

Bay Shipbuilding to hire at least 200

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Bay Shipbuilding Co. needs in excess of 200 people over the next several months, and hiring is likely to continue into 2014, / File/Press-Gazette Media

STURGEON BAY —Bay Shipbuilding Co. is hiring.

An influx of new projects has put the Sturgeon Bay shipyard in a position where it needs in excess of 200 people over the next several months, and hiring is likely to continue into 2014, Vice President and General Manager Todd Thayse said Tuesday.

“This is across all disciplines of shipbuilding and manufacturing,” Thayse said. The company needs hands-on workers like fitters and welders as well as engineers, purchasers and support staff.

The various projects were announced to the staff on Friday.

“We wanted them to hear it from us first,” Thayse said.

Canada Steamship Lines

Bay Ship has been successful in negotiating four significant repowering projects with Canada Steamship Lines. The first vessel is expected to arrive on or about Dec. 7 and the second vessel will arrive in later December. Both are scheduled for completion in April 2014.

The third and fourth repowering projects for CSL are planned to start in December 2014 and expected to complete

in spring 2015. These are diesel to diesel repowerings similar to projects Bay Ship has completed in the past.

The vessels' two existing Crossley Pielstick engines will be removed and new MAK 6M32 engines will be installed, complete with new gear boxes and Shottel CPP propulsion shafting and control systems.

The company also has an option for a fifth CSL vessel that has not yet been exercised, Thayse said.

St. Marys Challenger conversion

The company has reached an agreement with Port City Steamship Holdings Co. to convert the steamer St. Marys Challenger to an articulated tug barge that will be mated with a tug for future operations.

This project has been a long time in the works going back to 2005 or so, Thayse said. At 107 years old, the St. Marys Challenger is the oldest vessel actively transiting the Great Lakes and is a riveted hull.

The vessel is expected to arrive on or about Nov. 7 to begin the conversion process.

The conversion involves removing the existing stern end and its existing steam propulsion plant, fabricating and installing a new Bludworth-style ATB notch and modifying the forward end accommodations to allow for a forward-end machinery area that will house new ship service generators and switch gear.

BSC has agreed to complete the conversion by end of May 2015.

New ATB tank barge

Bay Shipbuilding has reached an agreement with a currently unnamed customer to build its next ATB barge, which will be designated as BSC hull 774.

The barge will be 491 feet in length overall with a 78-foot beam and 41-foot depth, with a design draft of 28 feet 3 inches. It will have a 150,000-barrel gross capacity and is designed to haul petroleum product, Thayse said.

The barge is currently in process of being engineered by Guarino and Cox.

"We expect to begin receiving steel in house by December 2013 with construction slated to begin in January 2014," he said.

Vessel hull will begin erecting midsummer of 2014 with delivery scheduled for May 2015.

Core competencies

Bay Shipbuilding Co. is a part of the Fincantieri Marine Group, a subsidiary of one of Europe's largest shipbuilding companies that also includes Marinette Marine and ACE Marine of Green Bay.

"The investments Fincantieri has made in our yard over the last four or five years have put us in a position to be very competitive as we seek these projects," Thayse said.

The company has built 22 ATBs since the late 1990s.

"It's a niche market we've become very good at," he said. "It highlights the core competencies of our yard."

Bay Ship also has a full slate of 16 winter vessels lined up for this winter, Thayse said. The company's "winter

fleet” has become a familiar sight as giant Great Lakes cargo vessels are parked at and near the yard for maintenance and repaired during the off-season.

—**Warren Bluhm writes for the Door County Advocate.**