NPDES, in 2004 the Coast Guard and the Department of State headed a U.S. Delegation to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) where the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (Convention) was adopted. The Convention includes a number of important provisions relating to research and development of treatment technology and the roles of flag states and port states in adoption and use of that technology, but most importantly it includes a ballast water treatment standard based on the number of living organisms contained in discharged ballast water that is the most stringent standard scientifically proven to be achievable and

detectable today ("Regulation D-2").

Today, as a result of these independent developments, both the Coast Guard and EPA are regulating ballast water under distinct, uncoordinated, and sometimes clashing sets of requirements—the Coast Guard under NANCPCA/NISA and the EPA under the Clean Water Act and NPDES. While both the Coast Guard and the EPA have adopted the IMO Regulation D-2 standard as their treatment standard for ballast water, there has been considerable confusion between them and among vessel owner/operators over how to administer, and properly comply with, the agencies' varying requirements.

Adding to the confusion for vessel owner/operators is the fact that, under the Clean Water Act, NPDES, and the EPA's Vessel General Permit (VGP) that it has used to manage

vessel effluent limitations, the EPA's management requirements are only a federal "floor"—meaning individual U.S. states have the ability to set additional effluent limitations and management requirements in their waters, on top of federal requirements. Several states have done so since the VGP went into effect with little or no coordination with one another, resulting in varying requirements depending on the state waters in which a vessel finds itself. For those readers familiar with the historic emphasis on uniformity in the field of maritime law and policy, this is a far cry from it.

Once fully implemented by EPA and Coast Guard, the current hot mess of federal and state commercial vessel discharge management requirements and limitations will be superseded by a single, uniform set of national requirements. Some of you know that I personally invested a decade of my professional life as a U.S. Senate committee counsel getting VIDA to the President's desk, and others too numerous to name here invested even more years than I did. Uniform treatment and management rules for commercial vessel discharges are a no-brainer—from facilitating vessel owner/operator compliance under simplified, uniform requirements to the ease of Coast Guard enforcement that comes with such requirements.

As DHS and the Trump Administration contemplate which rulemakings they will and will not prioritize, I urge every vessel owner/operator and every mariner coping with the patchwork quilt of overly complicated and confusing regulations to communicate to them, through whatever means available, the importance of Coast Guard's VIDA implementing rule. Uniformity: we are almost there!



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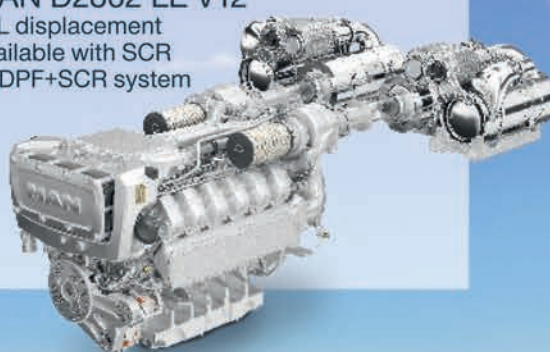
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Executive Action Needed to Amend Antiquated Executive Order

By Jen Armstrong, Vice President of Government Relations, Waterways Council, Inc.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works

mission began in 1824 when our Nation's fifth President, James Monroe, signed into law a bill to improve navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. While Corps projects have always been large and complex, the Civil Works missions have evolved over time to incorporate new regulations, policies, shifts from political pressures, and unfortunately, cumbersome bureaucracy.

Today's Corps' Civil Works mission is critical to America's economy and global competitiveness and provides a true return on investment to move the country forward. The net economic benefit generated by Corps' Civil Works is estimated to be \$268 billion dollars annually, a return of nearly \$40 for every dollar expended.

Infrastructure projects that have such a colossal impact on our economy and our communities can sometimes be controversial and politically sensitive. How water behaves hydraulically is largely dictated by physics, and has little regard for geographical, cultural, or political boundaries. To ensure transparency and promote public involvement, the development and recommendation of a Corps' water resource project for authorization by Congress follows an extensive public planning process that ensures it is economically justified, environmentally acceptable, and technically achievable.

Many credit the modern-day Civil Works program to the Reagan Administration given the seismic policy changes of the 1980s that reformed how projects are justified, how they are funded by adding cost share requirements from non-federal partners, how conservation is considered, and (the focus of this discussion) oversight by the Administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). But it was President Jimmy Carter's mistrust of the Corps' ability to recommend projects that were economically justified and protect the environment that sowed the seeds for the changes to come. Proving the phrase "all politics is local," the project at the center of Carter's attention was a proposed dam project on the Flint River in his home state of Georgia. In 1977, he announced a major review of 320 water resource projects, questioning their compliance with environmental laws and doubting that

many projects remained justified under the existing economic conditions. Ultimately, he suggested the elimination of funds for 19 water resource projects, sparking backlash from Congress and debate on whether certain water projects were worthy of investment from the American taxpayers.

Following Carter's defeat in 1980, the incoming Reagan Administration maintained the previous Administration's focus on the Corps of Engineers. In 1981, Reagan issued Executive Order (EO) 12322 to mandate any federal or federally assisted land or water resource project proposal first be submitted to OMB for review before being presented to Congress for approval. But over the last several decades, a broadened interpretation has caused a withholding of nearly all information, including outyear funding needs, up-to-date project capabilities, innovative acquisition strategies, and other information critical to Congressional decision-makers.

What was once intended to improve coordination and remove duplicative processes has effectively created an unnecessary choke point for basic factual information. This information is often not budget-sensitive and decisions that are not based on policy, overruling the judgement of technical experts, economists, scientists, and professional engineers. The impact of this has had real world consequences. Mislabeling almost all factual information as "budget sensitive" has negative and sometimes devastating impacts on the Corps relationships with its project partners and the public.

In fairness to OMB, they often find themselves fulfilling the role as the federal constant in a policy space that is ever-changing and subject to the never-ending whiplash of political attention and Congressionally directed reforms. During major shifts, OMB is a fixed presence as Administrations, the Congress, and Corps military leadership can frequently change.

The lack of transparent and objective information coupled with inconsistent communication has eroded trust in the Corps' ability to execute projects effectively. Restoring American maritime dominance and unleashing American energy can only happen if we assess and address what holds it back. By addressing the bureaucracy created by Executive Order 12322, President Trump can streamline Corps projects and ensure that the harmful and shortsighted policies of past Administrations do not continue on his watch.

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At Ports, Propane Powers More than Vehicles

By Jim Bunsey, Propane Education & Research Council

Energy reliability is critical at ports,

and while propane power has traditionally been associated with equipment like forklifts and terminal tractors, its role at ports is rapidly expanding into new areas. From electric vehicle (EV) charging to full-scale microgrids to shore power for docked vessels, propane-powered infrastructure helps a wide variety of port operations stay resilient and efficient.

Power Beyond Forklifts and Terminal Tractors

Propane has been a trusted fuel for port equipment for decades, and with good reason. Known for its clean and reliable performance, propane has a long-standing reputation as an effective alternative to diesel in terminal tractors, forklifts, and other material handling vehicles. These propane-powered engines emit significantly fewer greenhouse gases and particulate matter than their diesel counterparts. Today's ultra-low nitrogen oxides (NOx) propane engines are 90 percent cleaner than EPA standards, moving the industry closer to achieving near-zero emissions.



But terminal tractors and forklifts are just one piece of the puzzle for ports trying to decarbonize and lower costs while maintaining performance and uptime. This is where propane's versatility comes into its own. Propane-powered infrastructure is scalable, relatively low-cost, and capable of serving as both a primary and backup power in various applications.

Off-Grid, On-Demand EV Charging and More

For fleets moving to electric equipment, EV charging can be powered in part by propane to help ports transition away from their diesel terminal tractor fleets faster and at a lower cost. Most traditional electric grid charging infrastructure often requires utility coordination, transformer upgrades, trenching, permitting, and more. Propane-powered EV charging stations are more flexible, modular, and faster to deploy.

Many propane-powered chargers can be installed in a matter of weeks, and oftentimes your propane supplier will absorb most of the installation costs in return for an annual or long-term fuel contract. Faster infrastructure deployment means faster electric vehicle deployment, even if just temporarily while additional infrastructure is installed or during a pilot program. The main way propane is used beyond vehicles and equipment is through microgrids – mobile, off-grid power systems that can be powered by alternative energy sources. With the abundance of propane in the U.S., microgrids are an easy, powerful, and versatile solution to charge electric vehicles and equipment.

Microgrids come in various sizes and trailer lengths, typically from 15 to 53 feet. A trailer containing a propane tank (or tanks, depending on the size) and a generator are placed in the most convenient location on a property. Conduit is routed from the trailer to a bank of charging stations. EVs are then quickly and easily connected to the charging stations, recharged, and put back to work around the terminal.

The Reliability of Propane Microgrids

All ports, not just those operating fleets of electric terminal tractors and forklifts, face the risk of operational downtime if the grid goes down and knocks out critical systems.

Seasonal severe weather and natural disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and tornados can interrupt or completely disable grid power. Without the ability to recharge their fleet, many port operations could grind to a halt. Likewise, in urban areas where most ports are located, increasing demand for power from population growth and increased data center usage, as well as aging grid infrastructure, add additional strain to the grid.

Microgrids can be integrated into larger electrical systems to provide base-load power or backup across port operations. When combined with other clean energy sources, these microgrids create a low-emissions, diversified energy mix that can help maintain consistent power at the port.

For light commercial microgrid (< 100kW generation system) applications, propane fuel cells can lead to near zero NO_x and carbon monoxide (CO) emissions, as well as a significant reduction (24 percent) in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. For large commercial microgrid (> 100kW generation system) applications, propane fuel cells can also lead to near zero NO_x, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbon emissions, as well as a 16 percent reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Shore Power for Docked Vessels

Propane can also be used for shore-power, supplying docked cargo ships with electricity while in port so they don't need to run their auxiliary diesel engines to keep the lights on. Those same microgrids that can power other essential systems around the port can be used for shore power, reducing overall grid demand from large numbers of docked vessels.

By displacing the need for ships to run their own diesel engines, as well as the need for the port to use diesel generators in shore power systems, microgrid technology can significantly improve air quality around ports.

Every day at ports, propane proves that it can do more than simply fuel vehicles. Whether it's supporting EV fleets, enabling shore power, or bolstering energy reliability, propane offers a flexible, efficient, and low emissions energy solution. By leveraging a full suite of propane capabilities, ports can speed up their decarbonization without costly grid vulnerabilities, upgrades, or delays.

To learn more about how propane can make a difference at ports or to learn how to start making the upgrade for your operation, visit propane.com/material-handling-for-ports.

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Insights

Kyle Durden, CEO, Bergan Marine Systems

*From inland towboats and tank barges, to oceangoing tankers and government fleets, Bergan Marine is everywhere you look on the waterfront. **Kyle Durden, President & CEO, Bergan Marine Systems**, discusses the history of this company; born in 1975 in Norway but operating from Florida since 1980, it offers a full family of product and services that are connected, modular solutions that reduce installation and operating costs – ultimately providing better data.*



DURDEN

When Kyle Durden reflects on his maritime career, the story starts where so many seafaring lives do: at the dock. Growing up in Port Aransas, Texas, a fishing village near Corpus Christi, Durden's first taste of maritime work came early.

"My first job in high school was working as a deckhand on offshore fishing boats," he recalls. "Early on, I had a deep appreciation for the sea and for the people who work on it."

That early fascination turned into a lifelong calling. After hearing about Texas Maritime Academy (now Texas A&M University at Galveston), Durden enrolled — the only school he applied to — and graduated in 1986 with an engineering degree. Soon after, he went to sea with the U.S.

Coast Guard, earning his chief engineer's license at age 29.

"Those early years shaped my view of what mariners need and how critical equipment is in this industry," he says. "That perspective has stayed with me throughout my career."

Today, as President and CEO of Bergan Marine Systems, Durden leads a long-tenured and respected sensor and systems providers, a company that in 2025 celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Founded in Norway, Bergan Marine Systems relocated to Pensacola, Florida, in 1980, where it continues to design and manufacture mission-critical vessel systems for operators around the world.

"Fifty years in business is a long time," Durden says proudly. "Today we operate a state-of-the-art manufactur-

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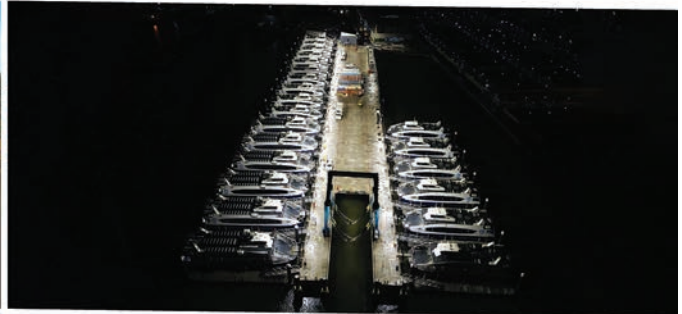
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Insights

Kyle Durden, CEO, Bergan Marine Systems

ing and engineering facility here in Pensacola, with a support center in Houston. We've got 44 dedicated employees designing, building, and supporting systems used on vessels worldwide."

That small but specialized team punches above its weight. Bergan's systems can be found on everything from inland towboats and barges to Navy auxiliary ships and offshore supply vessels. Roughly 30% of its work serves government and defense customers, while the remaining 70% focuses on the commercial market.

"This kind of diversification allows us to invest in our people, our products, and our technology," Durden notes.

