



A PUBLICATION OF THE RHODE ISLAND MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

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Founded in 1964

## **IYRS to showcase its training program**

The International Yacht Restoration School will host an open house at its satellite location in Bristol, R.I., April 5.

The Bristol site, at 257 Franklin St., was opened in 2007 to serve as the teaching locale for the school's new courses in marine systems. The open house run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The IYRS Marine Systems Program offers comprehensive training in installing, maintaining, and troubleshooting onboard systems such as electrical, electronic, steering, plumbing and propulsion.

The school offers a 10-month certificate program, which begins each fall, as well as continuing education courses.

In developing the program, IYRS says it worked closely with the Rhode Island Marines Trades Association and the American Boat & Yacht Council.

Individuals who would like to schedule an appointment to meet with a member of the IYRS staff during the open house should contact IYRS director of admissions John Freer (401) 848-5777, extension 203 / [jfreer@iyrs.org](mailto:jfreer@iyrs.org).

## **IYRS holds career day**

By James J. Gillis, Daily News staff

NEWPORT — While the area seems to teeter on the brink of recession, the boat-building industry is looking for workers.

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Marine-related businesses offered information and hope Saturday to people looking for careers in the boating industry, whether they want to train as ship captains or to build yachts. It was the third annual Marine Industry Career Day at the International Yacht Restoration School, and there was no shortage of marine-related companies and prospective workers on hand.

Bob Sharkey, a project manager at New England Boatworks in Portsmouth, said he is aware of the current economy. His company builds boats, re-fits them and repairs them.

“We’re concerned, of course, but so far we’ve been able to keep busy, particularly with new construction,” Sharkey said. “We seem to have a good amount of work.”

Susan Daly, vice president of marketing for the Thames Street school, said the event — funded by the United Way — gives people a chance to learn about new careers, to meet people in the business and for business people to get to know one another.

Daly said the industry currently is experiencing a 10 percent job vacancy rate and creating more jobs.

“This is an excellent opportunity for companies to recruit,” Daly said. “And it’s an opportunity for people who are interested in entering the industry or those already in the industry who want to learn new skills.”

Jon Washington, 23, of Hudson, Wis., is one those looking to find a place in the boating business. He has applied to attend IYRS in the fall, with an interest in boat building. He has experience in woodworking and while it might not seem like a natural fit for a guy from Wisconsin, Washington spent a good portion of his childhood in Florida.

Washington surveyed the two-story, brick yacht restoration school, with its rows of wooden boats lined up.

“I really want to attend this school,” he said. “I had an interview on Friday. I’m very excited about it. I think it will be a great opportunity.”

His wife, Katie, 25, works in software analysis for a newspaper company. She is in no hurry for a career change. “But I wouldn’t mind learning how to sail,” she said, “or get involved in some kind of interior design aspect.”

## **INDUSTRY'S IMPACT**

Here is a look at the impact the marine industry has in Rhode Island:

- The Rhode Island marine industry includes more than 2,300 businesses and accounts for \$1.6 billion in sales annually.

- The industry provides 6,600 jobs that pay a total of \$260 million in income annually.

- The average salary in this sector (\$39,400) exceeds the average pay for all industries in the state (\$38,100).

- The average job vacancy rate within the marine trades business is 10 percent. The highest sectors are boat building (17 percent) and boat service/repair (14 percent).

- The industry's skills areas identified as being in highest demand are engine repair, followed by electronics, computers and woodworking.

- A total of 2,400 workers will need to be trained over the next five to 10 years to meet the current and anticipated future employment needs of the state's small- to medium-sized, marine-related businesses.

Source: 'The Marine Trades in Rhode Island: A Skills Gap Analysis' (2008), conducted for the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association and funded by the Governor's Workforce Board.

Not every company deals directly with building and repairing boats. Tory Chew works for Newport-based Confident Captains, which trains ship captains or hires licensed captains to teach classes.

“We have people who are working toward licenses or renewing their licenses or people who want to teach,” she said. “There are some who just want to get some more education in safety. We get people who come here from all over the world who want to further their education or need to renew their licenses.”



From left, Seth Hagan and Carter Richardson, co-owners of East Passage Boatwrights in Bristol, talk with Dan Ritacco of Jamestown on Saturday during the International Yacht Restoration School's third annual Marine Industry Career Day in Newport. Richardson and Hagan began the company after graduating from IYRS in 2002 and 2004, respectively. (Ashley Wilkerson/Daily News staff)

IYRS, created in 1993 by Elizabeth Meyer, runs its restoration program on Thames Street. It also has a Bristol extension, where students learn about parts of ship systems, such as electronics and plumbing.

For Dan Ritacco, 24, of Jamestown, career day gave him a glimpse of possibilities in the marine industry.

He already works as a carpenter for McMillen Yachts. But the Colorado State University graduate is looking to stretch his talents.

“I have a degree in history, and I should put that to use,” he said. “Eventually, I’d like to do research on the ships.”

Send reporter James J. Gillis e-mail at [Gillis@NewportRI.com](mailto:Gillis@NewportRI.com).

## **New programs give marine trades a boost, Bristol Phoenix 3/7/08**

Jobs in the marine trades are expected to increase in Bristol this coming year, and town officials and community developers are on board to train the town's youth to enter the industry.

Two programs — one which would give Mt. Hope High School students hands-on experience in boat building, and another that will be run by New England Tech with Bristol grant money — are poised to begin this year. "There's a 17 percent dropout rate and a good amount of kids who aren't necessarily college bound," Mr. Tyska said Friday. "There are career ladders in this industry which will help them and allow them to stay here. That's rare."

The first program could start during the fall 2008-09 school semester, and will involve at least six Bristol businesses working in conjunction with teachers at Mt. Hope High School. The plan, said Mr. Tyska, is to bring students into the town's boat shops and teach them the trade.

