

A BOON FOR PORTLAND'S MARITIME SECTOR

Vigor christens new drydock at Portland's Swan Island shipyard

Union shipbuilder Vigor Industrial held a christening ceremony Oct. 25 for its new drydock, the Vigorous. The 960-foot Chinese-built vessel is the largest floating drydock in North America and will open Portland to new markets, such as cruise ships and post-Panamax vessels.

Two MARAD cargo ships will be the first vessels in the dock, creating 130 union jobs. The company also has a cruise ship booked for repairs in March 2015.

Vigor Industrial is the parent company of Cascade General and Vigor Marine LLC at Portland's Swan Island ship repair yard. Workers at Vigor Marine are represented by Seattle-based Boilermakers Local 104. Workers at Cascade General are members of various craft unions who work under a master labor agreement negotiated and administered by the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO. The Portland Metal Trades Council bargains local terms and conditions at Swan Island. [The Carpenters Union represents some employees there under a separate agreement.]

The Portland Metal Trades Council contract at Cascade General expires Nov. 30. Bargaining for a new contract began last month.

The master agreement with the national Metal Trades Department expires June 1, 2017.

Vigor invested more than \$50 million to build and deliver the Vigorous from China to Swan Island.

"This is a momentous day for us," said Vigor chief

operating officer Dave Whitcomb at the christening. "Vigorous is here to support family-wage jobs for the men and women of Vigor as well as the marine community here in Portland."

Gary Moore, a business representative for Laborers Local 296, said the new dry dock marks the resurgence of the maritime industry in Portland. "We anticipate a lot of good jobs coming from this," he said.

Vigor CEO Frank Foti said at the christening that the choice to sell the original dry dock in 2001 was a difficult decision which took courage. Now, 13 years later, the Vigorous joins 11 other drydocks at locations across the Pacific Northwest from Portland to Ketchikan.

Including Portland, Vigor Industrial employs approximately 2,000 union workers at facilities in Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Bremerton and Port Angeles.

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Lifting capacity: 80,000 tons

Length: 960 feet

Inside Width: 186 feet

Total width: 228 feet

Height: 70 feet

Weight: 24,000 tons



A little wind and rain didn't deter nearly a thousand employees, union officials, customers and their families from enjoying music, food and games Oct. 25 at the christening of Vigor Industrial's new drydock — the Vigorous — at Portland's Swan Island ship repair yard. (Photos courtesy of Vigor Industrial)

Worker activists plan 'Black Friday' protests at Walmart

Walmart worker activists who have been agitating peacefully for years for pro-worker changes at the notoriously anti-union retail giant are again planning mass protests at stores nationwide on "Black Friday," the big shopping day immediately after Thanksgiving.

In Portland, a protest is scheduled Friday, Nov. 28, at 11 a.m. at Walmart, 4200 SE 82nd Ave, Portland.

For more information, go on line at <https://actionnetwork.org/events/oregon-walmart-workers-stand-up>.

Where's our report on the November 2014 election?

This issue of the NW Labor Press headed to the printer before the results of the Nov. 4 election were known. For a comprehensive look at what the election results mean for working people, visit us online at nwlaborpress.org/election-2014, or look for our Nov. 21 print issue.

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