Delivering Critical Vessel Intelligence

At its core, Bergan Marine Systems has always focused on delivering critical vessel information — the data mariners rely on to safely operate ships and manage cargo.

"Our systems tell crews what's in their tanks, what their draft is, and all the information related to operational safety," Durden explains. "Our catalog includes tank level indicating systems, overfill alarms, draft loading systems, and related hardware."

The company's equipment is found across the maritime spectrum: inland barges, tankers, offshore vessels, and government fleets alike. "Our bread and butter is still the tank level indicating system," he says. "It's what we're best known for. But we've been expanding our line into digital and connected products to give customers more data and insight into their operations."

In maritime, digitalization is more than a buzzword, rather a defining shift. And for Bergan Marine Systems, it represents a natural evolution of the company's heritage in reliable sensing and control.

"Bergan Connect is our IoT-enabled platform," says Durden. "It allows operators to access data like tank levels, cargo flow rates, fuel consumption, and alarm conditions from anywhere on any connected device."

That capability is especially transformative for the inland barge market, long a digital outlier. "There are thousands of barges in operation in the U.S., but traditionally they haven't been well connected," Durden notes. "We've changed that. We've made IoT connectivity part of that ecosystem, even on vessels without constant power, using solar and battery solutions."

Another recent innovation is BargeWatch, a product

developed hand-in-hand with operators. "It's designed to make sure crews are alert and responsive during critical loading evolutions," Durden says. "Think of it as Bridge-Watch for the barge sector. It gives managers real-time visibility into loading operations, allows remote troubleshooting, and reduces risk for the operator."

Crucially, both platforms were designed with retrofit in mind. "We built these systems so customers can bring existing hardware into the digital age without a full system replacement," he explains. "It keeps costs down while modernizing the fleet."

Safety Through Smart Tech

For Durden, safety isn't just a selling point, it's personal. His decades at sea taught him the risks mariners face, from heat stress to icy decks and rough-weather operations. "When I started sailing in 1986, the industry's safety record was very different," he recalls. "One of the systems we're most proud of today is our draft loading system, which eliminates the need for crew to manually read draft marks painted on the hull."

The system provides continuous, wireless draft data, allowing crews to load cargo to precise limits without stepping out on deck. "It maximizes load while minimizing risk; no one hanging over the side at night or in bad weather," Durden says. "It prevents groundings and keeps mariners safe."

Durden is also candid about how artificial intelligence is reshaping the way Bergan designs and supports its systems.

"When AI tools like ChatGPT came out, I was one of the early adopters," he laughs. "I've always been interested in computers, and my son's a programmer at LinkedIn, so I had a front-row seat." Bergan now uses AI internally to improve software solutions and analyze electrical designs, but Durden sees its greatest impact coming in predictive analytics for shipboard systems.

"Our IoT dashboards already collect massive amounts of data," he says. "Now, AI can detect anomalies that humans might miss, trends in the data that suggest maintenance issues or operational risks. It's a game-changer for decision-making."

He cites former Google CEO Eric Schmidt's observation that AI could be "the most important invention in 500 years." Durden agrees: "We're just scratching the surface of what it will do for our industry."

Insights

Kyle Durden, CEO, Bergan Marine Systems

Market Signals: Connectivity and Integration

Serving customers from inland barges to ocean-going tankers, Bergan Marine Systems is seeing strong demand for connected, reliable, and maintainable systems.

“As a former mariner myself, I always look at our products from the deck,” says Durden. “Customers want systems that are easier to service, integrate seamlessly with other software, and provide better visibility into fleet operations.”

Integration and remote access have become central themes, especially after the pandemic. “During COVID, we couldn’t always fly engineers overseas,” he explains. “So we developed secure remote-access capabilities that let us tunnel into ship systems and troubleshoot sensor signals, even radar data, in real time. That’s now standard practice, better for our customers and a more efficient use of everyone’s time.”

Durden sees strong momentum in the U.S. maritime sector, particularly as government investment in shipbuilding and defense programs increases.

“The administration’s focus on revitalizing U.S. maritime infrastructure aligns perfectly with our capabilities,” he says. “Programs like the John Lewis-class fleet oilers at NASSCO have been a cornerstone of our business for decades. We’ve been on nearly every Navy auxiliary fleet class built there since the 1990s.”

Bergan is also providing systems for the U.S. Coast

Guard’s new Polar Security Cutter, under construction in Pascagoula, Mississippi, one of several Arctic-capable ships now in the pipeline. “It’s exciting,” Durden says. “Any expansion in fleet capacity — commercial or defense — drives innovation, and that’s where we excel.”

As Bergan Marine Systems celebrates its golden anniversary, Durden insists the company is just getting started.

“We have a great legacy of products, and we’ll continue to support those customers,” he says. “But we’re also expanding our digital and connected systems, AI features, analytics, fleet dashboards.”

He pauses, then sums up Bergan’s mission simply: “We want to be that trusted provider of critical vessel information, whether it’s a tried-and-true tank level system or a next-generation IoT dashboard.”

Durden says collaboration will be key. “We’re teaming with new hardware and software partners and will be making announcements soon ... it’s an exciting time.”

For a company that began with analog sensors and now delivers real-time, cloud-connected data from vessels worldwide, the transformation is remarkable. But Durden’s motivation remains unchanged:

“I started as a mariner,” he says. “Our mission is to support those mariners, to help them work safer, smarter, and more efficiently every day. We’ve been doing it for 50 years, and in many ways, we’re just getting started.”



Tidewater

OFFSHORE SERVICE VESSELS



Despite Market Fluctuations, A Bull-Run for Decades to Come

By Barry Parker

As oil exploration and production goes, so goes the market for Offshore Service Vessels (OSVs) and Platform Supply Vessels (PSVs). Throughout 2025, the prices of oil which drives exploration and production (E&P), have softened, moving down towards \$60/barrel amidst economic uncertainty and a wider than anticipated opening of the taps by major oil producers. In the past year, the Baker Hughes overall count of U.S. rigs working has declined. September 2025's U.S. Rig count of 537 was down from a year earlier figure close to 600.

The overall numbers for rigs deployed mirror the offshore rig counts. Westwood Global Energy Group, using data from RigLogix, also showed declines in rigs working offshore; the approximately 370 jackups working globally in September 2025 was down from a year earlier count

around 390 units. For floaters – drillships and semi-submersibles – the count of just over 130 units was down from year ago figures in the mid 140's. The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) looks at activity in the U.S. Gulf of America; in September, 2025, it pegged the number of rigs working on the Outer Continental Shelf in Federal waters at 11, all offshore Louisiana (except for one off the Texas coast), down from 20 a year earlier.

But regional bright spots have given the OSV sector, tied to rig activity, healthy hues, albeit in selected basins. In the September, 2025 report from Fearnley Offshore, its analysts emphasized the positive, saying "Since our last report, the OSV market has developed quite flattish overall with some segments and regions even experiencing significant softness. While this has undoubtedly put a dent in the recently held

overarching positive sentiment in the market, it does also create a window of opportunity for strategic moves.”

At the end 2024 Marine Money event held in New Orleans, Todd Hornbeck, CEO of Hornbeck Offshore Service (HOS) said that that vessels impacted by a softening market in the U.S. Gulf (at that time, seeing concerns based on reduced leasing activity in Biden Administration’s waning days) might divert to strengthening sectors such as Guyana and Brazil. Vessels working in Guyana’s Stabroek Block during 2025 have included Edison Chouest’s linked Platform Supply Vessels (PSVs) *WINE ISLAND*, *CLARENCE TRICHE*, *RUSSEL BOUZIGA*, *RUSSELL ADAMS* and *GARY ROOK*, TDW’s *BREAUX TIDE*, and Seacor Marine’s *EMILY DAY McCALL* and its hybrid powered *SEACOR AMAZON*. OSV’s working offshore Brazil, which has been described by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) as being a leader in future OSV innovation, have included Edison Chouest boats *ROGER WHITE* (a 299-ft. PSV) and *ALLIE CHOUEST* (a 280-ft. PSV). TDW-linked vessels operating offshore under Brazilian flag, include *STARLING TIDE*, *SCOTSMAN TIDE*, and Hornbeck’s *HOS CORAL*- registered in Mexico.

A quick scan of drilling in the Mississippi Canyon, in the U.S. Gulf, shows numerous OSV’s from local owners working. In early October, the OSV *JOSHUA CANDIES* was positioning at a Shell Offshore drilling site, while Edison Chouest’s *PELICAN ISLAND* was ferrying supplies between Fourchon and platforms

serving the Thunder Horse field. Harvey Offshore’s tri-fueled PSV *HARVEY ENERGY*, based at Fourchon, was working at the nearby Mars Field.

Exploration

Offshore exploration – and ultimately production – in U.S. waters may be a “bright spot” going forward. Activity in the U.S. Gulf, which had seen plans for minimal new leasing activity through 2030 during the Biden Administration, is now set to pick up.

In an August 2025 announcement, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) announced a leasing program, tied to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (passed during the Spring), with bi-annual lease sales to be held

out through 2040. According to the Institute for Energy Research (IER), “The plan is a significant departure from President Joe Biden’s lease plan that provided for a historically small number of lease auctions...”.

The oil majors are set to continue activity in the Gulf. For example, late September saw an announcement that BP would be going ahead with its Tiber-Guadalupe project (in fields roughly 300 miles southwest of New Orleans), with an aim to produce 80,000 bbl/day of crude oil by 2030. Occidental Petroleum (NYSE: OXY), in its early October 2025 announcement of the spinoff of its Oxychem division to Warren Buffet’s Berkshire Hathaway, suggested that a portion of

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Feature

OSVs

*“For the last few years, climate and energy policymakers have convinced themselves the world was inexorably moving away from fossil fuels. **Breaking news: It is not.**”*

– IEA

the \$9.7 billion consideration might be used for “opportunistic exploration of Gulf of America and international areas of operation.”

At Marine Money’s June 2025 signature event, Quintin Kneen, President and CEO of vessel owner Tidewater (NYSE: TDW), on a panel moderated by Greg Lewis, a leading equities analyst, with New York based investment bank BTIG, said: “What drives the majority of our business is production-oriented activity.” He went on to note that: “In today’s market, about 55% of the activity of our vessels is driven by offshore platforms, any type of production unit ... the balance is made up of drilling, offshore wind, offshore construction and offshore pipeline support.” He said that “...it’s the production activity that really provides the basis for our activity levels.” Lewis, being closely involved with equities’ performance, talked about TDW’s price being down from recent years’ previous highs from late 2024, and asked Kneen about prospects going forward. In response, Kneen emphasized the importance of the supply side (with little new equipment on order),

saying “We are early into it, which is great.”

On the demand side, the TDW CEO pointed to increased activity, including in areas that have not been active in recent years; but he did point out that: “In the U.S. Gulf, activity has been surprisingly slow ... but the southern parts of the Caribbean: Guyana, Trinidad and Suriname ... have really begun to pick up.” After detailing strong activity in Brazil, “continuing to drill through the cycle...”, he said, “I still think we have another leg up before we get into any difficulties from an oversupply standpoint.”

The investor reports from TDW, offer excellent insights into the overall marketplace for PSVs, a big component of the broader OSV sector. Following over-supply of vessels in 2014-2016, a time that demand from drillers eased, utilization dipped down as low as 55% by 2017. An incipient recovery was blunted by the Pandemic of 2020- 2021 with a further dip. TDW’s data shows that demand did indeed recover, reaching to nearly 80% in mid 2024 before backing down again. Dayrates, (with TDW citing data from Clarksons), which had plunged to below \$10,000

Harvey Gulf Marine



Harvey Gulf Marine

Guice Offshore



(for 3,200 tdw units) in 2020's slow-down, rallied up to around \$25,000 in mid 2024 (rivalling highs from the Spring, 2008 boom) before coming off later that year into 2025. Their larger 4,000 tdw brethren rode similar waves from Pandemic-induced lows of slightly above \$10,000/day up to \$40,000/day in mid 2024 (also in line with Q2 2008's heady levels) before pulling back.

In the recent research report on TDW, Evercore ISI described general market prospects, analyst Jason Bandel and his colleagues opined that: "No meaningful newbuild cycle is expected given vessel economics that still do not support reinvestment, and the global OSV fleet continues to age, with a large portion of supply nearing retirement and limited capital available to fund replacement. This supply constraint is gradually intersecting with a rising tide of global demand, particularly from FPSO installations, subsea construction activity, and longer-cycle drilling projects." Analysts at Westwood, summarizing views from

a seminar on oil markets held in September, 2025, reported that: "2025 has been a turbulent year for global oil

markets. Consumption has underperformed, prompting repeated downward revisions in demand forecasts.



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Feature

OSVs

Meanwhile, the rollback of voluntary OPEC+ production cuts has added nearly 3 million barrels of oil equivalent per day to global <oil> supply.” They cautioned that “Combined with seasonally soft demand and rising output from the Americas, this influx risks tipping the market into oversupply over the next 12 months.” In the same report, sentiments similar to those of Evercore were expressed, with Westwood commenting that: “Aging offshore fleets present a critical challenge. Lower dayrates are making it difficult to replace rigs and vessels, potentially impacting project efficiency and emissions management.” They added that: “Despite aging fleets, current market dynamics do not support a newbuild cycle. Instead, operators and service providers must extend asset life and improve operational efficiency.”