The second program is set to start later this month. With help from a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant it received in 2006, Bristol's Mosaico Community Development Corporation will offer an opportunity for 15 Bristol citizens, who qualify with low to moderate incomes, to enroll in a 13-week marine trades course administered by New England Tech. The certified course involves 20 hands-on activities, boat repair and composite curriculum, and students earn five college credits upon completion. Mosaico executive director Jennifer Astrella said at Wednesday's Bristol Town Council meeting that she and Mr. Tyska are excited to give students the opportunity to get into the business immediately upon graduation.

Ms. Astrella said she hopes to fill the remaining eight spots with qualifying Bristol residents, for whom Mosaico will pay the \$3,200 course fee.

Mr. Tyska said Bristol's 60 marine-related businesses are "strong employers" and offer annual starting salaries around \$39,000.

Classes run Monday through Thursday, March 31 to June 30, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Goetz Custom Boats on Broadcommon Road. Those interested in classes may call Ms. Astrella at 253-4627.

## **Sail industry conference/regatta June 11-13**

GE Capital Solutions and Sail America will present the inaugural "Growth Through Innovation" Sailing Industry Conference and Regatta, June 11-13 at the International Yacht Restoration School in Newport, R.I.

The conference is designed to help companies that sell sailing-related products and services achieve success in today's tough market environment. It will bring together more than 100 industry owners, sales and marketing managers, and other sailing industry professionals for a full day of educational seminars, keynote speakers, panel discussions, breakout sessions and networking events.

Sponsors say leaders from the worlds of business, economics, technology, marketing and sailing will mingle with conference participants to discuss future trends and best industry practices.

Sail America executive director Jonathan Banks said, "The Sailing Industry Conference will focus on business-building strategies for achieving greater success through creative and innovative business practices and techniques. We believe the attendees will go home renewed, re-energized, and equipped with an array of ideas they can implement to advance their businesses."

## **Political Action Committee**

### **What is a PAC?**

One of the missions of the RIMTA is to represent the concerns of the recreational boating industry on the regulatory and legislative issues. That means we have to deal with elected officials.

Fortunately, there are a number of legislators who have worked hard on our behalf and other who support RIMTA principles. We need to be sure those officials stay in office.

It is also important that legislators understand who we are. If we don't advance our causes, no one will do it for us.

By law, our Association can not contribute funds to any candidate, therefore we have established a legal, and registered Political Action Committee which CAN make contributions on our behalf.

How does the PAC get funded?

Only donations specifically made to the RIMTA PAC can be used. Under no circumstances can any membership dues money-or any other contribution made to the Association-be used by the PAC. It would be a violation of state election laws for any money from RIMTA to be used for PAC purposes. Also, all money received by the PAC must come from individual donors. No contribution can be accepted from any organization or business interest. Contributions are welcome from all members. Checks should be made payable "RIMTA PAC". You must provide your name and address (legal requirement).



Please mail contributions to RIMTA, PO Box 7663, Warwick, RI 02886/

RIMTA would like to thank several members for their contributions: John Andrews, Bill Munger and Don Vivenzio.

John Andrews, has issued a challenge. For every \$500.00 raised by the RIMTA PAC, he will contribute an additional \$25.00.

## **House Bill 7950**

On Weds evening, March 26, Members of the RIMTA Board including Chris Ruhling, President, Michael Keyworth, Legislation Chairman and Ken Kubic, Chairman of the Board along with Hinckley Company, CEO Jim McManus attended the Hearing of the House Finance Committee Bill 7950. This Bill, if passed would impose a tax on slips, labor and other marina services. The Bill would have a devastating affect on the Industry. After several hours of waiting long into the evening, the RIMTA Delegation was heard. The testifying before the Committee is a major reason why, donations to the RIMTA PAC are so important. See article below on the Hearing.

## **Opposing views of taxing times – Projo 3/27/08**

PROVIDENCE — The advocates flooded the State House hallways, staircases and committee rooms yesterday, fighting on the same afternoon for competing priorities as lawmakers decide how to close the largest state budget deficit in nearly two decades.

The army of protesters included poor children, business leaders, advocates for the homeless and taxpayer groups. At one point there were three rallies running simultaneously and two groups jockeyed for use of the microphone and podium in the State House rotunda.

Most were drawn to Smith Hill yesterday by a sweeping tax proposal introduced by Rep. Arthur Handy, D-Cranston, that leaders of his own party did not support. But the battle that played out in the capital building's marble halls was bigger than one lawmaker's tax plan.

The General Assembly must decide a key question in the coming months: Should government raise taxes to help close the \$384-million budget hole or rely solely on cutting government spending?

Close to 140 witnesses signed up to testify on Handy's bill during a House Finance Committee hearing that stretched late into the night.

Earlier in the day, protesters from the Campaign for Rhode Island's Priorities, a collection of poverty and labor advocates, battled the Rhode Islanders Against Excessive Taxation for attention in dueling rallies in the rotunda. At the same time, Governor Carcieri met with business leaders in the State Room upstairs.

The governor blasted Handy's bill, which would roll back tax cuts for high earners and expand the sales tax to include health-club memberships, expensive clothing, landscaping and legal services, among other things. "All they're doing is taxing just about everything that moves," Carcieri said. "We are at an axis point right now — either we decide to solve this problem by tightening our belts ... or we are going to raise taxes."

The Republican governor released a spending plan for 2008-09 that avoided tax increases, although some groups, such as hospitals, complained there are substantial fee hikes. Instead, the governor balanced the massive budget gap by cutting state spending on personnel, state aid, and human-service programs such as subsidized health care and long-term care for the elderly and disabled.

Early indications are that the Assembly's Democratic leadership agrees with the governor's priorities more than they disagree.

"Ultimately, I remain committed, as is the speaker, that we are not looking at any broad-base tax increases; we're not looking to roll back anything at this point," said House Majority Leader Gordon D. Fox, D-Providence. "And I want to assure those folks that that's where our hearts and minds are right now."

Handy acknowledged the likelihood that his bill would not become law this year, but said it was important to get the discussion going. "We need to restructure the tax system. In my mind, it's broken," he said. Advocates for human-service programs, which face deep cuts, argued against the tax breaks for the wealthy, which disproportionately favor high earners.

