



Industry

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

U.S. Marine, Inc. Receives \$61.5 Million Contract

Even during these tough economic times, key industries of Harrison County continue to flourish, and United States Marine, Inc. (USMI) is a powerful example. The full-service boat manufacturer in Gulfport, Miss. recently received a \$61.5 million contract over the next four years to construct boats for the country of Kuwait.

The Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Program, contracted by the Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington Navy Yard, awarded the contract to USMI for 10 90-foot vessels called Mark 5 boats. The boats will reach speeds of 60 miles per hour and be used to counter pirates and drug smugglers.

Working closely with Kuwait, USMI will adjust to environmental, cultural and other specific conditions in their design. USMI, which employs approximately 225 workers, will perform the work at its facility in Harrison County's Bernard Bayou Industrial District. The contract is expected to be completed by June 2013.

USMI CEO Barry Dreyfus, Jr. says the contract is "a continuation of what we've been doing," referring to the company's now constant employment levels paired with community and industry support. He elaborates on Harrison County providing favorable conditions to USMI's business by saying, "The water access, being able to test boats along the coast and the Southern attitude – it's just a different way of doing business." Dreyfus suggests that the contract "could lead to larger vessels, and helps solidify our market of vessels from 20 feet to 100 feet."

The contract also allows for supply partnerships with other nearby companies. For example, Trinity Yachts, located in the Bernard Bayou Industrial District, is helping with the production side, while USMI does the design and engineering in-house. And, it continues down the line, affecting many local businesses. "Aluminum suppliers, piping, screws. Just to run a business you need everything from a rag for a guy to wipe his hands to the aluminum to build the boat. We try to get everything here in South Mississippi," says Dreyfus. He continues, "This is another example of how Kuwait is helping the Gulf Coast. They waited for us to recover and then signed the contract when we were ready."

USMI boasts substantial growth in recent years and has an impressive 19 years designing, manufacturing, testing and supporting craft for Special Operations customers. With the help of quality companies like USMI, Harrison County continues to advance its shipbuilding industry.



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