Energy & Politics

Even if the oil markets remain relatively flat, oil-related exploration in the U.S. with a focus on activity in the U.S. Gulf of America, may see an upswing. Indeed, with Trump Administration trade policies described by some political strategists as “mercantilist”, incremental buyers of oil might choose U.S. sourcing over other producers. If these economic and geopolitical pieces align, OSV activity could follow E&P activity, and gravitate towards U.S. waters.

However, Trump 2.0 actions have already led to reduced demand in another segment: offshore wind. In Europe and Asia, many re-purposed OSVs from oil and gas work have also been used to support the development of offshore wind projects, a sector which has seen considerable worldwide growth. The U.S., however, has now seen a pause with the new Administration and forecast wind energy activity in U.S. offshore waters have been dramatically reduced. The Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC), in a 2025 report estimated overall installed offshore wind capacity at 83 gW, with another 48 gW under construction. The report pointed to revised forecasts of 6gW available U.S. offshore capacity (down from a 15 gW forecast in the previous year and a shadow of the “30 gW by 2030” mantra from the Biden years). GWEC commented: “Even if the next administration supports offshore wind, it will likely take several years to get GW-level offshore wind projects online.”

OSV owners are participating in existing projects, and projects still under construction.

Equinor’s 810MW Empire Wind 1 project, under de-

velopment in the New York Bight, south of Long Island. These have included Guice Offshore’s supply vessel *GO PATRIOT* (DP-1) built at Master Boat Builders, which had previously been working for drillers in the U.S. Gulf, and TDW’s 280 Class PSV *POLARIS* (DP-2, built at Thomas Sea). Vessels working at Ørsted’s Revolution Wind project, shut down briefly in late Summer, included Harvey Marine’s tri-fueled (diesel/LNG/battery) *HARVEY SUBSEA*, a multipurpose support vessel. The 800 mW Vineyard Wind project (developed by Iberdola, in waters south of Martha’s Vineyard), aiming for end 2026 completion, has been served by boats including *GO LIBERTY* and *GO SEEKER* (same owners as *GO PATRIOT*), along with *C FIGHTER* and *C PIONEER*, both linked to Edison Chouest. Another OSV owner, Otto Candies, has deployed specialized Service Operation Vessels (SOVs), involving retrofits from conventional PSVs, to serve wind-farms in the Northeast. Its *CADE CANDIES*, servicing oil platform in the U.S. Gulf prior to a retrofit, has been working as a SOV in the Northeast.

Looking Ahead

Longer term, looking out over decades, fossil fuels will still be extracted in quantity, which will in turn drive demand for OSVs. Noted energy analyst Javier Blas, from Bloomberg, wrote in September, 2025- prior to the release of an International Energy Association (IEA) report, “For the last few years, climate and energy policymakers have convinced themselves the world was inexorably moving away from fossil fuels. Breaking news: It is not.” Ship-broker Clarksons, in summarizing a Spring, 2025 seminar on Oil Services, had a similar view, telling attendees, “The sentiment was clear: despite the energy transition, oil and gas consumption is still expected to keep growing for many years with peak demand being unrealistic in the near to medium term.”

Bloomberg’s Blas, in his write-up, added that: “The consensus was that consumption of oil, natural gas and coal would peak before the end of this decade. There was debate about the speed of the subsequent decline, but the conclusion was the same: The end of the fossil-fuel era was within reach. But that tenet, key to achieving the ambition of net zero by 2050, wasn’t as cast in stone as its backers thought.”

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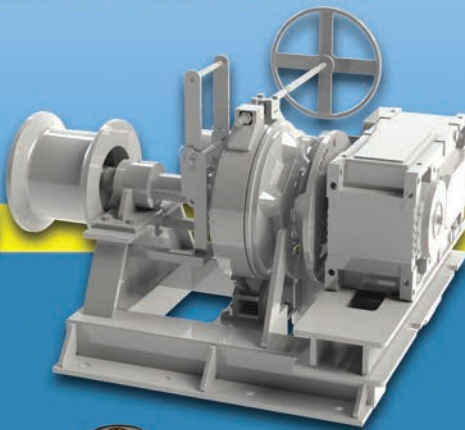


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Feature

Ballast Water Management Systems

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THE GREAT LAKES BWMS REGULATION SCRUM

There hasn't been an invasives species introduced to the Great Lakes from ballast water since 2006. So, what's the problem now?

By Wendy Laursen

As far as Transport Canada is concerned: “Scientific sampling to date consistently shows that ballast water management systems (BWMS) used in the Great Lakes reduce organism densities in ballast water discharges by over 99%, consistent with global evidence. As crews gain experience in operating these systems, performance continues to improve, contributing to the ongoing protection of Canada’s waters from invasive species.”

However, a 2025 publication supported by Transport Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada reported that nearly half of discharge samples studied did not comply with the IMO Convention D-2 performance standard. The Convention, like the USCG ballast water regulations, includes organism discharge standards - not reduction percentage levels.

BWMS are not working, says James Weakley, President of the Lake Carriers’ Association (LCA). The association is working with various research organizations, the EPA and the US Coast Guard to test systems. “There’s no equipment that will work on a US-flag Laker under the American rules,” he says.

Currently, compliance testing doesn’t involve ensuring treatment efficacy in the waters of the Great Lakes which have high tannin and sediment loads and vary in temperature across the lakes from freezing to over 70 degrees.

“Our test conditions are probably the most difficult test conditions in the world, and no BWMS that’s commercially available has been proved to work. The US recognizes that, and they’ve given a pass to Lakers.”

In contrast, Weakley says vessels are deemed compliant by Transport Canada if they have a BWMS onboard, even if operating it doesn’t meet the numerical standard for the maximum number of viable organisms discharged. The IMO Ballast Water Management Convention does not include a “deemed compliant” provision mentioned by Transport Canada.

He says Canada has gotten “cute” by claiming to have jurisdiction over US ports. “They believe that if the ballast water originated in Canada and it’s discharged in the US, that Canada now has jurisdiction over that US port, because the ballast water originated in Canada.” Transport Canada does not have

Feature

Ballast Water Management Systems

control of discharges in U.S. ports.

"Everywhere in the world and IMO, it's a discharge standard. Discharge standard, because you're discharging. It's an operational activity that's being controlled, and you have to meet that standard, unless you're in Canada and you have the 'deemed' compliance standard," says Weakley.

"Canada believes to protect one Canadian port from another Canadian port, that if you pick up the organism in, say, Windsor, Ontario, and you move it to a US port, say, Duluth, Minnesota, and you discharge it and you kill it upon discharge, because another Laker could pick it up in Duluth and move it to Thunder Bay, Ontario, and somehow it magically comes back to life and needs to be killed a second time.

"We object to that. We filed a petition with the Federal Maritime Commission saying that Canada is only doing that for economic reasons - to drive US-flag lakers out of the cross-lake trade."

Weakley says that new Canadian vessels are leaving Chinese yards with cheap BWMS. "We're not rebuilding the way the Canadians are."

In mid-September, Transport Canada did not grant extensions to the existing exemptions for installing BWMS that LCA members say they need to align with their upcoming contracts being negotiated for 2030. Weakley sees this as effectively placing a regulatory embargo on LCA ships going to Canada.

Providing the perspective of Canadian shipowners, Jason Card, Director of Communications, at Canada's Chamber of Marine Commerce (CMC), says the CMC advocates for safe, sustainable, harmonized, and competitive policy and regulation that recognizes and supports marine trans-

portation's significant contributions across North America.

"Given the focus of our organization, the inconsistency in ballast water regulations between Canada and the United States has been a concern, as it is creating uncertainty for stakeholders in both countries.

"Transport Canada's regulations set out performance standards for discharging ballast water. Installing ballast water systems is the only means by which Canadian operators can comply with the standards set out by Transport Canada, and so Canadian ship owners have taken action to maintain compliance. Under US regulations, US operators of existing vessels are currently exempt from these regula-

tions and have been given extended permission to operate in Canadian waters without the equipment."

Card also points to the challenging water conditions in many Great Lakes ports. "This poses serious operational challenges for all manner of systems. Lack of clear guidance and enforcement is also a problem. With differing requirements in both countries, our seafarers receive conflicting compliance directives from regulators and inspectors, resulting in uncertainty, costly delays, and confusion."

There is misalignment in the approach taken by Transport Canada and the EPA, and the manner in which this discrepancy will be handled in future is unclear, he says, a significant problem



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Feature

Ballast Water Management Systems



"Our test conditions are probably the most difficult test conditions in the world, and no BWMS that's commercially available has been proved to work."

**– James Weakley,
President of the Lake Carriers'
Association (LCA)**



"With differing requirements in both countries, our seafarers receive conflicting compliance directives from regulators and inspectors, resulting in uncertainty, costly delays, and confusion."

**– Jason Card,
Director of Communications,
at Canada's CMC**



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for an industry that needs certainty to effectively plan operations and manage costs. Full alignment between Canada and the US from a regulatory perspective would reduce challenges and uncertainty for all players.

"Canadian shipowners have had to adopt ballast water systems to comply with Transport Canada regulations and in doing so have incurred millions in capital and operational costs to install and maintain equipment that was not designed for the conditions in which they operate. To date, US shipowners have not been made subject to such complication and expense."

Transport Canada says its ballast water regulations, published in June 2021, currently remain in full effect. These regulations require vessels built before January 1, 2009, to install a BWMS by September 8, 2030, while vessels built after January 1, 2009, must comply by September 8, 2024. The cut-off date was chosen to align with US Environmental Protection Agency rules introduced in 2013 under the Clean Water Act.

Transport Canada says the regulations consider domestic operating realities such as the logistical and technical challenges of installing BWMS across a large fleet in a short time-frame, especially for older vessels designed prior to the ballast water management era. As such, vessels operating exclusively in Canadian waters and the Great Lakes were provided with extended timelines for compliance. In certain cases, Canadian and US vessels have been granted time-limited extensions or exemptions due to supply chain issues related to the pandemic and limited drydock capacity.



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**50
YEARS**
1975-2025



Great Boats 2025

Boat of the Year



First in Class

WILLIAM E. MORAN

Image courtesy, Jess Yeomans

The William E. Moran has entered service in New York, bringing enhanced capability and performance to Moran's evolving fleet. As the first vessel in the company's next-generation class, it is purpose-built to meet the demands of modern port operations, support evolving customer needs, and advance Moran's goals for safety, efficiency, and environmental responsibility. These next-generation tugs will be among the largest in the fleet, underscoring Moran's continued focus on delivering safe, reliable, and innovative maritime solutions.

Built by Master Boat Builders in Coden, Alabama, and designed by Robert Allan Ltd., the William E. Moran belongs to the RAport 2800 series. This modern ASD tractor tug is engineered for high-performance escort and ship-assist operations. Measuring 92 feet in length with a 40-foot beam, the vessel delivers more than 80 metric tons of bollard pull, equipped to manage the increasing size and complexity of vessels calling at U.S. ports with precision and control.

"These tugs represent a leap forward in our ongoing commitment to providing best-in-class maritime solutions," said Sean Perreault, COO, Maritime Services. "Through our collaboration with Master Boat Builders and Robert Allan Ltd., we have leveraged our design exper-

tise to create vessels that deliver exceptional performance and compliance while offering adaptability to meet our customers' evolving demands."

The William E. Moran is ABS class, Escort-rated and powered by Tier IV Caterpillar 3516E engines, producing a combined 6,770 horsepower. It is LEV (Low Emission Vessel) certified, significantly reducing NOx emissions and supporting Moran's long-term sustainability goals. The tug features twin Z-drive propulsion units for enhanced maneuverability and operational precision.

Crew safety and well-being were central to the vessel's design. The William E. Moran includes expanded accommodations, improved working spaces, and modern on-board systems. The vessel features a fully integrated Rose Point ECS for precision navigation and Starlink satellite connectivity to ensure uninterrupted communications and data access across all operating conditions.

The arrival of the William E. Moran is part of Moran's broader fleet-renewal strategy. Additional vessels in this class are under construction and expected to deliver later this year.

165 Years of Evolution

Founded in 1860, Moran has grown from a single-service tug operator into one of the most diversified marine



enterprises in North America. “We started off in the ship-assist business, so ship docking was our bread and butter for many years,” Perreault said. “More recently, we’ve expanded into a couple of other business lines. Today we’re made up of two divisions – the Maritime Division and Specialty Services – and within those we have four business units covering ship assist, transportation, environmental and industrial services, and dive and construction.”

Between the two divisions, Moran employs nearly 2,000 people, operating 80 ship-assist tugs in 17 ports and maintaining a fleet of 14 ocean-going barges. “Over the last 18 months, we’ve delivered seven new tugs into the operating fleet,” Perreault said. “The William E. is one of those – and a real milestone in our continuous-build program.”

The William E. Moran embodies Moran’s effort to create a standardized yet flexible tug platform that can be deployed across multiple ports and missions. “We were looking for a platform that allowed us to meet all of our needs throughout the ship-assist business unit,” Perreault explained. “Each of our 17 locations has slightly different requirements. We wanted a tug that was handy enough to handle general ship-assist work anywhere but also capable of being outfitted for high-performance terminal service – firefighting, larger winches, and high-speed escort work.”

This led to a focus on commonality and crew familiarity. “As people move from one boat to the next, they should have that sense of familiarity,” he said. “Standardization helps with safety, training, and efficiency, but it also gives us a core design that any qualified U.S. yard can build for Moran for years to come.”

Visibility was another key focus during design collaboration with Robert Allan Ltd. “Operator visibility is huge,” said Perreault. “These tugs have full-height windows all the way around, 360 degrees, deck-to-overhead. We even raised the pilot house slightly and moved it aft, which gives much better sightlines to the foredeck and alongside when close to ships. It’s exponentially better visibility than we’ve had before.”