An estimated 350 protesters gathered in the State House earlier in the day to protest Carcieri's plan to cut state spending on Head Start. The move would save taxpayers \$3.3 million and force 400 poor children out of the preschool program that currently serves 2,800.

"Rhode Island's children are not someone else's responsibility. They are our children," said the Rev. Donald C. Anderson, the executive minister for the Rhode Island State Council of Churches. "Keeping 400 children in Head Start is the good and right thing to do."

Later, Carcieri dismissed Mr. Anderson's concerns.

"Show me empirical evidence that Head Start has done anything," he said. "I think it's been the biggest waste of money, frankly."

One of the Head Start protesters, however, said he'd have to leave his construction job if Head Start didn't care for his 4-year-old son every day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"If I don't have child-care, I can't work and I can't pay taxes," said Marcos Vazquez, 21, of Woonsocket. An effort to study the state's current tax code and potential reforms is under way at the Department of Revenue, where the governor's newly appointed director, Gary Sasse, is preparing a "strategic tax plan" to present to state leaders by the end of the calendar year.

The business-backed Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council urged caution in adopting any major changes to the state's tax code, according to a statement issued this week: "Without knowing the true impact of the legislation, and given the state's already significant tax burden, a more prudent course of action would be to exercise caution and continue with the positive steps the state has already made."

Rhode Island's tax burden ranks seventh-highest in the nation, based on a RIPEC analysis of tax collections for fiscal year 2005. The average Rhode Island taxpayer contributes 12.3 percent of his or her personal earnings to state income, property and sales taxes.

Connecticut stands at 11th-highest, at 11.9 percent of personal income; Massachusetts ranks 34th at 10.7 percent.

Rhode Island hasn't raised its income or sales taxes — the state's first and second largest revenue streams respectively — in more than 15 years, according to Sasse.

But the Assembly has approved policies in recent years that lower taxes for higher earners.

The capital gains tax phase out that took effect in 2006 dropped from 5 percent to 1.67 percent this year, which cost the state \$46 million this fiscal year and an estimated \$48 million next year, according to Sasse.

Similarly, the alternative flat tax, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, will cost the state \$14.1 million this fiscal year and an estimated \$24 million next year.

## **Newport unveils plans for \$1.46M Harbor Center**

By Susan A. Baird , PBN Web Editor

NEWPORT – City, state and federal officials, along with local business leaders, today joined in unveiling plans for a \$1.46 million transient boaters' center at the 124-year-old Newport Armory.

The historic building, erected by the State of Rhode Island to house the R.I. militia, is now owned by the Newport Redevelopment Agency. It is located on Thames Street in the heart of the city's waterfront business district.

"This new centralized hospitality and activity center will open up opportunities for visiting boaters to experience the countless natural and recreational attractions that Newport has to offer, and will encourage extended and repeat visits to the City by the Sea and the Ocean State," W. Michael Sullivan, director of the R.I. Department of Environmental Management, said in a statement today.

“The project will also promote economic activity by providing public access from the water to the shore. Boating plays an integral role in our economy,” he noted. “In addition to the 44,000 boats registered in the state, several thousand boats from out of state visit Rhode Island waters every year.” The Harbor Center project – designed by Donham & Sweeney, Architects, of Boston – will rehabilitate about 8,000 square feet of the historic Armory, creating a boaters’ center with entrances from Thames Street and the public Ann Street Pier; storage lockers, restrooms and showers; a laundry room, vending area and ATM machines; a lounge with charts and Internet access; a concierge/information desk; office space for the city dock master and facilities manager; and an interactive information kiosk to help visitors locate sight-seeing destination and other ports of call.

Water, pumpout and trash disposal facilities will be located on the Ann Street Pier, which offers boaters about 35 slips plus dinghy access. (The number of slips at the pier will not change.)

Construction is slated to begin next spring, and the center is expected to open to visitors in the summer of 2009.

Financing will come from a \$713,000 Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BigP) grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, announced last month by U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, a member of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees federal spending on Fish & Wildlife programs. **READ MORE**). The DEM had filed the grant application in October on the city’s behalf.

Matching funds for the Newport Harbor Center project include a \$250,000 grant from the R.I. Department of Environmental Management; a \$140,000 cash contribution from the City of Newport, which will also donate the value of the building and property; \$12,000 from RealWeather Inc., \$10,000 from the Newport Convention and Visitors Bureau, \$5,000 from the Newport Restoration Foundation and \$5,000 from Bowen’s Wharf Co.

“These funds offer us the opportunity to provide visiting boaters upgraded harbor facilities that will maintain Newport as the sailing capitol of the world,” said Newport Mayor Stephen Waluk.

“Tourism plays a vital role in the economy of Newport, and all of Rhode Island,” added Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Paiva-Weed, D-Newport and Jamestown. “As island residents, in a state known as the Ocean State, we recognize the importance of Narragansett Bay in attracting visitors to the city. ...

“Construction of this new boating facility and the accompanying amenities, in the heart of the waterfront business district, will help to provide another convenient way for boaters to access the city and further boost the local and state economy.”



COURTESY NEWPORT REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

**THE WEST SIDE of the building will gain a new downstairs entry, for dock-level access.**



COURTESY NEWPORT REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

**NEAR THE CENTER – at the public Ann Street Pier vessel pump-out – water and trash facilities will be provided.**

The Harbor Center's federal grant is part of \$13 million awarded by the Fish & Wildlife Service to improve boating and fishing opportunities nationwide and promote economic activity. BigP grants provide a 75-percent reimbursable match; they are funded by excise taxes on motorboat fuel.

"I am pleased that Newport is receiving this federal funding to build a new boating facility," Reed said today. "The city is vital to Rhode Island's tourism industry, and this money will help ensure that both visitors and local boaters have access to high-quality facilities."

The City of East Providence has been awarded a similar grant, in the amount of \$12,000, to install six sets of transient moorings for recreational boaters and improve access to the harbor in rough weather.

