



Burger Boat Co. of Manitowoc will build the 78-foot, steel-hulled Grayling, a fisheries research vessel for the U.S. Geological Survey. It is expected to launch in fall 2014. / U.S. Geological Survey image

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MANITOWOC — Burger Boat Co. expects to add up to 50 jobs to build a large fisheries research vessel for the U.S. Geological Survey.

The Government Accountability Office had upheld the awarding to Burger a \$5.59 million contract for the 78-foot, steel-hulled Grayling with an expected launch into the Manitowoc River in fall 2014, Kurt Newman of the USGS's Great Lakes Science Center said Wednesday.

Protests filed in April by one or more losing bidders prompted a GAO review of the contract.

"I was very impressed with the package Burger Boat provided and I just think we made the right decision all-around," said Newman, branch chief of the Western Basic Ecosystem of USGS.

Ron Cleveringa, Burger Boat's vice president of sales and marketing, said the new hires would be in all shipbuilding trades including metal working, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, paint and joiner.

"In about three months we should start cutting metal," Cleveringa said, noting production will commence after final design approval by USGS.

The new ship will replace the existing 38-year-old Grayling and is expected to have a 40- to 50-year service life. Among crew members' tasks will be dragging nets along the lake bottom, catching fish, and using sound waves to detect fish and assess their abundance.

Cleveringa said the 150-year-old company will reach out to former employees to see which ones would like to work on the project.

Charlie Mathews writes for HTR Media of Manitowoc