Inside and out, the William E. Moran reflects Moran’s emphasis on operator comfort, maintainability, and data-driven reliability. “We spent considerable time on the layout – how we outfit the interior, arrange equipment, and ensure connectivity for those aboard,” Perreault said. “We want to take care of the folks that take care of us. They’re living away from home, and we want these vessels to feel as much like home as possible.”

The tug integrates real-time equipment monitoring systems designed in-house by Moran engineers. “We’ve incorporated a variety of systems to collect data continuously,” Perreault said. “We can access that data shoreside to trou-

bleshoot issues, and, more importantly, identify problems before they happen. By comparing performance across the fleet, we can spot trends early and maintain that high level of availability that our customers expect.”

For Moran, the William E. Moran class is also a response to increasing vessel size, evolving regulations, and higher expectations from clients and crews alike. “As ships continue to grow, tugs have to grow – more power, greater escort capability, larger winches,” Perreault noted. “Customers are looking for 80-ton boats, so that’s where we’ve positioned this class.”

Beyond horsepower, new escort stability requirements and fire-suppression regulations influenced the design. “The timing of those regulatory changes mattered,” he said. “It forced us to adapt our approach to layout and firefighting systems.” Crew feedback has been integral as well. Moran’s new-construction team maintains a direct feedback loop with crews, allowing onboard observations – from equipment placement to small habitability details – to feed directly into the next build cycle. “They’re great ideas, and we really welcome that feedback,” Perreault added.

Balancing Investment with Efficiency

While these next-generation tugs represent a significant capital investment, Moran views the returns in operational efficiency and longevity. “We continuously invest because our customers are investing,” Perreault said. “Each new class brings improvements, and yes, that often means higher CapEx, but we offset it through smarter operations. That includes better dispatching, technology that improves utilization, and more efficient workflows. The idea is to be better than the last class in every measurable way.”

Moran currently has five additional vessels under construction, scheduled for delivery between late 2025 and Q1 2027, continuing the company’s methodical renewal strategy. “I don’t see that changing over the next 12 to 24 months,” Perreault confirmed.

WILLIAM E. MORAN MAIN PARTICULARS

Builder	Master Boat Builders – Coden, Alabama
Designer	Robert Allan Ltd. (RApport 2800 series)
Owner / Operator	Moran Towing Corporation
Type	ASD Tractor Tug / Escort-rated
Classification	ABS Escort-rated / LEV (Low Emission Vessel)
Length o.a.	92 ft (28 m)
Beam	40 ft (12.2 m)
Bollard Pull	> 80 metric tons
Main Engines	2 × Caterpillar 3516E EPA Tier IV diesels (6,770 bhp)
Propulsion	Twin Z-drive azimuthing thrusters
Generators	Caterpillar C7.1 auxiliary sets
Navigation & Control	Rose Point ECS Integrated Navigation
Communications	Starlink satellite connectivity; VHF/UHF bridge suite
Fendering	Manuplas system
Fire Protection / Suppression	Firemaster fire insulation package
Insulation	Iscover

Great Boats 2025

Boat of the Year – The Shipyard

Master Boat Builders



MASTER BOAT BUILDERS:

A Family Shipyard at Full Steam

*Expansion into Harbor Tug sector helps Master Boat Builders nearly double in size, from 200 to 400 employees building eight to nine vessels per year, and the prospect of a new drydock plus additional partnerships and government construction contracts promises to power the company forward further, faster. **Garrett Rice**, President, Master Boat Builders, discussed the impetus for the company's growth, and the growth in U.S. shipbuilding overall since the start of 2025 when President Trump made industrial revitalization and shipbuilding a priority.*

By Greg Trauthwein

When Garrett Rice walks through the gates of Master Boat Builders (MBB) each morning in Coden, Alabama, he's not just clocking into work, he's continuing a family legacy that began nearly half a century ago. Founded by his father in the late 1970s, the family-owned shipyard has grown from a small Gulf Coast operation a busy dynamic tugboat builders. Today, under Garrett's leadership, MBB is on a trajectory of rapid expansion, doubling its workforce, ramping up production, and positioning itself to play a larger role in a resurgent U.S. shipbuilding industry.

Bayou Beginnings

"Coden, Alabama is as far south in Mobile County as you can get," Rice said. "It's a small bayou, but it's home." That humble setting belies the scale of what Master Boat Builders has

achieved in recent years. The company has grown from about 200 employees two and a half years ago to roughly 400 today, operating across two facilities, its main yard in Coden and a wet dock facility in Theodore, Alabama, about 30 minutes north.

This growth hasn't been accidental.

Rice attributes it to focus, diversification, and a sharpened sense of purpose. "For the longest time, we were a traditional workboat yard building supply boats, fishing vessels, offshore tugs," he explains. "But in recent years, we've really honed in on the harbor and offshore tug market, which we see as sustainable for the long term."

That focus has allowed the company to increase its output dramatically. "We've gone from building five or six tugs a year to eight or nine," says Rice. "That's a 35% increase in throughput, no small feat when you consider the man-hours it takes to build a tug."

A Backlog Built for Momentum

MBB's orderbook tells the story of that success. "We have 16 tugs under contract that we have yet to deliver," Rice says. "We'll deliver the next one in early November, and then a tug every six weeks through the end of 2027."

Most of those vessels are Robert Allan Ltd.-designed harbor tugs, primarily in the RAport 2700, 2800 and 3000 series, serving major U.S. operators from coast to coast. The yard's rhythm is steady and deliberate: start a tug every six weeks, deliver a tug every six weeks. "It's the kind of consistent cadence that keeps our workforce engaged and our facilities running efficiently," Rice notes.

Delivering Power and Precision for Moran Towing

One of MBB's highest-profile customers is Moran Towing Corporation, one of the nation's oldest and most respected tug operators. "Moran is a great customer," Rice says. "We've delivered three tugs so far in their six-vessel series, the William E. Moran being the first, and those boats went straight to work in New York Harbor."

The tugs are the first for Moran designed by Robert Allan Ltd., and they measure 86 feet long (28 meters) and are powered by twin Caterpillar 3516E engines, producing nearly 7,000 total horsepower. With Kongsberg Z-drives and Markey bow winches, they achieve bollard pulls exceeding 80 tons, enabling them to handle ship-docking and escort duties with equal confidence.

"The next three Moran tugs are a bit different," Rice adds. "They're fitted with FiFi firefighting systems, larger 300-horsepower Markey winches, and enhanced Kongsberg drives for even better performance. You won't see much difference from the outside, but under the skin, they're beasts."

For a yard that's growing this fast, infrastructure investment is essential. "We're taking delivery of a new dry dock this month from our friends at Conrad Shipyard," Rice says. "It's a big step for us because our channel here in Coden has only about eight feet of draft, while our tugs draw 18 feet."

Previously, MBB relied on outside facilities, like Austal or Bollinger, to launch its vessels. Now, with its own dry dock, the company gains greater control over scheduling, logistics, and safety. "It's a game-changer," says Rice. "We'll be able to launch and deliver on our own schedule, which makes us more efficient and predictable for our customers."

Beyond the dry dock, MBB is also planning a new government-dedicated shipyard across the bayou in Coden. "We'll talk more about it soon," Rice hints, "but it's part of our effort to support the Navy and Coast Guard through partnerships and outsourcing agreements."

Those partnerships include a significant new collaboration with Austal USA, headquartered just 30 minutes north in Mo-

bile. "We're working with Austal on a strategic outsourcing agreement," Rice explains. "They build big ships and do it well. We can help increase their throughput and de-risk some of their backlog by handling specific modules or vessel components."

It's a symbiotic relationship, he says, one that will also benefit the broader regional workforce. "We're talking about joint workforce development initiatives. The more work we keep here in the Mobile area, the stronger our entire industrial base becomes."

Modernizing Processes: One Tug at a Time

Even as MBB remains steeped in hands-on craftsmanship, Rice is pushing the yard toward greater digital integration. "Tugs are tough for automation—they're small, there aren't a lot of big panels for robotic welding—but we're testing some robotic processes over the next six months," he says.

The bigger leap has been in design and engineering. "Everything we do now is 3D modeled," Rice explains. "Our engineering efforts have grown tremendously, which is creating real efficiencies in production. We've moved from an old-school, mom-and-pop approach to a modern shipbuilding operation, while keeping the family culture intact."

That combination, family-driven values and modern methods, has become Master Boat Builders' signature. The yard's reputation for quality, reliability, and partnership has made it a go-to builder for operators like Crowley, G&H Towing, Kirby, Seacor Marine, and now Moran. "We're a small part of a big industry," Rice says, "but we're proud of the part we play."

Reviving U.S. Shipbuilding

Garrett Rice is candid about what he sees happening across the American shipbuilding landscape and why it matters. "This is the most exciting time I've seen in my lifetime for U.S. shipbuilding," he said.

The "One Big Beautiful Bill," has set the stage for that response. "The money is appropriated; the signal is clear," he says. "Now it's up to the industry to step up, invest, and deliver." For smaller and mid-tier yards like MBB, he believes the key lies in strategic partnerships and modular construction. "We don't all have to build entire ships," Rice explains. "There's room for a tiered ecosystem — where smaller yards handle modules or specialized components for larger builders. It's a smarter, lower-risk way to expand capacity." That's part of why MBB's partnership with Austal USA is so significant: it's a practical example of how collaboration can strengthen the entire industrial base. "We can't get to a 355-ship Navy or support a growing commercial fleet by relying on just five or six big yards," Rice says. "We have to think broader."

Great Boats 2025

Harbor Charger

Siemens Energy



HARBOR CHARGER

The Trust for Governors Island introduced the Harbor Charger, New York State's first hybrid-electric ferry, in August. The ferry is equipped with Siemens Energy's hybrid propulsion system, battery storage and real-time control platform.

In New York Harbor, August 12, 2025, saw the debut of Harbor Charger, a \$33 million hybrid-electric public ferry to operate in New York State with a capacity of 1,200 passengers and 30 vehicles, which will be linking Governors Island, a climate research and maritime education center in the Upper Bay, with downtown Manhattan. The vessel was designed by **Elliott Bay Design Group** and delivered from **Conrad Shipyard** in Morgan City, La., and is set to replace a diesel-powered boat in service since the 1950s. Harbor Charger required more than 465 tons of steel to construct, and sports enhanced maneuvering capabilities using **Schottel** azimuthing thrusters featuring 360-degree steering. The boat also features modern amenities, a lower-level ADA-accessible lounge, and restrooms on each level.

As explained by its owner, The Governor's Island Trust, "The hybrid propulsion system reduces air pollution by allowing the boat's systems to toggle between three modes:

zero-emissions, battery-only power, and battery assisted hybrid with diesel backup." They explain further that the vessel is equipped with Siemens Energy's BlueDrive Eco diesel-electric propulsion system, its BlueVault advanced battery-based solution, and EcoMAIN — a technology platform ... for monitoring the... equipment." The Trust points out that: "The battery-assisted hybrid mode will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 600 tons annually, allowing the Trust to make groundbreaking progress on its net-zero emissions goals."

This milestone coincided with the 20th anniversary of Governors Island opening to the public, a symbolic moment as the Island cements its role as a hub for climate innovation, research, and education.

Harbor Charger is the second ferry EBDG has designed for the Trust, following the passenger-only GOVERNORS 1 launched in 2019.

"Ferries are a vital part of transportation infrastruc-

Great Boats 2025

Harbor Charger

ture, lasting 40 to 60 years or more. At EBDG we work closely with our clients and their teams to ensure the vessel is fit for purpose and engineered to match a long life,” said John W. Waterhouse, Principal in Charge at EBDG. “The best clients are those that truly collaborate, so the resulting vessel shows the best of designer and client. Working with the Trust for Governors Island has been a real pleasure. We believe the vessel will be a reliable component in delivering the Governors Island experience to visitors.”

Equipped with Siemens Energy’s BlueDrive Eco diesel-electric propulsion system, BlueVault battery storage, and EcoMAIN real-time monitoring technology, Harbor Charger is engineered to operate in three distinct modes: zero-emission battery-only power, battery-assisted hybrid, and diesel backup to help ensure reliable service with a reduction in air pollution.

In its current configuration, the ferry is expected to cut nearly 600 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. Once shore-side rapid charging facilities are completed, the vessel will reach fully electric operations and eliminate an additional 800 tons annually.

EBDG served as an integrated member of the entire project team, providing support from initial concept through final construction. In addition to vessel design, the firm supported grant development under the Passenger Ferry Grant Program by defining shoreside charging infrastructure for the new hybrid-electric ferry. EBDG coordinated directly with Siemens Energy ensuring seamless integration of the diesel-electric battery hybrid propulsion system into the vessel’s design. The team also worked closely with the Trust to integrate owner requirements and design feedback, while overseeing engineering contributions from other partners.

Throughout construction, EBDG delivered technical oversight and supported Siemens’ system integration, ensuring the project remained aligned and delivered to the highest standard. By embedding deeply at every stage, EBDG ensured the HARBOR CHARGER was not only innovative in design but also practical, reliable, and ready for decades of service.



The Harbor Charger, pictured at Conrad Shipyard as it prepares for its highly anticipated sea trials.