For more information about the City of Newport and its Redevelopment Agency, visit [www.CityofNewport.com](http://www.CityofNewport.com) ; information about Newport Harbor is available from the city Department of Parks & Recreation at [cityofnewport.com/departments/parks-recreation/harbor/home](http://cityofnewport.com/departments/parks-recreation/harbor/home). For information about the R.I. Department of Environmental Management, visit [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov).

## **Superyacht Forum June 24-27**

The Yacht Report will host the American Superyacht Forum, formerly known as Project USA, in Newport, R.I., June 24-27.

More than 300 delegates involved in the large-yachts sector – including shipyard and project management, owners' representatives, captains, management companies and subcontractors – will gather at the Newport Hyatt Regency.

The American Superyacht Regatta June 27 will provide a chance for delegates to race on the historic 12-meter yachts, and also serve as the finale to the conference, organizers say.

There are a limited number of delegate places available. Visit [www.synfo.com/asf](http://www.synfo.com/asf) .

## **Providence is a possible hub for short sea shipping**

By Kevin Shalvey , PBN Staff Writer

Advocates for short sea shipping – a regional alternative to long-haul trucking – want to see if Providence could be instrumental in restructuring regional shipping.

Short sea shipping works like this: When imported materials headed for Rhode Island arrive at a large port, such as in New York Harbor, they would be kept in their overseas containers and moved to a smaller barge that would bring them directly to the Ocean State rather than being driven here on Interstate 95, said Robert Kunkel, chairman of Washington, D.C.-based Short Sea Cooperative Program (SCOOP)

It's an attempt to curb both pollution and traffic congestion caused by trucking, Kunkel said. Environmental benefits would come from lessened trucking congestion – shipping 150 containers via a barge would emit fewer pollutants and use less energy than driving the same 150 containers between New York and Providence, he said.

“Rhode Island comes into the mix because you do have that very nice highway infrastructure,” said Kunkel, who will be touring Allens Avenue on Friday, Feb. 29. “It takes you more or less directly from Providence out into the hinterlands.”

A national movement toward creating new shipping channels started during 2003, when the U.S. Dept. of Transportation and the Maritime Administration were preparing a study on congestion on U.S. highways, Kunkel said. At the same time, they looked to European Union countries that already had in place effective short sea shipping routes.

During the next year a study, “The Public Benefits of the Short Sea Intermodal System,” was completed by the University of New Orleans. It identified sea shipping from New York to Providence as a shipping alternative for the New York-to-Boston trucking traffic. Bringing containers into Providence and driving them to Boston would be cost effective because ships would not have to navigate around Cape Cod, the study noted.

“The quickest way to get those containers up to that Boston-Worcester market is to come in below the Cape Cod Canal,” Kunkel said. “If we have to go through the canal, we’re going to be paying pilot’s fees. We’re going to have to slow the ship down and the transit time [will increase], affecting the door-to-door time. Providence becomes a better port on the short sea side – or maybe even Fall River or New Bedford.”

Short sea shipping is also outlined in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, signed into law by President George W. Bush during December 2007, said Providence Working Waterfront Alliance spokesman Christopher Hunter. The bill authorizes the U.S. Transportation Secretary to designate short sea transportation routes as “extensions of the surface transportation system” and to “focus public and private efforts to use the waterways to relieve landside congestion along coastal corridors.”

One of the companies along the Allens Avenue industrial corridor that says it might benefit from short sea shipping is Sprague Energy, a PWWA member that operates terminals around the country. Vice President of Marketing and Materials Handling Jim Therriault said the short sea shipping method has been in place since September 2007 at Sprague’s Portland, Maine, terminal.

In Portland, Sprague operates from Merrill’s Marine Terminal, which is less than a mile from the International Marine Terminal, from which barges leave for New York every few days. Sprague had been shipping material from Portland to New York using bulk ships and trucks, but that had become too costly, said Therriault. “Historically, when we moved pulpwood, we would move it in a kind of open bulk ship with a hole in the middle of it that’s loaded by a crane,” he said. “But what’s happened is the shipping market has gone crazy. The prices for those ships have gone from \$20,000 a day to sometimes as much as \$50,000, \$60,000 or \$70,000 a day.”

Instituting short sea shipping to New York took about a year of planning in collaboration with Portland and Maine officials, Therriault said. But Providence doesn’t have the same infrastructure already in place.

He identified ProvPort Inc., a 105-acre terminal south of Allens Avenue that has a connection to the Providence and Worcester Railroad, as having potential as a short sea shipping hub. Companies on Allens Avenue could load containers on site and move them to that terminal, where they would be put onto a barge, Therriault said. Scott Borgerson, an international affairs fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations, a membership organization based in Washington, D.C., is coordinating the tour this week. He’s also compiling a report – “The Fletcher Report” – about the national state of the shipping industry. That report, which could be available as soon as late summer, will address short sea shipping, he said.

He's visited 30 major ports around the world to study container traffic. Providence, he said, is particularly interesting.

"The ports of Boston and New York are the big ones one either side of Providence," he said. "They're really at capacity when it comes to international cargo ... but there are a handful of reasons why they're not optimal." Because they import so much, their rail and interstate systems are overcrowded. Bringing a roll-off container port to Providence would help curb that congestion, he said.

"That wouldn't require a big crane or any of the other infrastructures that Boston, New York or Los Angeles has," he said. "The idea is to kind of skate around the congested international hub, so there are some key ports along the way, Providence being one of them."

### **Ben Mazzotta: Bring short sea shipping to Providence**

10:02 AM EDT on Friday, March 21, 2008

BEN MAZZOTTA , MEDFORD

PROVIDENCE'S waterfront stands at a crossroads. Too often, we have to choose between jobs and open markets, or between jobs and the environment. Domestic maritime freight, known as short sea shipping, is ready to expand, particularly between New York and Boston. This change will ease highway congestion, shrink the region's greenhouse-gas emissions and create jobs. Providence should reject proposed changes to the industrial zone, and keep private residences a safe distance from the port. Providence needs a working waterfront to become a leader in U.S. short sea shipping.

