

# Bollinger Shipyards Launches Inaugural Shipfitter Boot Camp



*Partnership with Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, South Mississippi Planning & Development District and AccelerateMS will hire and train the next generation of Gulf Coast shipbuilders*

PASCAGOULA, MS. – (June 20, 2024) This week, Bollinger Shipyards (“Bollinger”) kicked off the inaugural Shipfitter Bootcamp, an innovative workforce development initiative alongside Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC), the South Mississippi Planning & Development District and AccelerateMS that will recruit, hire, and train the next generation of skilled shipbuilders, ensuring Bollinger’s workforce in Mississippi remains second to none in the shipbuilding industry. The Shipfitter Bootcamp is a critical step to establishing Bollinger Shipyards as a Center of Excellence in the design and construction of heavy polar icebreakers.

The Shipfitter Bootcamp is a comprehensive workforce development program designed to equip current and future Bollinger employees with the essential skills and knowledge required to take their careers to the next level. Through a blend of classroom instruction and hands-on experience, students will learn the essential functions that are required to become a Shipfitter in a 14-week program. The first 12 weeks will be taught at MGCCC and the final 2 weeks will be taught on-site at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding located in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Upon successful completion of the program each Shipfitter Trainee will be evaluated and their compensation will increase according to their skill level.

“We are thrilled to launch this exciting new program that will ensure Bollinger and the Mississippi Gulf Coast remain synonymous with best-in-class defense shipbuilding,” said Ben Bordelon, CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. “Our industry relies on the expertise and dedication of skilled shipfitters, and this bootcamp will provide invaluable training and opportunities for individuals looking to start or advance their careers at Bollinger. When we invest in our Mississippi workforce, we’re investing in and ensuring the future success of our industry.”

Participants in Bollinger’s Shipfitter Bootcamp will benefit from state-of-the-art facilities and resources at MGCCC, as well as becoming a Bollinger employee and earning an income while they learn. This opportunity not only provides an income for themselves and their families, but it also offers full benefits, paid holidays and vacation. The bootcamp is open to anyone who is interested in learning the skills necessary to become a Shipfitter.

“For over seven decades, Bollinger has exhibited excellence and innovation in the shipbuilding industry,” said Jonathan Woodward, Ph.D., Vice President for Teaching & Learning and Community Campus at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. “Bollinger Mississippi has consistently delivered the highest quality ships by accentuating efficiency and effectiveness – rising above external challenges. The paramount challenge in all sectors of the current economy is human capital. The Shipfitter Bootcamp illustrates a novel, practical, and attractive approach to meet this challenge head on.”

“Shipbuilding is a critical defense industry and a major contributor to the economic growth of the Mississippi Gulf Coast,” said Dr. Courtney Taylor, Executive Director of AccelerateMS. “These students have the opportunity to achieve success through training programs that few other fields can offer. We’re proud to support initiatives like these, which

equip a new generation of workers to drive the industry's evolution in our state.”