Image courtesy Siemens Energy



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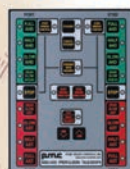
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Great Boats 2025

M/V San Jacinto

Houston Pilots

M/V SAN JACINTO



Breaux's Bay Craft delivered its latest aluminum pilot vessel for the **Houston Pilots**. The first of two, M/V San Jacinto, is the newest addition to the fleet of high-performance pilot boats, designed for precision, built for strength, and finished with a striking red, white, and blue color scheme that reflects the Gulf Coast heritage of the Houston Pilots.

Measuring 80 x 21 feet wide, the San Jacinto is built with a new-generation inverted deep-V bottom hull, exceeds the rigorous operational demands of one of the busiest pilotage services in the U.S. Powered by three MAN D2862 LE 438 Tier 4 engines supplied by Performance Diesel, each rated at 1,200 hp, and paired with Twin Disc MGX 5204 SC gears and Hamilton HTX47 Jets, this vessel achieves an impressive top speed of 37.5 knots and cruises efficiently at 32.5 knots running 1950 RPMS at 80% load. Fuel consumption is optimized at 43 gallons/hour per engine, with a total fuel capacity of 2,200 gallons, three 145-gallon stainless steel DEF tanks and a 100-gallon freshwater tank.

Designed for real-world demands, the San Jacinto includes triple jet propulsion and a full fuel polishing system (FPS) by Gulf Coast Filters. The jet system is complemented by DLS Cardan Shafts, two composite and one steel, all supplied by Driveline Service of Portland.

The boat is outfitted with Hamilton Jet's AVX controls and

water-cooled exhaust systems on the main engines with SCR mounted in the overhead, designed by Soundown of Massachusetts. It is also equipped with a fixed CO2 system installed in the engine room, including two 100-lb CO2 bottles with automatic engine shut down and vent closure, along with a manual pull located in machinery space. This system was supplied by Total Safety and installed by Burner Fire Control of Lafayette, LA. Dual Northern Lights M944T3FG 38 kW three-phase generators power the onboard systems, supporting advanced navigation and communication.

With safety as a priority, the stability of both overhead and forward bow boarding allows for safe transport of maritime pilots to and from ships that they are piloting, as well as a rescue Sealift located on the stern of the boat. The Sea-keeper 40 stabilization system further enhances onboard comfort, even in rough conditions.

Inside, the San Jacinto offers a spacious and modern environment with sleeping accommodations for four, a galley kitchen, and an A-Head sanitation system. Ceiling material is marine-grade plywood covered with black vinyl custom upholstery by Sterlings Upholstery of New Iberia, LA. Cabin sole is aluminum covered with marine-grade acoustic plywood and finished with PlasTek Flooring. Seating includes shock-mitigating NorSap reclining seats supplied by IMTRA, to ensure comfort for pilots and crew on long transits. An HVAC system

SAN JACINTO MAIN PARTICULARS

Owner/operator: Houston Pilots
Designer: ECS
Builder: Breaux's Bay Craft Inc
Dimensions: 80 x 21-ft.
Boat Type: Pilot Boat
Engines: (3) MAN D2862 LE 438 diesel engines
1,200 hp each at 2,100 rpm
Gears: (3) Twin Disc MGX 5204 SC gears
Waterjets (3) HamiltonJet HTX47 waterjets
Generators (2) Northern Lights 38-kW gensets
Exhaust System Soundown Corp. of Massachusetts
Speed, max. 37.5 knots
Speed, cruise 32.5 knots
Stabilizatoin Seakeeper 40
Displays (3) Delta19 Multi displays
Radar Furuno 1518
Radios (2) Sailor 6248 VHF
Compas, DGPS, Loudhailer, AIS Furuno
Epirb ACR Globalfix V5
Night Vision FLIR t
Chairs NorSap
Sanitation A-Head

supplied by Advanced A/C & Electric, LLC in Abbeville, LA consists of two four-ton Dometic chillers (variable speed) and titanium condenser coils with five air-handling units.

Fritted laminated glass with integrated defrosters installed on the forward three windshields, and the forward two side windows by B&G Glass of New Iberia, LA, ensures visibility in all weather conditions.

The engine room overhead, forward bulkhead, and crew quarters were insulated by EEG Marine of Gulfport, MS. Mist eliminators and blowers were furnished by Centek Industries of Thomasville, GA.

Attention to detail is evident throughout this vessel. Custom SeaDeck flooring supplied by Castaway Customs Texas, LLC — Storm Gray over Blue Teak pattern — was installed on the walk-around deck and boarding area. This not only adds traction underfoot, but provides a clean aesthetic finish. All logos, name, and home port were designed and installed on reflective material by Lipari Sporting of New Iberia, LA.

The San Jacinto was constructed in Loreauville, Louisiana, a legacy shipbuilding hub nestled along the Bayou Teche. Founded by Roy Breaux Sr. in 1946, Breaux's Bay Craft continues to lead with tradition, performance, and a reputation for delivering rugged, reliable vessels around the globe. The SAN JACINTO represents over 75 years of boatbuilding heritage.



WELCOMING THE
WILLIAM E MORAN TO OUR FLEET



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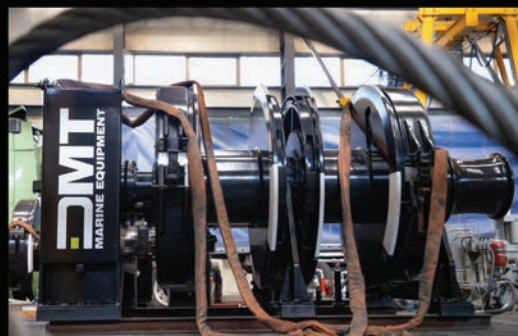
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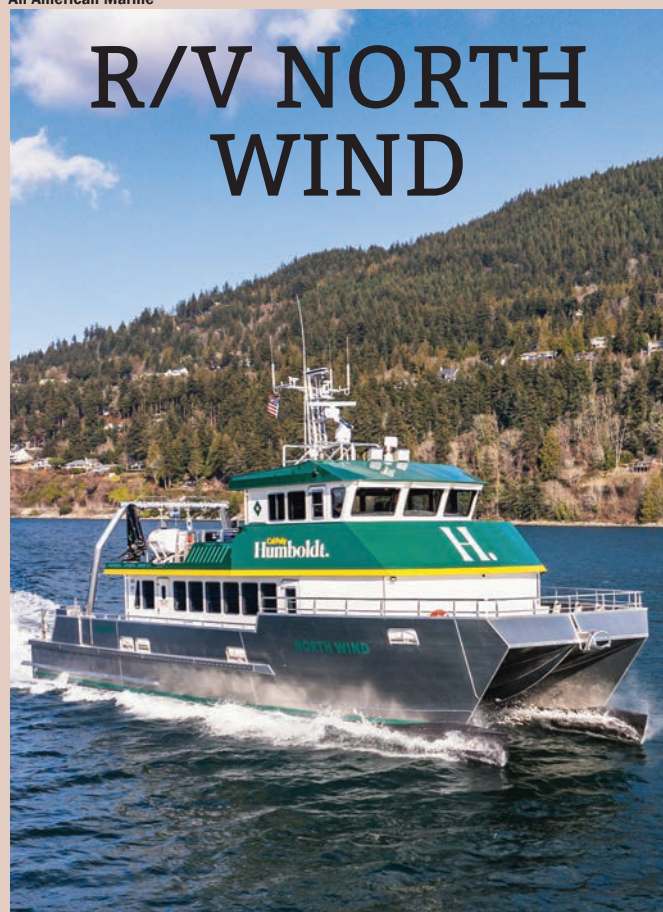
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Great Boats 2025

R/V North Wind

All American Marine



R/V NORTH WIND MAIN PARTICULARS

Boat Name: R/V North Wind
Boat Type: Research Vessel / Semi-Displacement Aluminum Cat
Boat Builder: All American Marine, Inc.
Material: Marine-grade aluminum
Boat Owner/Operator: Cal Poly Humboldt
Boat Designer: Teknicraft Design
Delivery Date: March 2025
Classification: U.S. Coast Guard Subchapter T
Length (o.a.): 78 ft (23.8 m)
Breadth (molded): 26 ft (7.9 m)
Depth (molded): 8.5 ft (2.6 m)
Draft (designed): 4 ft (1.2 m)
Speed: 28 knots full, 1.5 knots survey
Fuel: 1600 Gallons
Main engines: 2x MAN D2862LE438 EPA Tier 4
Rating: 882 kW (1,182 bhp)/2100 rpm
Propellers: Fixed-pitch propellers
Special Features: Teknicraft hydrofoil-assisted hull, Outfitted with a Kongsberg ADCP electronics suite, a fixed WASSP multibeam system, and Okeanus deck handling equipment, ensuring precise data collection for marine research.
Radars: Furuno
AIS: Furuno Class A
GPS: Furuno GP-170

All American Marine (AAM) has delivered a 78- x 26.7-ft, semi-displacement aluminum catamaran to Cal Poly Humboldt. The vessel will serve as a scientific exploration platform and support faculty research along the Northern California and Oregon coasts. Designed by Nic de Waal of Teknicraft Design, the RV North Wind builds on the success of similar research vessels, including the R/V Shackleford and the University of Hawaii's R/V Imua. Constructed to US Coast Guard Subchapter T standards, it is optimized for near-coastal and offshore operations, supporting Cal Poly Humboldt's research initiatives in oceanography, marine ecosystems, and the emerging offshore wind industry. The vessel is powered by twin MAN D2862LE43B EPA Tier 4 engines with diesel particulate filters and meets California's stringent environmental standards while delivering exceptional performance. The vessel is capable of fully laden cruising at speeds exceeding 28 knots at 80% engine load. Featuring Teknicraft's hydrofoil-assisted hull design, the vessel minimizes drag, enhances fuel economy, and ensures a smoother ride in rough seas. Its CFD-modeled hull shape reduces wake energy and optimizes efficiency, a critical feature for long-duration research missions. Outfitted with a Kongsberg ADCP electronics suite, a fixed WASSP multibeam system, and Okeanus deck handling equipment, the North Wind provides advanced capabilities for oceanographic research. Onboard, researchers benefit from wet and dry labs, a computer lab, industry-leading electronics, comfortable live-aboard quarters, and a full suite of oceanographic equipment. North Wind is designed with extended missions in mind, and it features comfortable accommodations for 14 live-aboard researchers, including full bunks, a spacious bathroom with a shower, and onboard laundry facilities. A galley and dedicated common areas offer space for collaboration and expanded opportunities for daytrips. The vessel will provide Cal Poly Humboldt researchers, students, and others with a pioneering platform, allowing them to access and study a wide array of marine environments, says AAM. The knowledge gained from research missions on this vessel will directly support managing and conserving California's marine resources. These amenities, combined with the vessel's fuel-efficient propulsion system and advanced research equipment, make it an optimal platform for multi-day and offshore scientific operations. The vessel also accommodates up to 40 daytime passengers.

Great Boats 2025

Karl

MV **KARL** is the result of San Francisco Bay Ferry's ongoing strategy to operate a public transportation fleet of the best available passenger vessel fleet with the cleanest, low-emission, technology available. KARL and sistership ZALOPHUS meet that goal as the cleanest diesel driven high-speed passenger ferries in operation anywhere. KARL is a high-speed aluminum catamaran built by Mavrik Marine, Inc., and designed by One2Three Naval Architects. Powered by quad MAN D2862 engines, Reintjes WVS440 gears, and Hamilton Jet HTX52 waterjets, KARL is capable of an efficient 40 knot cruise speed while reducing operating expenses by over 40%. KARL is equipped with an exhaust gas aftertreatment system with Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) and Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF) that inject Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) fluid into the exhaust converting exhaust emissions into nitrogen and water. KARL meets California Air Resource Board (CARB) requirements delivering an incredibly clean, low-emission operation while also lowering fuel consumption. Speed, efficiency, low operating costs, and clean operations set KARL apart from any other ferries operating today. KARL is an integral part of the ferry system's daily operations that transports over 2.5 million passengers each year. Because of KARL's exceptional range, operating efficiency and speed, KARL is primarily used on SFBF's longer routes. The onboard passenger experience also benefits from Mavrik's quality manufacturing, internal system design, and outfitting standards with a bright, open cabin accommodating 325 passengers, providing a full galley, USB charging ports, video display terminals, indoor and outdoor seating options with tables, and storage space for 50 bicycles. "The proud craftsmen at Mavrik delivered another exceptional vessel to San Francisco Bay Ferries", said Mavrik President Bailey Shewchuk, "The four Mavrik Dorado Class vessels in the SFBF fleet are unquestionably the finest quality, most efficient, lowest operating cost, and lowest-emission vessels in operation."

KARL MAIN PARTICULARS

Name:	Karl
Owner:	San Francisco Bay Ferries
Builder:	Mavrik Marine
Type:	Catamaran Ferry
Designer:	One2Three Naval Architects
Main Engines:	MAN D2862
Gears:	Reintjes WVS440
Waterjets:	Hamilton Jet HTX52
Speed, Cruise:	40-knot
Passengers:	325
Bikes:	50

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Great Boats 2025

Long Island

Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Company



Eastern Shipbuilding Group, Inc. (ESG) delivered LONG ISLAND (ESG Hull 228), a newly built 1,000 passenger, 124-vehicle ferry, to the Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Company, a subsidiary of McAllister Towing. The vessel, designed to provide seamless transportation between Bridgeport, CT, and Port Jefferson, NY, across Long Island Sound, is the latest addition to the company's fleet. Long Island measures measuring 302 feet in length, is engineered to accommodate both vehicles and passengers with state-of-the-art features, including a pair of EPA Tier 4 Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) 12 ME 23B main engines driving Hong Shen propellers through Reintjes gears delivering a service speed of 18 knots. Long Island is outfitted with a full suite of marine electronics from Furuno, and the vessel is finished with coats from International Paints.