Freight growth threatens to choke our highways. Federal projections indicate that most sections of the interstate between Washington, D.C., and Boston will carry more than 20,000 trucks per day by 2035, which would cause hours of daily delays with current infrastructure. Just maintaining the national road system as it exists costs \$75 billion a year. The cost to fix the all bridges as bad as the Minnesota bridge that collapsed last year, or worse? Nearly \$200 billion.

Expanding the highway system would take hundreds of billions of dollars, at a time when state and federal governments are groaning under unprecedented debt. It is beyond dispute that, even today, billions of dollars' worth of time and fuel are wasted when commuters, truckers and freight sit idle in traffic. Businesses pay for late deliveries, padded schedules and idle engines. Engines idling in traffic release vast quantities of pollutants. Short sea shipping offers a durable way to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. Ships are more carbon-efficient than the hundreds of trucks they replace. The latest maritime technology can reduce air pollution by 85-97 percent. The newest ships run on natural gas and fuel cells, a far cry from the bunker fuel of 50 years ago. America has some of the strongest maritime-pollution laws in the world, and soon all domestic freight will, at a minimum, run on ultra low-sulfur diesel fuel. Corporations with a serious commitment to the environment are already getting in line to have their cargo on ships as soon as service is available.

New ships don't require cranes or special containers to take cargo up and down the coast. Truckers simply park trailers at the dock, where they are driven onto ships, and then back onto the highway at another port. Truckers make short-haul routes to and from the ports, meaning they can spend time with their families at night instead of sleeping in their cabs at rest stops. Providence could win those trucking jobs as early as two years from now, provided there is space enough to park the freight, and an industrial port where dock hands can work at first light.

Shifting truck traffic onto the water saves time and money for ordinary taxpayers and commuters. Because trucks are larger than cars, trucks cause more highway congestion, cause roads to wear out faster, and cause much more serious highway accidents. Once state and federal governments find the money to improve the highway system, commuters deserve to enjoy the full value of that investment.

Providence has a deep-water harbor with industrially zoned waterfront. The industrial zones with deep water berths are huge public assets. The existing infrastructure represents millions of dollars' worth of sunk investment in capital equipment, harbor maintenance and environmental studies and permits. Though the port keeps a low profile in city politics, it punches above its weight in the New England economy. This winter, for example, with road salt scarce, trucks have come from as far as Montreal to buy from Providence port's stockpile.

Providence's long history of maritime industry creates synergies for short sea shipping. The port offers ship repair, a fuel terminal, a supply of skilled maritime labor, and enough land to park hundreds of trailers by the docks. Providence has excellent rail and road access to eastern Massachusetts, including both Worcester and Cape Cod. Providence offers truckers the chance to leapfrog around congestion in New York and Boston.

Private real-estate developers are looking for an outsize windfall: waterfront property for luxury condominiums in the heart of the city's industrial zone, and at fire-sale prices. Make no mistake, enormous real-estate empires have been built during downturns. But with recession, housing prices falling, and 750 empty houses in Providence, do condominium developers need a windfall at public expense?

A decision to re-zone the industrial waterfront would force tractor trailers to compete for space on the highways with commuters. It would turn local truckers' jobs into NAFTA jobs, and scuttle the port's plans for growth. Instead, Providence should leverage its maritime resources and make Providence the first port of call for short sea shipping.

Ben Mazzotta is a doctoral candidate in the Maritime Studies Program at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

## **U.K. equity firm buys Oyster Marine**

By Susan A. Baird , PBN Web Editor

IPSWICH, England, and NEWPORT – Oyster Marine Ltd., a U.K.-based yacht builder with shipyards in Ipswich and Newport, has been acquired by U.K.-based private equity fund Balmoral Capital for an undisclosed sum.

“I will be staying on as chairman and CEO, and it will be business as usual for Oyster's staff,” founder Richard Matthews said in announcing the sale. “We will maintain our ongoing commitment to providing great service for our owners and continuity to the ‘family’ of key subcontractors who are such an important part of our future.”

“As investors, we are delighted with the acquisition of Oyster and have every confidence in the existing management team to take the business forward,” said Balmoral managing partner Richard Winckles. The equity firm already owns Canados, the Italian maker of 70-foot to 110-foot fly-bridge and sports motor yachts.

Besides the Oyster Marine offices in Ipswich, and its Newport Shipyard at One Washington St., the transaction includes the associated businesses of Oyster Brokerage and Southampton Yacht Services, the companies said. The deal has been in the works since “the end of last year – around October,” when Balmoral approached Oyster. Liz Whitman, Oyster’s director of public relations and marketing, said in an e-mail interview today. “Business as usual means just that,” Whitman said, when asked to elaborate upon Matthews’ statement. “Balmoral are looking to Oyster’s existing management team and staff to run the business in the same way that we have been, which has proved very successful over the last 34 years.”

Oyster Marine was founded in 1973 as a designer and builder of cruiser racers. Today, it is best known for its comfortable live-aboard cruising yachts, many of which have circumnavigated the world. The company’s vessels, currently starting at 46 feet, feature a distinctive “deck saloon” configuration. But racing remains a part of the tradition, with Oyster yachts placing as winners in their class in both the Fastnet and the Sydney Hobart races in 2007.

Oyster Marine employs about four people in Newport and 85 in Ipswich, Whitman said. Another six are employed at the company’s Oyster Brokerage, also in Ipswich, and 140 at Southampton Yacht Services, which she said “not only builds the larger Oyster yachts but also has a very substantial build and refit operation for superyachts.”

Oyster eschews agents, selling its vessels directly to customers around the world, Whitman noted. “From Newport, we look after our growing band of USA-based customers and have brokerage, charter and, most importantly, after-sales personnel on hand to service those customers,” she said. The Newport staff also assists Oyster owners visiting from abroad – “and, of course, they are also responsible for organizing Oyster’s presence at the USA Newport, Annapolis, Miami and Fort Lauderdale boat shows.”

