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Shipbuilding moves indoors in Ketchikan

The outlook for building new ships in Alaska just got a lot brighter, warmer, and dryer when the engine room module for a new factory longliner was transferred into the new \$31,000,000 fully enclosed Ship Assembly and Production Hall at the Ketchikan Shipyard. The engine room module measures 40' (width) x 32' (length) x 17' (height) and weighs 95 tons. After the engine room module is outfitted with wiring, piping, machinery, and equipment it will be joined to other hull modules to form the fully assembled ship.



Engine Room module for the Alaska Longline Company's new factory longliner Arctic Prowler

Alaska Ship & Drydock (ASD), a Vigor Industrial company, has been building modules for the Alaska Longliner Company's new factory

longliner Arctic Prowler since March of 2012. The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) who owns the Ketchikan Shipyard has been managing construction of the new Ship Assembly and Production Hall since March of 2011. Last Saturday, ASD transferred the Arctic Prowler's engine room module into the brand new Ship Assembly Hall marking the commencement of indoor shipbuilding operations at the Ketchikan Shipyard. ASD-Vigor is the private sector operator of the Ketchikan Shipyard under a 30 year operating agreement with AIDEA.



New Assembly and Production Hall at the Ketchikan Shipyard

ASD's Vice Chairman Randy Johnson noted that, "ASD's workforce deserves a lot of credit for bringing both the Arctic Prowler and the Assembly Hall together...they have worked outdoors in adverse elements for many years proving to potential customers and shipyard investors that Ketchikan is capable of building modern and complicated ships." "Now, with a fully enclosed Ship Assembly and Production Hall, Ketchikan is on the map for having a highly productive shipyard workforce and modern, advanced shipbuilding infrastructure." Mr. Johnson also noted that, "this project is a great example of government

and industry working together to create employment and investment opportunity in Alaska.”

The 30 year operating agreement defines the roles of the Ketchikan Shipyard partners who include AIDEA, the City and Borough of Ketchikan, and ASD Vigor. Planning for the Ketchikan Shipyard began in 1976 by the State of Alaska to leverage public investment in the creation of the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry fleet. In the 1990’s the regional timber industry collapsed creating an economic disaster prompting Alaska’s Congressional Delegation to provide economic aid to rebuild the regional industrial base. A combination of local municipal, state, and federal funds are being leveraged to improve the Ketchikan Shipyard and expand the regional capacity for supporting marine vessels that operate in Alaska. Ted Leonard, the Executive Director of AIDEA, commented that, “The partnership between ASD and AIDEA has allowed the creation of a new and invigorated industry in Ketchikan. This true public private partnership has resulted in the development of a state of art facility that has created and continues to create new jobs in the region and new opportunities for the State. We are proud of the accomplishments that we have done working together.”

ASD began operating the Ketchikan Shipyard in 1994 and was purchased by Vigor Industrial in February of 2012. Adam Beck, the new president of ASD, noted that, “the new Assembly Hall positions the Ketchikan Shipyard to be very competitive for emerging shipbuilding opportunities in Alaska and, as evidenced by Vigor’s recent purchase of ASD, is already attracting new investment.” Mr. Beck also observed that, “additional new investment will be created in Ketchikan as local vendors expand their existing product lines and new vendors open shops with new marine products.”

New shipbuilding opportunities include the replacement and rebuilding of the Bering Sea ground fishing fleet; ice strengthened, off-shore vessels and structures serving the Cook Inlet and Arctic oil and gas industry; and new Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) Ferries.

The next phase of improvements for the Ketchikan Shipyard is a new \$10 million Steel Shop that was funded this last session by the State of Alaska. The Steel Shop will receive and fabricate pre-cut steel plates into three dimensional ship modules that will move into the Assembly Hall for the final outfit and assembly of the ship’s hull and superstructure. Design is underway for this facility that is scheduled for completion late summer 2013.

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