"Long Island represents everything Eastern Shipbuilding Group stands for — American craftsmanship, engineering excellence, and a commitment to building vessels that serve communities for generations," said Joey D'Isernia, CEO, Eastern Shipbuilding Group. "We are honored to see the LONG ISLAND recognized, and even more proud of the men and women at Eastern whose skill and passion brought this vessel to life."

This ferry joins two other Eastern-built vessels in the fleet: P.T. Barnum (1999) and Grand Republic (2003). Buckley McAllister, the President of the ferry company, said "Eastern Shipbuilding has provided our company with over a dozen high quality vessels and transformed the mari-

time services we can offer. We are very thankful to Eastern Shipbuilding and the D'Isernia family." The addition of the LONG ISLAND ferry will enable a consistent three-vessel schedule during peak travel periods.

LONG ISLAND MAIN PARTICULARS

Boat Name:	Long Island
Boat Type:	1000 passenger/vehicle Ferry
Boat Builder:	Eastern Shipbuilding Group
Boat Owner:	Bridgeport & Port Jefferson Steamboat Co.
Boat Designer:	John Gilbert & Associates
Delivery Date:	December 17, 2024
Classification:	USCG 46 Subchapter "H"
Dimensions:	302.5 x 52 x 16.8'
Draft:	10'
DWT:	1600
Speed:	18 knots
Main Engines:	(2) EMD 12ME 23B Tier IV
Bowthruster:	John Deere
Propellers:	Hong Shen
Bearings:	Cooper
Gears:	Reintjes WAF3445
Generators:	John Deere
Engine Controls:	Aventics
Radars, Depth Sounders, AIS, GPS:	Furuno
Autopilot:	Anscheutz Pilotstar
Radios:	Standard Horizon
GMDSS:	Tron Sart 20
Mooring Lines:	3" nylon
Fire extinguishing:	Novek
Fire detection:	Autroprime
Heat exchangers:	WEKA Box Coolers
Motor starters:	Ingersoll Rand
Liferafts:	Viking
Coatings:	International
Switchboard:	Beier
HVAC:	Mitsubishi



THE GAMBLER

The Gambler is a 42-ft. Sounder with a 12-ft. beam, designed from the hull up for open-water pursuits. Outfitted with triple Yamaha 350NSAs, The Gambler pushes more than 1,000 horsepower with confidence, thanks to careful rigging and balance. Paired with Yamaha's precision lower units, the setup offers an ideal blend of speed, range, and control, regardless of the conditions. The helm features a full Raymarine suite of radar, sonar, GPS, and multifunction displays, all installed with clean, purpose-built ergonomics. FLIR night vision, Seakeeper 4 Gyro stabilization, and Seakeeper 600 Ride reflect North River's commitment to safety and comfort in all conditions. Inside the cabin, custom touches make this vessel stand out. The layout is functional, featuring a starboard S2 helm seat with a workstation, a port-side S5 seat, and custom cabinetry, along with ample storage throughout for extended runs. When it comes to fishing, this boat is outfitted with premium Burnewiin rod holders and a full spread of custom Gambler Series Talon rods, it's a purpose-built hunting platform. With expansive deck space, fish boxes, and gear storage, The Gambler was designed to chase tuna, halibut, salmon, and more, backed by the range, stability, and fishability to support it.

GAMBLER MAIN PARTICULARS

Boat Name: The Gambler
 Boat Type: 35' North River Sounder Walkaround
 Boat Builder: North River Boats
 Material: Aluminum
 Boat Owner: Jed Stout
 Boat Designer: North River Boats
 Delivery Date: October 2025
 Main engines: (3) Yamaha F350
 Total installed power: 1050 hp
 Bow Thruster: Side Power SEP 80
 Engine controls: Dual Station Yamaha Helm Master EX
 Radars: Raymarine Cyclone 4' Open Array_w/ AR200 Camera
 Depth Sounders: (3) Raymarine Axiom Pro 2 - 16" Chart plotters
 Raymarine CP570 Clear Pulse chirp Sounder module
 Airmar CM599 3kW transducer and Real Vision 3D transducer
 Auto Pilot: Yamaha Helm Master EX
 Radios: (3) Raymarine Ray 73 VHF marine
 AIS: Raymarine AIS 700 Class B
 Liferails: 8 PAX Survitec
 Coatings: Trilux 33 Antifoul hull
 Stabilization: Seakeeper 3 Gyro stabilization system
 Thermal Camera: FLIR M364C

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Great Boats 2025

Thomas Grasso

Built at Blount Boats, Bristol Harbor Group, Inc. (BHGI) provided design, engineering, bid support, and construction oversight for the Thomas Grasso, a versatile tug built for the New York Power Authority and the New York Canal Corporation. Built for year-round operations, the vessel supports a wide range of critical tasks across New York's canal system, including towing and pushing assets, dredging support, deployment and maintenance of navigational aids, pollution control, and icebreaking in areas vulnerable to ice accumulation and spring ice break up. The vessel is certified as a USCG Subchapter M Towing Vessel and built to American Bureau of Shipping Marine Vessel Rules, with an ABS Grade D reinforced ice belt and appendages.

"The Grasso and his three Sisters is a simple Sub-Chapter M Tugboat design," said Bob Pelletier, Project Manager, Blount Boats. "Most of the structural parts of the hull and deck house are CNC cut with very little bracketing brought into the design. The heavy, thick hull plating, sized for ice breaking, keeps faired hull lines with little to no oil canning appearance after welding. The engine room is systematically appointed with accessibility and head room that is perfect for crew operations and maintenance. With the Grasso's low air draft a very low vertical center of gravity it offers a very stable comfortable ride for a refreshed crew. It also comes with a one button lowering mast for running under Erie canal bridges without having to

leave the bridge. The bridge boasts a fantastic 360-degree view while in operation and can seat three crew."

The design combines characteristics of inland towboats and coastal vessels, offering strong visibility from the raised pilothouse, while maintaining a low enough air draft to navigate under canal bridges. Its low working freeboard and full perimeter deck access make it well-suited for maintenance, dredging, and repair work.

Below deck, the layout supports multi-day operations with heated and conditioned accommodations for 2-3 overnights, with a capacity for eight crew members. Cold-weather gear systems, integrated heating, and window wipers ensure the vessel remains operational throughout the harshest of winter conditions.

Another key feature of the Thomas Grasso is its adaptability. Its layout and systems can be easily reconfigured to better support a specific task or set of tasks, depending on the needs of a particular section of the Canal. This flexibility allows for the enhancement of existing capabilities or the integration of entirely new functions beyond its current scope.

"The Grasso can sleep 3 crew, with a head, shower, freezer/refer, electric food warmers, oil fired furnace, electric heat, and a split duct AC/Heat Pump system," said Pelletier. "The well-appointed interior of the bridge and crew space is outfitted with white oak furniture, B-Class Joinery, vinyl laminated ceiling panels with lots of mahogany trim to compliment."

Blount Boats/BHGI

THOMAS GRASSO

THOMAS GRASSO MAIN PARTICULARS

Boat Name:.....Thomas Grasso
Boat Type:.....Tug Boat
Boat Builder:.....Blount Boats, Inc.
Boat Owner/Operator:.....NYP/ New York Canal Corp.
Boat Designer:.....Bristol Harbor Group, Inc.
Length, (o.a.):64'-6" molded, 66'-3" over fender
Beam:.....22' molded, 23'-8" over fenders
Depth, (molded):.....9' midships at side
Draft:.....7' DWL
Air Draft:.....15'-3" ADWL
Main Propulsion:.....2x Caterpillar C9.3 Tier 3
Total installed power:.....750 hp (560 kW) at 1800 RPM
Propellers:.....Michigan Wheel 38" SS, HD profile
Shafts:.....2 x 4.5" Aquamet 22 HS (+2 spares)
Gears:.....Twin Disc MGX5114SC 3:1
Speed:.....10.5 knots
Bollard Pull:.....18,000 lb
Gensets:.....2x Caterpillar C2.2 Tier 3
HVAC:.....Olympia 105KBTu Diesel-Fired w/Modine hydronic heaters, Coleman Mach rooftop A/C
Pushing Winches:.....2x Nabrico DF 156-10-6L/R 10 ton
Roller Chocks:.....2x Nabrico DF-164
Fenders:.....Schuyler SR114D,-RC and -V Laminated
Main Davit: Nick Jackson 500 lb (227 kg) @ 7'-6" radius
Portable Davits:.....Columbia 5AFM SS
Fire detection, suppression:.....Kidde

Great Boats 2025

Interceptor 40



Metalcraft Marine

INTERCEPTOR 40

MAIN PARTICULARS

Boat Type:	Interceptor
Boatbuilder:	Metalcraft Marine
Boat Owner:	Texas Parks & Wildlife Boat
Designer:	Metalcraft Marine
Delivery:	November 2025
Length, o.a.:	43.2'
Draft:	24"
Speed:	65 mph
Main Engine:	(4) Suzuki 350 hp
Total Installed HP:	1,400
Engine controls:	Suzuki
Radars:	Raymarine
Depth Sounder:	Raymarine
AIS:	Raymarine
Night Vision:	FLIR
Foam Collar:	Gilman
Seats:	Shox
Coatings:	International

In the world of Great Boats, Metalcraft Marine's Interceptor 40 turns heads. Designed intercept smugglers on the southern border, it can reach 65 MPH and is designed for severe sea states at high speeds. The structure is designed to ISO 12215 Category B, up to 16-ft. wave heights.

The Officers of Texas Parks & Wildlife were directly involved in most of the design elements. The guns are stored in the large lockable cuddy under the console. The center face of the console hinges up for ease of entry and the cuddy has 5'11" headroom. In the cuddy there are hinged access panels to reach all the electrics and electronics easily. MetalCraft claim the wiring is Boeing quality, all wire labels face the technician and clearly match the schematic numbering system. The builder's ABYC electricians consider it a work of art.

The boat has five machine gun mount locations, 2 X forward and 3 X aft. There is also a walk-in bow compartment as the bow stairs hinge up for access. The aft handrails fit into sockets by way of the bow stairs. The sockets also hold the gun mounts. The officers exchange gun fire on a far-too-often regular day's patrols.

The bow push knees allow for rapid docking with steps and handrails being a safe and quick way to disembark. And ramming a bad guy's boat or engines when needed.

The boat has black matte finished quad Suzuki 350 HP outboards with duo prop drives. The 27" duo props have the 18,000 lb speed machine leaping out of the water. If you punch it at 5000 RPM it does the same thing. The helm is mounted to port so in high-speed pursuits the Navigator becomes the throttle-man. The throttles are

mounted on a hinged platform between the seats which allows the operator to lean his arm on the platform for steadier hand movements. When docked and hinged 90 degrees, out of the way and seat bolsters in the up position. There is a clear aisleway between the console and the seats making the area excellent for service access.

The suspension seats are overwide United Safety Shox suspension seats, all six have slide and height adjustment and the overwide width easily accommodates Officer's gun belts and vests. They are covered by an overwide T-Top for weather protection and the paint is a heat absorbing paint. The T-top can support a man working up on it. The rapid hinging mast can be dropped by one person no tools in 9 seconds and can be trailed while down.

The collar is a Gilman Foam collar, which is a foam coated collar, mounted in 6-ft. sections. If a section gets damaged you can just replace the damaged section, not the entire collar.

Electronics are a full suite of Raymarine, including the Blue Force Tracker and 364 FLIR camera. Raymarine electronics interface with the USCG SIMS -2 standard electronics package and makes secure encrypted communications possible.

The heart of the Interceptor is the amazing variable dead-rise/monohedron hull design that provides an amazing soft dry ride and turns on rails. The Texas IN 40 is the first Interceptor with a ventilated hull, which increased speed by 4 MPH. In hard over turns at speed there is no cavitation at the outboard prop that just keeps pulling and no side slippage.

Both US Navy and USCG also like the Interceptor design: the Navy ordered 20 of the IN-40' and the CG ordered 17 of the same boat in 35' version.

ALL-WEATHER LI

Baltic Workboats' CARGO 17WP Keeps a Private Island Connected in Any Weather

When Captain Jim Weber needed to replace his 22-year-old 46-ft. Fiberglass crew and supply boat – a boat that is condition critical to supplying people and supplies to Gardiner's Island off of the Hamptons in New York – he settled on a pilot boat style boat and admittedly wanted to 'Buy American.' But in searching across builders for more than a year, he found that price, delivery time and the fact that he wanted to build a 'one-off' instead of a fleet took many of the builders out of the mix; some wouldn't even discuss the project. He turned to Baltic Workboats, based in Estonia with aspirations to build more business in the U.S.

By Greg Trauthwein

FELINE



Image courtesy Baltic Workboats

Baltic Workboats

Test Ride

When Jim Weber heads to work, there's no bridge, tunnel or ferry schedule. His commute — six miles across open water off the Hamptons in New York — depends entirely on the weather ... and on the rugged new aluminum boat now docked there.

A retired U.S. Coast Guard Bosun Mate Chief and certified surfman, Weber has more than three decades of experience running small boats through the roughest weather that Mother Nature can produce. Today, he manages operations for a private island that functions like a small municipality. "We're isolated, so we have to depend 100 percent on ourselves," he said. "Personnel, food, fuel, building materials — everything comes by sea."