The company reports having had a “very active London Boat show, with enquiries substantially ahead of last year for new yachts and for the expanding fleet of Oysters available for charter.” It already is booking orders for the Oyster 100 and 125 superyachts, slated for launch in 2010 and 2011.

“All divisions of Oyster Marine can expect to be as busy as ever,” in the wake of the acquisition, Whitman said. “And we are looking to expand production where possible.”

For more information about Oyster Marine Ltd., its vessels and its services, visit [www.oystermarine.com](http://www.oystermarine.com). Balmoral Capital, founded by Richard Winckles and Alec D’Janoeff, is a private equity company specializing in controlling investments in mid-market European companies with growth potential. Businesses acquired by Balmoral typically have an enterprise value of 30 million to 350 million euros. To learn more, visit [www.balmoralcapital.com](http://www.balmoralcapital.com).

## **K-line launches export program at Quonset**

By PBN Staff

NORTH KINGSTOWN – The Port of Davisville, one of the nation’s top ports for automobile imports, has added an export side to its trade equation with the shipment yesterday of a load of used tractor-trailer cabs to Emden, Germany, the Quonset Development Corporation said.

“Strategically, this is a major achievement for the Quonset Business Park, since it signals the creation of committed export activity at the Port of Davisville,” Steven J. King, the QDC’s chief operating officer, said in an after-market statement.

The shipment – of about 100 truck chassis – was the first in a K-line pilot program that is bringing in used truck cabs from across the United States.

The truck tractors are being processed by North Atlantic Distribution, which is providing damage inspection, customs clearance and storage. The shipper for the pilot project is Automotive Transport Inc., which is loading the chassis on K-line ships, the QDC said. ATI, which already runs exports through the ports of Jacksonville, Fla., and New York, had not previously run exports through North Kingstown.

“The addition of a dedicated export cargo moves the Port of Davisville at Quonset into a higher activity level,” the QDC said.

The change will mean increases in dockage and wharfage fees paid to the quasi-public port management agency. For each additional day a vessel must stay in port to take on cargo, the QDC estimates it will bring in \$1,600 in dock fees, plus \$12 per truck in wharf fees.

The program is expected to create the need for 12 more longshoremen – a 40-percent increase from the 30 now on the port staff – at an estimated wage of \$56,000 per year plus benefits, the QDC said. NORAD also plans to increase its local staff, hiring another two to three workers.

For the K-line vessels that now bring in cars from Germany, the export business will provide “dedicated backhaul for those ships – meaning, they will now have cargo to transport on the return trip,” the QDC added. Vessels importing cars from the Japanese port of Kawasaki and the Mexican port of Veracruz will continue to return empty – at least for now.

“Currently, the pilot is only open to the truck-tractor export,” the agency said. “However, given the robust export business, there may be future growth opportunities.”

The Quonset Development Corporation – a special-purpose subsidiary of the R.I. Economic Development Corporation – is a quasi-public company responsible for the development and management of the Port of Davisville and the 3,000-plus acre Quonset Business Park, both in North Kingstown. Additional information is available at [quonsetpointri.com](http://quonsetpointri.com).

## **Stokes calls for statewide tourism effort**

By David Ortiz , PBN Staff Writer

Keith W. Stokes, executive director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce, was recently named by Gov. Donald L. Carcieri to a fifth term on the board of directors of the R.I. Economic Development Corporation, where he serves as treasurer of the board. He was also named to a first term on the board of the Quonset Development Corporation. Stokes also is vice-chairman of the Newport Redevelopment Agency’s board of directors, and a board member for the Business Development Corporation of Rhode Island.

PBN: Where will we see the impact on the local economy as the U.S. Navy's recently announced investment in Naval Base Newport ramps up?

STOKES: Clearly, as we're struggling with what very much looks like a recession, the announcement couldn't have happened at a better time. ... You're going to see a 74-percent growth in the number of training personnel that are coming to Naval Station Newport each and every year. We're going to go from about 6,000 to about 16,000 personnel per year. We haven't seen those numbers in 20 years – you'd have to go back to the Cold War and the Reagan Administration to see that level of training officers coming through that base. I think another very important aspect of this is over \$100 million in construction projects going on at Naval Station Newport. There'll be millions of dollars in construction projects with the Rhode Island National Guard at Quonset, and ... we'll be providing an opportunity for Rhode Island (tradesmen), contractors and small businesses to participate in and bid on these contracts.

PBN: Can we expect any big announcements this year concerning the Quonset Business Park?

STOKES: The critical issue is, what are the highest and best uses of Quonset? I've always believed that the highest and best uses are tied to industrial. ... In fact, at Quonset we already have some of the most important companies and industries co-located there – Ocean State Job Lot, Electric Boat, Toray Industries, Senesco. So if we look at the available land that's left at Quonset, we have to make very critical decisions about what are the complementary industries that we can attract and grow at Quonset.

PBN: The ups and downs of Newport's tourism seasons get a lot of press every spring and summer. How important is tourism to the city's fortunes?

STOKES: You have to understand that the tourism, retail, service industries are vital, but they don't drive an economy. I mean, most economies are driven by manufacturing, professional, technology and services. Because ultimately if you have a high-skill, high-wage work force and population, then they're going to have the disposable income to shop in stores and take vacations. So in Rhode Island tourism is an integral part of our economy, but it only works if the other pieces are working alongside.

PBN: What other sectors drive Newport County's economy?

STOKES: Obviously, military and defense-related economies are important...and as you see growth at Naval Station Newport, you see growth at the National Guard, you're also going to see growth in contracts for not only the construction trades but continued growth in contracts for defense-related technology firms. In fact, one of the things that we remind people is, 25 percent of all Rhode Island taxes each year come from defense-related technology companies. They also represent combined almost a quarter of all our senior scientists that are employed in the state. The second economic engine is the marine trades, and this becomes very important, because people all the time are asking, 'What are Rhode Island's economic strengths?' The one thing we have that nobody else has is Narragansett Bay. It has been and will continue to be an economic asset. ...

PBN: That brings us back to tourism?

