Bollinger Shipyards to Refit NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown

Side view of NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown underway. Image courtesy of Wade Blake/NOAA.
Release from Bollinger Shipyards

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At 274 feet, the Ronald H. Brown is the largest ship in the NOAA fleet

Refit will create 100 jobs at Bollinger Mississippi Repair

Work is scheduled to be completed by summer 2024

PASCAGOULA, Ms., – (May 2, 2023) – Bollinger Shipyards has begun fabrication at its newly acquired Mississippi repair facility, Bollinger Mississippi Repair, in preparation to refit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") Ship *Ronald H. Brown*, the largest ship in NOAA's fleet. The overhaul is expected to extend the life of the vessel, first launched in 1996, by an additional 15 years. Work is scheduled to be complete by summer 2024.

"Here on the Gulf Coast, we're intimately familiar with the breadth and importance of NOAA's mission, so we're proud to be entrusted to extend the service life of the *Ronald H. Brown*," said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. "The refit will be performed by our team at our newly acquired Bollinger Mississippi Repair facility, which is capable of executing projects from simple to the most complex, and doing so with the highest levels of quality, support and service in our industry. We look forward to supporting the NOAA mission with a vessel that will continue to serve as a platform for

cutting-edge research and exploration for many years to come.”

“NOAA Ship *Ronald H. Brown* is a global class vessel supporting scientific research to increase our understanding of climate and the ocean,” said NOAA Commissioned Corps Capt. Amanda Goeller, Commanding Officer of NOAA Marine Operations Center – Atlantic. “These repairs, system overhauls and modernization will allow the ship to continue operating for many years to come.”

The refit of the 27-year-old ship will be performed at Bollinger Mississippi Repair in Pascagoula, Mississippi, adding an additional 15 years to the original 30 year expectant service life of the vessel. During the refit modification, the propulsion system will largely be replaced with new more environmentally friendly diesel generators, renewal of the bow thruster and propulsion motors, new switchboards, control systems, and alarms. Additional ship systems that are scheduled to be upgraded include the potable water plants, sewage plant, uncontaminated seawater sampling system, HVAC systems, tank level indicators, navigational components, radar renewals, overhead lighting, and ballast and exterior fuel tank vent renewals. Bollinger will replace much of the ship’s piping, along with steel as identified by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS).

The vessel refit is scheduled to be completed and redelivered to NOAA in August 2024.

To perform the work, over 100 jobs will be created at

Bollinger Mississippi Repair, where the company will be looking to hire Pipefitters, Pipe Welders, Shipfitters, Ship Welders, Riggers, Scaffold Builders, and other production support positions. Additional positions need to be filled to continue repair work on semi-submersible rigs and marine vessels on drydock and at the wet dock.

The ship is named to honor the late Ronald H. Brown, the first African American to serve as Secretary of Commerce. Brown made it his mission to generate jobs and provide opportunities for ordinary Americans, and he was an ardent supporter of the NOAA fleet. He was killed in a plane crash on April 3, 1996, while on a trade mission to Bosnia.