For years, that lifeline was a 22-year-old fiberglass Down Easter whose limitations were dictated by sea state and wind. "It got to the point where the weather was making the decisions for us," Weber recalled. "That's no way to run an island."

His solution came from half a world away: a CARGO 17WP, a 17-meter, self-righting, pilot-style vessel custom-built by Baltic Workboats of Estonia.

The Baltic Workboats Build Philosophy

Baltic Workboats has built more than 250 vessels operating in 30 countries, and its reputation for technical refinement and reliability is anchored in a disciplined in-house design ethos. From its 17-meter pilot craft to 120-meter ferries and patrol vessels, the company's production is guided by full-scale stability testing from 0 to 180 degrees. "The 17-meter platform is one of our most proven hulls," said Carl Mahler, Baltic Workboats' head of U.S. sales, and a harbor pilot in South Florida himself. According to Mahler, its ride quality comes down to three features:

1. the wave-piercing bow that cuts through chop
2. the resiliently mounted wheelhouse that isolates vibration and noise, and
3. the optimized propulsion and stabilization systems that make it handle like it's on rails.

The CARGO 17WP Weber commissioned began as Baltic's standard 17WP Pilot design and was re-engineered for multi-mission logistics. It's a self-righting, all-aluminum craft built to operate in 6- to 8-foot seas and gale-force winds — conditions familiar to surfmen like Weber but hardly routine for daily supply runs.

Engineering the Details

The CARGO 17WP's systems read like an encyclopedia of modern marine engineering. Noise and vibration are controlled through layers of Swedac and Temtex damping, Isover insulation, and Firemaster Marine Plus Blanket fire protection — materials common to military and high-speed commercial craft.

"All of our wheelhouses are resiliently mounted to isolate structure-borne vibration," Mahler said. "When you combine that with the Volvo D13s, ZF gears, and Humphree interceptors, you get this incredibly smooth, quiet, confident feel."

Inside, crew comfort was prioritized. Norament 920 flooring, Bohamet heated windows, Exalto wipers, and Hella Marine EuroLED lighting provide durability and visibility in freezing spray. Climate control is handled through a Kabola B-22 diesel heater, Grundfos circulation pumps, and a Webasto air-handling and chilled-water system, equipment normally found on larger offshore vessels.

"It's not just a pilot boat with cargo space," Weber said. "It's an all-weather, go-anytime, do-anything platform."

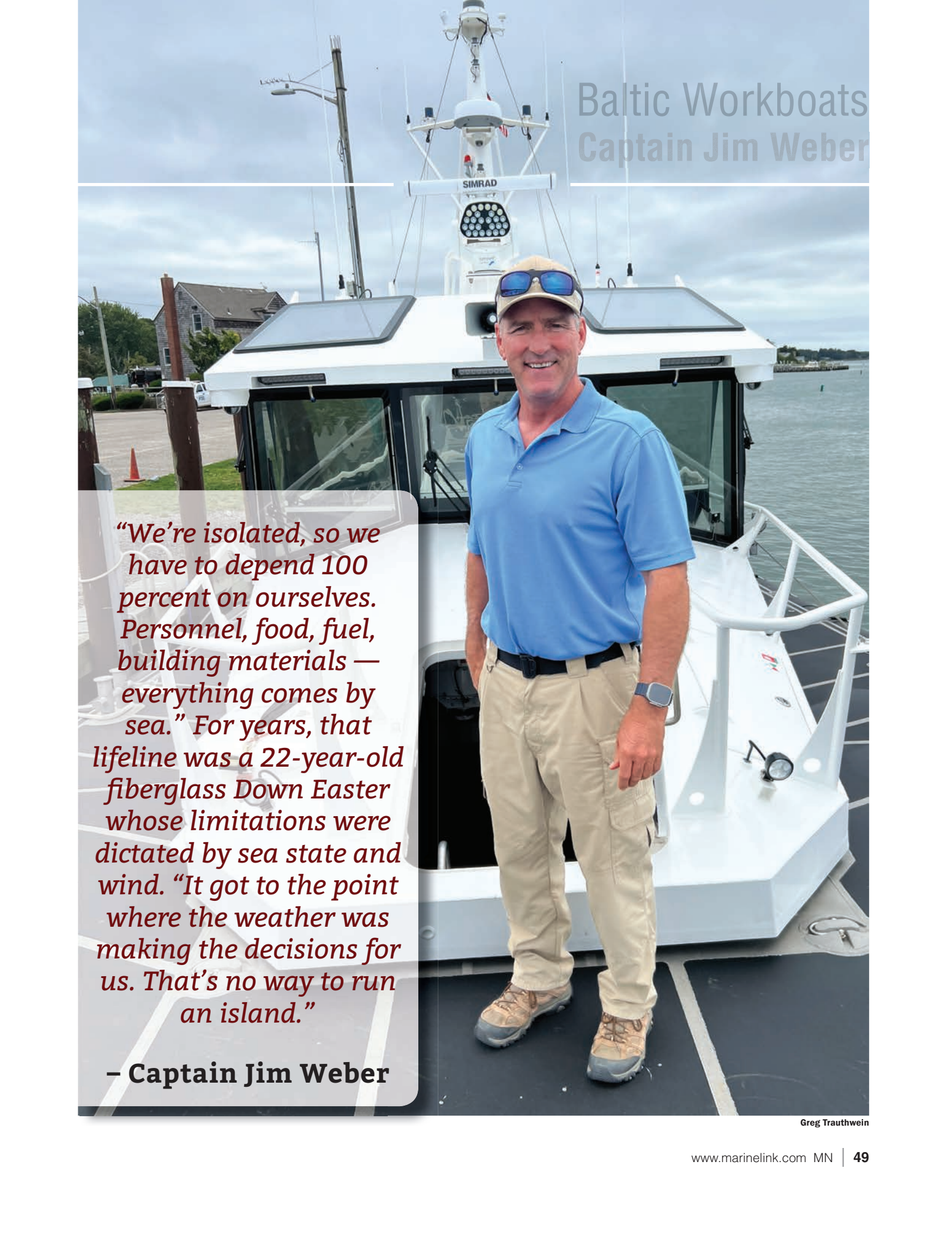
Customization Without Compromise

That "go-anytime" capability required some customization. "We had change orders before and during construction," Weber said, "and they didn't charge me for any of them."

One of the biggest modifications was doubling the fuel-tank capacity from 600 to 1,200 gallons. With island operations requiring redundancy and maximizing optionality, the upgrade will let Weber transfer fuel to the island, if needed. Importantly for the builder, all of that extra fuel changes the stability of the vessel, so it was tested and verified before the first piece of metal was cut.

Other modifications included additional deck pad-eyes, lockable Freeman hatches, a forklift-liftable cargo basket, and 3M non-skid pads for deck safety. "They'd call me on Zoom and ask exactly where I wanted handrails or tie-downs," Weber said. "They found a way to do everything I asked with no pushback, no extra fees."

Communication was constant: photos and video updates at every build milestone, plus three visits Weber made to Estonia at the yard's invitation. "They had a schedule, and they met every deadline," he said. "You don't see that often."

A full-page photograph of Captain Jim Weber standing on the deck of a white workboat. He is wearing a light blue polo shirt, khaki cargo pants, a tan baseball cap, and sunglasses. The boat has a radar dome labeled 'SIMRAD' on its mast. In the background, there is a body of water and some buildings under a cloudy sky.

Baltic Workboats Captain Jim Weber

“We’re isolated, so we have to depend 100 percent on ourselves. Personnel, food, fuel, building materials — everything comes by sea.” For years, that lifeline was a 22-year-old fiberglass Down Easter whose limitations were dictated by sea state and wind. “It got to the point where the weather was making the decisions for us. That’s no way to run an island.”

– Captain Jim Weber

Greg Trauthwein

Baltic Workboats

Test Ride

MAIN PARTICULARS

Length o.a.:	17 m (≈ 56 ft)
Beam:	5.4 m (≈ 17 ft 8 in)
Classification:	Lloyd's Register
Main engines:	Twin Volvo Penta D13MH diesels
Gearboxes:	ZF 665
Propellers:	CJR bronze props,
Seals:	Tides Marine
Bearings:	Thordon
Steering & rudders:	CJR rudder blades, Kobelt steering cylinders
Bow thruster:	Sleipner SP320HYD-U19 hydraulic
Stabilization:	Humphree Professional Plus interceptor
Fendering:	Ocean3 heavy-duty foam
Fuel capacity:	1,200 US gal (custom expanded from 600)
Seating:	Norsap & Grammer Pro Air
Radar:	Simrad Halo 20
ECDIS:	NSO Evo 3S
Compass:	MX-575D GPS compass
Weather Station:	Airmar WX220H
VHF:	Cobham
GMDSS:	Sailor SP3520 G
Intercom:	Jotron
Surveillance:	FLIR M364C thermal camera,
CCTV:	Avigilon
Fire safety:	FirePro Fi-Fi, Viking/Tamrex
Rescue gear:	Viking liferafts, BWB rescue platform/boom
EPIRB & SART:	McMurdo

Image courtesy Baltic Workboats



Performance Where It Counts

Marine News joined Weber for a test run where the Long Island Sound meets the Atlantic Ocean and confirmed the handling difference. “The Humphree system is amazing. With the bow trimmed down, it sliced through four-foot chop — zero slamming,” Weber said. “When you raise the bow, you feel the pounding come back. That system alone makes this boat.”

Noise levels were another revelation. “The engines are right below the wheelhouse, but you can’t hear them,” he said. “It’s quiet, solid, and so much less fatiguing. That means better crew awareness and communication.”

He added that the Volvo D13MH engines, paired with CJR propellers, deliver both speed and fuel economy, while the Sleipner hydraulic bow thruster and Kobelt steering system make close-quarters docking easy, vital when threading between narrow piers in heavy crosswinds.

Support That Doesn’t Sleep

After-sales support has been equally strong. “If something goes wrong, I snap a photo, upload it through their

warranty portal, and within 24 hours they tell me where to take it,” Weber said. “They line up the technician, the parts — everything. They take ownership.”

For Mahler, that responsiveness is part of Baltic’s culture. “Our project managers treat each vessel like their own. Whether it’s Sunday or midnight, if the customer calls, we answer. That’s just how we do business.”

Baltic Workboats employs about 250 people at its primary yard in Nasva, Estonia, with another 500 working across its two Finnish facilities owned through Summa Defense. Baltic Workboats’ Estonia yard delivers about 10 vessels annually, with revenues topping €125 million — a five-fold increase over the past decade.

In addition to pilot boats, the company’s portfolio includes ferries, patrol craft, SAR vessels, pollution-control ships, research vessels, tugs, and dredges, as well as alternatively powered vessels. “More than half of our production over the last five years has been hybrid, electric, or hydrogen fuel-cell,” Mahler noted.

Baltic’s technical reach extends through its sister company, Baltic Marine Group, Northern Europe’s largest dis-



The well-designed helm puts full control of the boat at the fingertips – **literally** – of Captain Jim Weber.

Image courtesy Greg Trauthwein

tributor of MTU, Volvo, and ZF products. “That gives us supply-chain leverage and lifecycle support from the inside out,” Mahler said.

Breaking Into the U.S. Market

Despite formidable U.S. competition and regulatory complexity, Mahler sees opportunity. “We’ve now got two vessels operating in the U.S.,” he said. “The first has logged over 21,000 hours — essentially one of every three hours for eight years straight. That speaks volumes for reliability.”

He credits Baltic’s engineering standards for the appeal. “We build to international class rules, not ABYC small-craft standards. It’s an apples-to-oranges comparison in design, safety, and longevity. Anyone who’s spent time aboard our boats can feel the difference immediately.”

From Weber’s perspective, when he started the process he was clear: “We wanted to ‘buy American’, but in this case we could not, citing considerable price differences and the ability to deliver in a timely fashion. “Very few [U.S.] boatbuilders were even interested to talk to us ... they were not interested to build a single, one-and-done boat,” said Weber. With that, after the contract was signed and Weber made three trips to Estonia to visit with the yard and check on the progress, less than a year later the boat splashed from the deck of a cargo ship into New York waters.

For Weber, the design and build story is personal. “This boat is the island’s lifeline,” he said. “It’s not a luxury — it’s essential infrastructure. Now, no matter the weather, we can go.”

From a single-island logistics run to a demonstration of Baltic Workboats’ precision engineering, the CARGO 17WP represents what happens when a builder listens, adapts, and delivers.

“They built it, they support it, and they stand behind it,” Weber concluded. “That’s all you can ask for — and more.”

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Feature

Stevens Towing Company

All images - unless otherwise noted - courtesy Stevens Towing Company



STEVENS TOWING RAMPS UP SHIPYARD CAPABILITY

*Stevens Towing Company is a 4th generation family-owned and operated company based on Yorges Island, SC. Led today by “G4” – **Johnson Stevens** who took over in his late 20s with the untimely passing of his father – Stevens Towing continues to strengthen its traditional towing business while investing mightily, too, in ship and boat repair capacity and capability to accommodate and anticipated surge in maritime repair business.*

By Greg Trauthwein

Feature Johnson Stevens

On the quiet waters of Yorges Island, South Carolina, just south of Charleston where the Seaboard Railroad once ended, stands one of the Lowcountry's oldest continuously operating maritime companies. For more than a century, Stevens Towing Company has served as a connective thread across generations of shipbuilders, tug operators, and tradespeople who embody the resilience and reinvention of the American maritime spirit.