STOKES: What Newport and Rhode Island have in hospitality and tourism is a brand name – we are the Ocean State. We're a small, compact state, and in one hour you can get to any historic location and tourism location in Rhode Island. That's unlike anywhere else in the country or the world. So you have the mansions of Newport, you have Blackstone Valley and the heritage corridor there, you have the wonderful beaches of South County,

and now you have our capital city, which has a wonderful urban environment.

PBN: There's been talk for years about the need to revitalize Newport's North End. Is a plan taking shape?

STOKES: The chamber has been working very closely with the city of Newport, the city has been developing a North End Master Plan. The next critical step is, the city of Newport needs to finalize their master plan so they can set the stage for what potential investment uses are most compatible to the needs of the city of Newport? Next week, our chamber is taking the mayor of Newport, members of the city council and the members of the administration to Charleston, South Carolina. And we're spending four days in Charleston, meeting with the mayor and his staff, and we're going to be learning firsthand how Charleston has reclaimed its waterfront, how Charleston has redeveloped its north side, which is very similar to the North End of Newport. So we're quite excited about the opportunities for the North End of Newport, but it is critical that the city of Newport leads the planning effort. It's critical in any community – communities have to lead the planning effort, not the private sector, not state or federal government. Local communities need to be empowered to make the highest and best investment decisions themselves. And our role at the chamber is supporting our local communities. •

Interview: Keith W. Stokes

POSITION: Executive Director, Newport County Chamber of Commerce.

BACKGROUND: Prior to taking the helm at the Newport County Chamber in 1993, Stokes worked for three years as a senior policy adviser for economic development to then-Gov. Bruce Sundlun. From 1987 to 1990, Stokes was executive director of the Omni Development Corp. He began his career as a senior policy adviser to the R.I. general treasurer.

EDUCATION: B.S. in planning from Cornell University, 1980. M.S. in planning and policy from the University of Chicago, 1982.

RESIDENCE: Newport

AGE: 48

## **RIEDC goes on offensive to grow Rhode Island jobs**

By David Ortiz , PBN Staff Writer

State economic development officials are pursuing a trio of initiatives aimed at increasing the amount of growth capital available to Rhode Island businesses and more aggressively marketing the Ocean State as a regional hub for high-wage industries.

On Feb. 26, the R.I. Economic Development Corporation announced a new strategic alliance with the Business Development Company of Rhode Island (BDCRI) and the Business Development Company of New England (BDCNE), which combined will make more than \$200 million in capital available to finance the growth of businesses in the state.

At the same time, the EDC said it has proposed legislation to establish a new \$20 million, loan-guarantee program.

The EDC also announced the launch of a regional attraction campaign with the Rhode Island Commodores – an organization of top business and civic leaders in the state – aimed at growing Rhode Island’s financial services, information technology and digital media and life-science sectors.

The new initiatives, which the EDC unveiled soon after completing a comprehensive review of its activities and programs, were created as part of work to prevent Rhode Island’s economy from stagnating amid a nationwide economic slowdown and the state’s worst fiscal crisis in a generation, said Saul Kaplan, the EDC’s executive director.

The EDC is also implementing an internal restructuring aimed at making its staff more customer-oriented and accountable for working daily with companies in the state to help them grow, Kaplan said.

“This is exactly the time that we need to play strong offense,” Kaplan said. “We need a clear vision of the kind of economy that we’re trying to create, and a very specific road map of activities.”

The EDC has set for itself a goal of increasing the number of Rhode Island jobs that pay above the \$42,400 national private sector average wage from 40 percent to 60 percent over the next 10 years, with measurable annual increases.

Meeting the goal would create 79,000 new high-wage jobs, produce \$2.5 billion in income and \$83 million in additional state income tax revenue in today’s dollars, according to the EDC.

“This is an important time for Rhode Island,” Gov. Donald Carcieri said in a press release. “We are at a tipping point and must confidently move forward with a common vision and actionable plan for creating a stronger economy.”

The EDC’s new joint venture with BDCRI and BDCNE will invest in Rhode Island companies from a newly created, \$30 million mezzanine fund, MB Capital III.

The alliance also will enable the EDC to provide financing of up to \$2 million in junior debt and up to \$5 million in mezzanine and equity capital per transaction. The BDCs will also work with the EDC on ways to bring the successful micro-lending Capital Access Program to Rhode Island.

In an indication of how closely the organizations will now be aligned, BDCRI is in discussions with the EDC to establish an office at the latter’s Providence headquarters where it can meet with prospect companies.

“I think it’s a win-win,” Kaplan said of the possible sharing of office space. “On our end, it brings more growth capital to the market, which is a key part of our economic growth plan. And on their end, it gives them a close connection to our business-development team, which is focused on targeted, high-wage sectors of our economy.”

As part of its new marketing campaign, “Opportunity: Rhode Island,” the EDC will make 5,000 calls to companies across the region and the nation that are seen as prospects for relocating or expanding their operations in the state.

The Rhode Island Commodores will contribute \$30,000 to the \$75,000, nine-month outreach effort, which will use direct marketing, industry events and peer outreach to generate new business-development leads.

“While significant job growth will come from companies already located in Rhode Island, it’s important that we continue to seek out attraction opportunities that bring new business and new jobs into the state,” Donna Cupelo, Verizon Communications regional president, who leads the Rhode Island Commodores, said in a press release.

R.I. House Majority Leader Gordon Fox and state Sen. William Walaska are sponsoring bills drafted by the EDC that would reduce from \$80 million to \$50 million the guarantee authority currently in the Rhode Island Industrial Recreational Building Authority (IRBA) program. The proposed legislation would also create a new, \$20 million loan-guarantee program for companies seeking private-sector lenders to finance assets other than real estate, machinery or equipment.

Creation of the new Growth Capital Guarantee Fund would shift loan-guarantee authority into a program aimed at supporting businesses positioned to grow in the 21st century, Kaplan said.

“We’re going to establish a new program that allows us to provide guarantees to growth companies that need support for working capital and other intangible assets that the current IRBA program won’t allow us to finance,” Kaplan said.

