VT Halter Marine
A company of VT Systems

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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VT HALTER MARINE TO BUILD SWATH VESSEL FOR NOAA

NOAA today announced that VT Halter Marine Inc. of Pascagoula, Miss., will complete the final design and build of a new Small Waterplane Area Twin Hull Coastal Mapping Vessel (SWATH CMV) for the agency. NOAA exercised a $15 million option for the ship with VT Halter Marine, which also completed the vessel's preliminary design under a separate option.

The primary mission of the SWATH CMV will be to map the full seafloor in coastal areas for the nation's nautical charts. It will operate in waterways along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, Caribbean Sea and Great Lakes, conducting basic hydrographic surveys of the seafloor using side scan and multibeam sonar technologies. The vessel's ability to monitor and detect changes to the seafloor—including obstructions, shoaling, and other dangers to navigation—will enhance the nation's commerce and security and improve our ability to characterize marine ecosystems.

VT Halter Marine expects to deliver the SWATH CMV by the summer of 2008. The nearly 38-meter long vessel will be homeported at Fort Point in New Castle, N.H., and will replace the 40-year-old NOAA ship *Rude.* Locating the vessel at New Castle will significantly enhance coastal and ocean mapping research partnership opportunities with the NOAA Joint Hydrographic Center at the University of New Hampshire.

"The SWATH design is particularly suited to NOAA's mission to map the ocean floor, as it is less responsive to wave action than a mono-hull ship," said Rear Admiral Samuel P. De Bow Jr., director of NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations and NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps. "Its reduced motion will result in more reliable acquisition of survey data, and its enhanced sea-keeping ability will make it a more efficient survey platform."

U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, who was instrumental in securing funds for the SWATH CMV, stated, "This vessel provides a cutting-edge platform for NOAA and UNH scientists and undergraduates to test new ocean mapping technologies and conduct hydrographic research in near coastal environments, previously inaccessible with traditional vessels. The SWATH ship will help to grow the already successful UNH-NOAA partnership and help UNH remain a national leader in oceanographic work."

"We are excited to build this first-in-class SWATH CMV for NOAA," said Boyd E. King, VT Halter Marine's chief executive officer. "It is always exciting to take a project from blueprint to blue water. The SWATH CMV will be the fifth NOAA vessel that VT Halter Marine will build in support of NOAA's active fleet replacement program."

Once operational, the new SWATH CMV will be operated, managed, and maintained by NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, composed of civilians and commissioned

officers of the NOAA Corps, one of the nation's seven uniformed services. The SWATH will support the nautical charting mission of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey.

In 2007 NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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VT Halter Marine is the marine operations of VT Systems. Based in Pascagoula, Miss., it is a leader in the design and construction of medium-sized ships in the United States. VT Halter Marine designs, builds and repairs a wide variety of ocean-going vessels such as patrol vessels, oil recovery vessels, oil cargo vessels, ferries, logistic support vessels and survey vessels.

VT Systems (VTS) is a provider of integrated engineering solutions, specializing in the fields of aerospace, electronics, land systems, and marine. Headquartered in Alexandria, Va., VTS has locations throughout North America. VTS offers a broad range of proven innovative services to both the commercial and government sectors. VTS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Singapore Technologies Engineering Ltd. Please visit www.vt-systems.com.

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On the Web:
NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations and NOAA Corps: http://www.omao.noaa.gov
VT Halter Marine: http://www.vthaltermarine.com