Today, the company is led by Johnson "G4" Stevens, the fourth generation to take the helm. Stevens was still in his late twenties when he received a call that would change his life. "My father was sick," he recalls. "I was in Panama at the time, and the call came in saying, 'You need to be at work in January.' My parents needed help making some serious decisions about whether to keep the company going."

That decision guided by faith, family, and determination would mark the start of a new chapter in one of South Carolina's most enduring maritime success stories.

Starting in Produce Transport

The Stevens story began in the early 1900s, when Johnson's great-grandfather and great-uncle saw a niche opportunity along the South Carolina coast. The brothers began transporting produce between the Sea Islands and the markets of Charleston. "Back then, Yorges Island was the hub," Stevens explains. "The Seaboard Railroad ended right here. There was a vegetable dock below the office, a post office downstairs, and farmers upstairs. We became the connection between the

islands before there were bridges."

Those early days were about trust and relationships. "They'd sell the produce in Charleston and bring the money back to the farmers," says Stevens. "If you bought a car or a tractor, it came in by rail, and the salesman would live with you for a few weeks to teach you how to maintain it. That's

just how business was done."

When the bridges came and the produce trade shifted, the company adapted several times over. From produce transport to marine construction to LASH barge handling and now towing, salvage, and ship repair, Stevens Towing has evolved through at least four major transformations.



The 820-metric-ton Marine Travelift is central to the shipyard's capabilities.



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Feature

Stevens Towing Company



“Each generation has had to reinvent what we do to survive,” says Stevens. “We’ve done it by staying close to our people and our customers.”

A Shipyard Built for the Next Century

Today, Stevens Towing’s shipyard division anchors the company’s operations and represents a major investment in South Carolina’s maritime infrastructure. Located along the Wadmalaw River, the yard is equipped with an 820-metric-ton Marine Travelift, one of the largest on the East Coast, and an 1,800-long-ton marine railway. “Those capabilities allow us to lift 60-foot-wide barges, which is fairly rare,” says Stevens. “We can drydock a 300-by-90-foot deck barge, and we’ve got about 18 parking spots for vessels.”

That scale and flexibility have positioned Stevens Towing as a one-stop shop for repairs, conversions, and heavy-lift support, not only for its own fleet but also for commercial operators up and down the Atlantic coast. The company also owns a 500-ton heavy-lift crane capable of offshore work, supporting project cargoes, salvage, and marine construction.

Inside the shipyard’s historic headquarters, a renovated post office that won a Carolopolis Award for Historic Preservation—administrative, towing, and yard operations share the same building. “That was intentional,” Stevens notes. “The goal was to put everyone under one roof to improve communication.” Designed by Charleston architect Eddie Fava, the restoration took three years and finished just before



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Steven's Towing's HQ once served as the Post Office, recently renovated and the recipient of a prestigious award.



Image courtesy Greg Trauthwein

the COVID-19 pandemic. "It's been a fun project and a great symbol of who we are—rooted in history but always building forward."

Towing, Transport, and the Long Haul

On the towing side, Stevens Towing operates a diverse fleet of inland and ocean-going tugboats and deck and hopper barges, serving clients from the Gulf of Mexico to South America and the Great Lakes. "We've even operated a Jones Act ship and circumnavigated the globe twice," Stevens says.

The company specializes in complex project cargoes, the kind of jobs where engineering, logistics, and timing all converge. "We like to be the one-stop solution," he says. "We can do the engineering, we own the barges, we have the cranes and the shipyard to secure and lash the cargo, and we've got the tugs to take it wherever it needs to go."

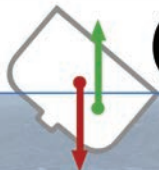
Two recent projects showcase that breadth. The first involved transporting a replica of Air Force One, a 747

mock-up, from Connecticut to National Harbor in Washington, D.C. "We had the barge, the tugboat, the ramps, and the know-how to roll it on and off safely," Stevens says.

Another milestone came through work for Nexans, a global cable-laying company. "We assembled a massive cable reel on one of our barges here, used our cranes and engineering team, and then delivered it to Charleston," he says. "We later supported their cable-laying operations using the same assets—meeting a very tight schedule tied to wind-farm permits. That's the kind of integrated service we love to do."

Investing to Stay Competitive

Stevens Towing's forward-looking mindset extends to its equipment and environmental performance. The company began repowering its tugboat fleet back in 2008, well before emissions reduction became a regulatory mandate. "We started replacing most of our boats with Tier III engines, mainly Volvo D16s and Caterpillars," says Stevens.



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Stevens Towing Company

"Because we're paid on a per-ton basis, fuel efficiency really matters. We've nearly repowered the entire fleet ourselves. You can't afford downtime in our business. Having engines that are reliable, efficient, and maintainable is critical."

But that reliability comes with its own set of challenges. "It always boils down to people and parts," Stevens admits. "You're running 24/7, 365. Do you have the right technicians, and can you get parts when you need them? That's what keeps me up at night."

Digital Tools, Human Touch

While Stevens Towing may be steeped in tradition, it's not standing still in the digital era. The company has rolled out Starlink connectivity across its fleet and uses mobile apps for job tracking, inventory management, and communications between vessels and the shipyard. "It's changed how fast we can make decisions," says Stevens. "You can

FaceTime the engine room from the office, send a diagram, or clear customs paperwork in minutes instead of hours."

Still, for Stevens, technology is just an enabler; the core remains the people. "We've always been a family company, and that extends to everyone who works here," he says. "We have captains who've come over for Thanksgiving dinner every year. When you know their families, when you train them, and when you give them opportunities, that's how you keep good people."

That philosophy is formalized in the company's apprenticeship and training programs, designed to cultivate local talent and give young people a career path in the maritime trades.

At the shipyard, Stevens Towing partners with local high schools to offer a welding apprenticeship for five to eight students each semester. Participants are paid hourly while working in the yard, and the company funds their continued education at nearby technical schools.

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On the towing side, a structured progression takes deckhands through to captain. “After two years as a deckhand, we pay your tuition and daily rate while you go to school for your AB, then AB to steersman, and on up to mate and master,” says Stevens. “You can start on deck and end up running an ocean-going tug.”

He shares one story that captures the culture perfectly: “We had a young guy who started as a deckhand and now operates the 820-ton Travelift. One night, he was under pressure to finish a dry-docking before sunset. He refused to rush, saying, ‘I’m not going any further until I’m sure it’s safe.’ The next morning, we gave him a bonus in front of everyone. That’s what success looks like—doing the right thing, even when no one’s watching.”

Weathering the Cycles

Like most long-lived maritime companies, Stevens Towing has endured its share of storms, economic, personal and literal. “There have been great years and some bleak ones,” Stevens reflects. “What I learned from my parents and grandparents is to stay conservative financially and take care of your people. They’ll weather it with you.”

That approach has paid dividends in the recent slowdown. “The last few months have been a little soft, so we pulled our own vessel maintenance forward to keep our core group working,” he says. “It’s not what you want to do when business slows, but it keeps your assets ready and your people engaged.”

The long view, he believes, is what separates survivors from casualties in this business. “There are always going to be swings. You stay patient, stay smart, and when the tide turns, you’re ready.”



(L to R) Kurt Olsen, VP Shipyard Operations, Johnson Stevens & Marine News editor Greg Trauthwein in the shipyard.

For all the cranes, Travel Lifts, and tugboats, Stevens Towing’s real strength lies in its culture of continuity and trust—values that trace directly back to its founders. “We’ve learned to stick with what we’re good at,” Stevens says. “We don’t chase every new thing, but we’re not afraid to evolve when we have to. It’s about knowing

your niche, supporting your customers, and figuring it out.”

From produce to power cables, from railheads to renewable energy, Stevens Towing has been connecting the Lowcountry to the wider world for more than a century. And with “G4” at the wheel, the next generation of Stevens innovation is already underway.



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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)

1. Publication Title Marine News	2. Publication Number 0 1 3 - 5 9 2	3. Filing Date September 18, 2025
4. Issue Frequency Monthly	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 12	6. Annual Subscription Price (if any) None
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) Maritime Activity Reports, 118 East 25th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10010		Contact Person Kathleen Hickey Telephone (include area code) 516-441-7253
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) Maritime Activity Reports, 118 East 25th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10010		
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank) Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) John C. O'Malley Maritime Activity Reports, 118 East 25th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10010 Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Eric Haun Maritime Activity Reports, 118 East 25th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10010 Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)		
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.) Full Name Complete Mailing Address John C. O'Malley Maritime Activity Reports 118 East 25th Street, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10010		
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box: ☒ None Full Name Complete Mailing Address		
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) ☒ The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: ☐ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement.) ☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement.)		

13. Publication Title Marine News	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below September 2025	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation Requester	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	5798	5375
b. Legitimate Paid and/or Requested Distribution (By mail and outside the mail)		
(1) Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing, and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)	5360	4900
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(4) Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	74	70
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	5434	4970
d. Non-requested Distribution (By mail and outside the mail)		
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f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e)	5558	5290
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4, (page #3))	240	85
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	5798	5375
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15f times 100)	97.8%	93.9%

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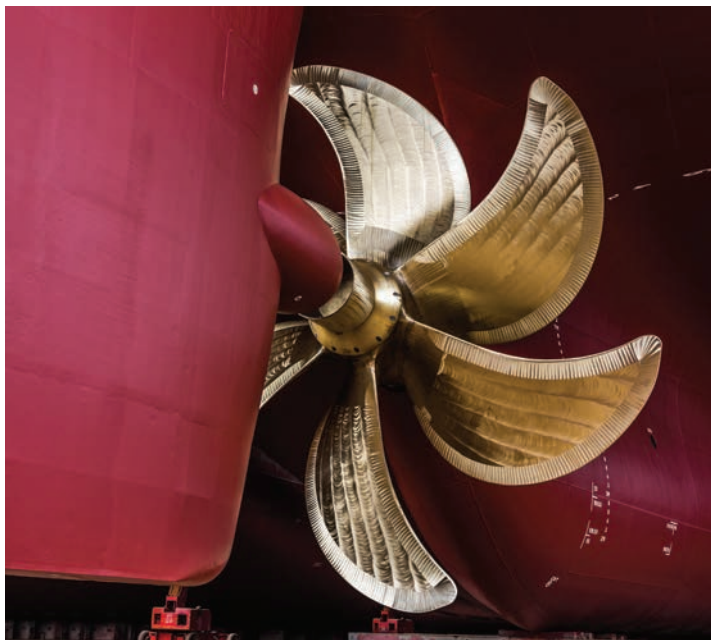
PS Form 3526-R, July 2014 (Page 2 of 4)



Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)

16. Electronic Copy Circulation Marine News	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	5419	0
b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	10853	0
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	10977	0
d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	98.9%	%
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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the issue of this publication. November 2025		
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner Kathleen Hickey		Date 9/18/2025

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2026 Editorial Calendar

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Ad close: January 2, 2026

Passenger Vessels: Ferries & Expedition Cruise

- Shipyard Reviews
- Marine Electronics: Navigation & Weather Routing
- Maritime Communications

EVENTS

- **IPF 2026** – New York, NY
- **PVA Maritrends** – Covington, KY
- **CMA Shipping** – Hilton Stamford, CT, USA

February 2026

Ad close: January 30, 2026

Maritime Power

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- **Tech In Focus:** Hybrid & Electrification – Alternative Fuels to Batteries

March 2026

Ad close: February 13, 2026

Inland & Energy Ports

- Dredging Technology
- Combat Craft Design & Construction
- Offshore Service Vessels

EVENTS

- **Port of the Future 2026** – Hyatt Baytown Houston
- **Sea-Air-Space** – National Harbor, MD, USA
- **OTC 2026** – NRG park, Houston, TX, USA

April 2026

Ad close: March 30, 2026

Maritime Workforce Development

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- **Training & Education:** Maritime Schools, Simulation Centers & E-Learning

May 2026

Ad close: April 14, 2026

Inland Waterway Ops: Towboats & Barges

- Shipyard Reviews
- Marine Electronics: Navigation & Weather Routing
- Maritime Communications

EVENTS

- **Inland Marine Expo 2026** – Nashville, TN
- **Mari-Tech 2026** – Victoria, BC
- **Seawork** – Southampton, UK

June 2026

Ad close: May 29, 2026

The Green Marine Edition

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- **Tech In Focus:** Digitalization Tools for Efficiency, Fuel Economy
- **Green Marine** at the Quebec City Convention Centre

July 2026

Ad close: June 17, 2026

Dredging: The Leadership Edition

- Boatbuilding, Repair & Maintenance
- Marine Salvage
- Deck Machinery & Cranes

EVENTS

- **World Dredging Congress & Exhibition** – Montreal, Canada
- **MACC 2026**

August 2026

Ad close: July 31, 2026

Inland Waterways

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- **Tech In Focus:** Coatings & Corrosion Control

September 2026

Ad close: August 19, 2026

Naval Architecture: Boat Design

- U.S. Coast Guard Shipbuilding
- Floating Power
- Propulsion: Alternative Fuels & Hybrid Technology

EVENTS

- **SNAME 2026**
- **Electric & Hybrid Marine World Expo North America**

October 2026

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Police, Fire, Patrol & Pilot Boats

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- **Tech In Focus:** Waterjets, Thrusters & Propellers

November 2026

Ad close: October 14, 2026

Workboat Edition

- Great Boats of 2026
- U.S. Offshore Energy
- Shipyard Equipment: Cutting, Welding, Bending & Shaping

EVENTS

- **Intl. Workboat Show 2026** – December – New Orleans, LA

December 2026

Ad close: November 30, 2026

Power & Propulsion Technology

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