



Industry

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Gulf Ship Launches New Tractor Tugs

On February 4, 2009, Gulf Ship launched four new, true tractor tugs into the Bernard Bayou Industrial Canal in Gulfport, Mississippi. Each tugboat weighs approximately 700 tons, is 110 feet in length, and takes 12 months to construct. The entire phase of construction – from design to steel cutting to launch – is done within the walls of Gulf Ship, keeping with the philosophy of parent company Edison Chouest Offshore to "design, build, own and operate" all of their boats in-house.

The tugs, while launched in Gulfport, will be used to assist in movement of tankers that haul liquefied natural gas (LNG) to docking stations in Louisiana and Texas. These tankers are 900-plus feet in length, and the tugs are able to move forward, in reverse and sideways at a moment's notice.

This is the second launching of tractor tugs by Gulf Ship, one of the Coast's largest industries and an employer of 440 workers. The first launch was in November of 2007, and while Chouest hasn't ruled out the possibility of more tugboats in the future, there are no immediate construction plans at this time. However, Gulf Ship will be busy over the next few months completing modules in collaboration with Chouest's other shipyards.

Chouest owns the Gulfport location, as well as four other sites located in Houma and Larose, LA, Tampa, FL and Brazil. A new yard, which will be the largest site yet, will be constructed near the Houma location and will employ around 1,000 workers. To date, Chouest employs 3,000 workers in its shipyards, with about 7,500 company-wide.

Gulf Ship has been spurring the Coast's economy since its opening in April of 2006, and is doing well despite the nation's current economic conditions. Thanks to Chouest, Gulf Ship exceeded their expected employment levels at their Gulfport location, and they continue to be an asset for the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



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