

DOD's new submarine-hunting drone is union built in Oregon

By members of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 and IBEW Local 48 at Oregon Iron Works

"Sea Hunter," the first-ever Anti-Submarine Warfare Continuous Trail Unmanned Vessel (ACTUV), was built by members of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 and IBEW Local 48 at Oregon Iron Works in Clackamas.

The robotic surface vessel (i.e. drone) is scheduled to be christened April 7 at Caruthers Landing, 110 SE Caruthers Street, Portland. The Office of Naval Research and the Space and Naval Systems Warfare Command will then conduct sea-trials over the next 18 months to test its long-range tracking and self-driving functions.

The ship is a small part of the Pentagon's \$18 billion Third Offset strategy, which is devised to help the U.S. maintain superiority over rising military powers like China and Russia.

Jared Adams, chief of media relations for the Defense Department's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), told the Labor Press via email that he wasn't able to

provide an interview, but he did send photos and information about the vessel.

The 140-ton, 132-foot long ship is the largest unmanned surface vessel ever built. Designed to operate autonomously for 60 to 90 days straight, its primary objective is to track enemy submarines in shallow waters. In addition to locating spying submarines, it also could play a role in supplying other U.S. naval vehicles and running logistics in operations.

And because it is unmanned, the ACTUV (pronounced 'active') is relatively cheap to operate — between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per day, according to Sea Magazine. In contrast, a destroyer costs about \$700,000 per day to operate.

The prime contractor of the program is Leidos, a national security, health, and specialty engineering company. Leidos initially contracted with Christensen Shipyard, Ltd., a non-union yacht builder in Vancouver, Washington, to construct the hull, under the supervision of Oregon Iron Works. Christensen closed unexpectedly in February 2015, and the ACTUV was



Photos courtesy of DARPA

A certification and testing launch of ACTUV took place Jan. 29 at Vigor Industrial at the Portland shipyard on Swan Island. Vigor owns Oregon Iron Works.

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Local 516 Business Manager Phil Casciato confirmed that his members worked on the ACTUV, but other than that, he said he couldn't discuss anything about the project.



FERC denies application for Jordan Cove LNG facility

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has denied the application for the construction and operation of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminal and natural gas pipeline in Coos Bay, Oregon.

The proposed Jordan Cove Energy Project was supported by the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council and the Oregon AFL-CIO.

The \$6 billion facility was to be built under a project labor agreement (PLA) with building trades unions. Construction was anticipated to span 42 months, with an average workforce of 900, and a peak workforce of approximately 2,100.

The project consists of three primary components:

- An export facility located on the North Spit in Coos Bay to liquefy and transfer natural gas to maritime vessels.
- The Southern Dunes Power Plant to provide continuous power to the export facility.
- A 234-mile Pacific Connector pipeline to deliver natural gas to

the facility from North American production sources.

Specifically, the FERC said on March 11 that the public benefits of the pipeline did not outweigh the potential for adverse impacts on landowners and communities.

"Please know that this is not the end of the road, and that Jordan Cove LNG has plenty of options," said Boost Southwest Oregon, a coalition of organizations, politicians and individuals that support the privately-funded project.

"Clearly, we are extremely surprised and disappointed by the FERC decision," said Don Althoff, president and CEO of Veresen, the parent company of Jordan Cove LNG. "The FERC appears to be concerned that we have not yet demonstrated sufficient commercial support for the projects. We will continue to advance negotiations with customers to address this concern."

Althoff said a request for a re-hearing of the decision will be filed.

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