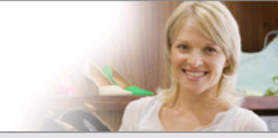




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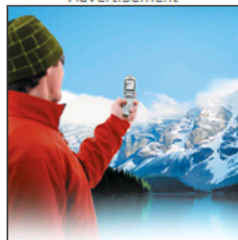
Coast Guard gets swifter boat

Milwaukee station one of first recipients

By MEG JONES
mjones@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Oct. 22, 2008

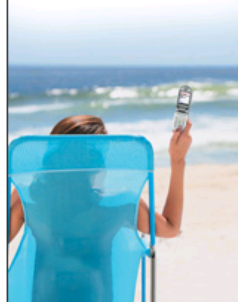
The Coast Guard station in Milwaukee is getting a sleeker, faster boat to use for search-and-rescue efforts.



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One of the first Response Boat-Mediums that recently rolled off the assembly line arrived this week in Milwaukee. The \$2.5 million, 45-foot-long boat will replace the Coast Guard's 41-foot response boats here and in other parts of the country.

The Coast Guard contract for 180 Response Boat-Mediums will be split between Marinette Marine Corp. and Kvichak Marine Industries in Kent, Wash. The first 10 boats are being constructed by Kvichak while Marinette Marine, which is ramping up for construction at its Green Bay facility, is scheduled to build the 11th and 12th.

Continued construction after the first dozen boats are completed is contingent upon testing. Assembly takes eight weeks.

The first three boats were delivered to Coast Guard stations in Oregon, Virginia and Florida, and Wisconsin's was delivered this week. The Response Boat-Medium being tested on Lake Michigan will be the only one in the Great Lakes region so testing can be done in varying weather conditions, said Milwaukee Station Coast Guard Cmdr. Joe Malinauskas.

"We're very excited to get it. It's packed with new technology and new capability we're looking to use on Lake Michigan," said Malinauskas.

The Response Boat-Medium will replace 25-year-old utility boats that are being phased out because of escalating maintenance costs. The new boats feature better electronics, more speed and power and more crew comforts such as heat, air conditioning and more seating, said Bryan Martin, field crew coordinator for Kvichak Marine Industries.

Featuring air bladders in the window seals and watertight doors, the Response Boat-Medium has the capability of overturning and righting itself in roughly seven seconds. The current boats can't do that.

Top speed for the old

Coast Guard



Photo/Michael Sears

Technical workers and Coast Guard members check out the new Response Boat Medium which was launched at Southwind Marine in Milwaukee and is moored on the Kinnickinnic River. The boat was built Kvichak Marine Industries of Kent, Wash.



Bryan Martin (left) field crew coordinator of Kvichak Marine and Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Efrén Lewis discuss some of the boat's many features.



Photo/Michael Sears

Master Chief Petty Officer Daniel Wong of Washington D.C.

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boats was 25 knots while the new boats can travel as fast as 43 knots. They're also more maneuverable.

"The response time has been cut in half," said Martin.

inspects one the Response Boat Medium's twin 825 horsepower, Detroit Diesel engines. Top speed for the new craft will be 43 knots.

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