## **Dealer agreement issue boiling up again**

It was anything but cold for dealers in Alaska’s House Judiciary Committee hearing room on February 13 when H.B. 303 received a favorable Committee vote. But the fact there’s a bill in Alaska’s legislature at all sadly indicates that the decades-long quest for better dealer agreements rolls on.

The reality is if Alaska’s dealers find they must turn to their lawmakers to legislate certain aspects of the manufacturer/dealer relationship, something’s gone wrong. What happened to the proposed new dealer agreements once hailed with great fanfare by both manufacturers and dealers in Washington 3 years ago? I’m referring, of course, to the Special Task Force chaired by David Slikkers of S2 Yachts, which produced recommendations for unprecedented changes designed to settle the major problems cited by dealers with these agreements. It was also expected to eliminate the need for legislation in the states. Moreover, the recommendations were unanimously approved by the Boards of the NMMA and MRAA. Many boat manufacturers, covering more than 60 brands, committed to adopting the recommendations in their dealer agreements no later than the 2007 model year. Things were definitely looking good!

Why, then, is there a bill in Alaska?

Well, it seems safe to say what was expected to happen hasn’t happened. The excellent work of the Task Force has not found its way into dealer agreements and the dealers in Alaska, at least, have decided to battle it out in their legislature. I say battle, because the NMMA is burning up the bucks flying between Washington and Alaska to oppose the dealer initiative.

Larry Innis, MRAA’s Director of Government Relations, testified in “strong support” of the Alaska bill. The bill, he says, includes fair and timely warranty payments; repurchase of 2-year old boats if cancelled by the manufacturer; territorial rights and protection; the long-term security of multi-year terms; and protection from cancellation including non-renewal without cause, among other issues.

If you compare the Alaskan bill with the Task Force recommendations approved by the NMMA's Board in 2005, they seem pretty much in line. So, it seems to me the NMMA ought to resolve with Alaska's dealers the discrepancies between their bill and the Task Force recommendations and save a lot of airfare!

One of the prime reasons the Task Force, made up of 14 dealers and 13 manufacturers, spent more than a year hashing out their recommendations was to end the need to battle this issue in state legislatures across the country. After all, when you stand back and look at it, you see it's a blatant waste of limited industry financial and human capital on all sides that could be better used to increase demand for our products these days.

But in light of the failure of manufacturers to follow through on their own recommendations, I expect Alaska won't be the only state where dealers will seek a legislated solution.

## **New bill would avert national permitting for boats**

A new bill introduced to the Senate would ensure recreational boaters will not need a federal clean water permit to operate their boats.

Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., yesterday introduced the Clean Boating Act of 2008, which would permanently restore a longstanding exemption for recreational boaters from federal and state permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act.

The bill, S. 2766, is similar to legislation that was introduced last year, the Recreational Boating Act of 2007, which is pending in the House and Senate. The National Marine Manufacturers Association says the new bill increases the chances of passage of legislation before a court-mandated September deadline.

"This issue has been a cloud hanging over our industry and, as promised, Senators Boxer and Nelson have worked to address," Scott Gudes, vice president of government relations for NMMA, said in a statement.

The issue of new federal permits stems from a September 2006 U.S. District Court ruling that ordered the EPA to regulate ballast water discharges, and mandated a deadline of September 2008 to put it in place.

Although the litigation was aimed at ocean-going vessels, the court's ruling also struck down an exemption instituted in 1973 that applied to the incidental discharges from all vessels, including recreational boats. Large ocean-going ships use ballast water for stability and routinely discharge that water, introducing pollutants and invasive species in U.S. waters in the process.

The NMMA, BoatU.S. and other stakeholders have been striving to resolve the issue in advance of the permitting deadline. The NMMA plans to aggressively lobby for passage of S. 2766 and the new legislation will be a topic of discussion during the upcoming American Boating Congress in April, according to spokesman Duncan Neasham.

"Without legislative relief soon, everyday boaters would be required by federal law to apply for the same expensive permits as ocean-going commercial vessels and land-based industrial facilities," Gudes said.

## **Floating L.I. Sound gas terminal gets federal OK**

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Thursday approved a controversial proposal to install a floating liquefied natural gas terminal in the middle of Long Island Sound.

The terminal, intended to meet increasing energy needs, is the first floating terminal for LNG storage and delivery to be approved in the United States, according to FERC.

But many environmentalists, legislators and residents oppose the project, citing concerns about safety, potential environmental impact and encroachment on public waters. Some criticized the project for “industrializing” Long Island Sound, an estuary that is popular for boating and fishing.

FERC chairman Joseph T. Kelliher said Thursday the project meets federal safety and environmental standards, and pointed out that the commission imposed about 80 conditions intended to mitigate the project’s impact. “We have reviewed the record in the Broadwater LNG proceeding and have considered carefully the concerns of the many citizens who have commented on the project,” Kelliher said in a statement. “Based on all available scientific facts, we approve the Broadwater project today, subject to rigorous conditions, because it can meet the projected energy needs for New York City, Long Island and Connecticut, and can provide the service safely, securely and with limited adverse impact on the environment.”

The decision culminates nearly four years of studies and public hearings on the project. Hundreds of people, for example, packed a high school auditorium in Branford, Conn., last January to protest the plan. Connecticut attorney general Richard Blumenthal had urged federal regulators to reject the proposal.

“We will fight to the highest court in this country, because it is not only immoral, it is illegal,” he said last year. Broadwater Energy, a joint venture of TransCanada and Shell Oil, first proposed the massive terminal in 2004, saying it would process liquefied natural gas and pipe it to New York and Connecticut. The terminal would be 1,200 feet long and would be moored to a fixed tower in the middle of the Sound, about 11 miles from the Connecticut shore and nine miles from Long Island, N.Y.

The Broadwater project would deliver up to 1.25 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day to fuel electric generating plants and heat homes.

Before the project moves forward, the New York Department of State will decide whether Broadwater is consistent with policies designed to control development and protect coastal resources.

—JoAnn W. Goddard  
Associate Editor



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