

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Audrey Bandy
205-943-4737
abandy@atn.org

Mobile, AL. – The high cost of recruiting, hiring and training the thousands of skilled shipbuilding and repair professionals needed across the country each year, coupled with the need to increase productivity has left executives in the industry searching for answers.

In response to this need, industry leaders recently launched a national initiative called the Lighthouse Campaign. On December 6-7, 2011, the leadership team of the Lighthouse Campaign sent representatives to a meeting at NCCER headquarters in Alachua, Florida. The purpose of this meeting was to finalize the plans for the development of a national Maritime Workforce Development program and to establish the National Maritime Education Council to provide oversight of the program.

Increased ROI is one significant benefit of a formal workforce development system as is a larger pipeline of technically skilled workers. According to a recent survey, a similar program in the construction industry developed by NCCER resulted in double-digit improvements in terms of productivity, reductions in turnover costs, absenteeism, injuries and rework.

NCCER was selected as the development partner because it has developed training and assessments in over 60 craft areas and has over 4,000 training locations in the U.S. for the construction and maintenance industries. NCCER's curricula and assessments have portable, nationally-recognized credentials that include transcripts, certificates and wallet cards tracked through NCCER's National Registry. Their experience and resources will help give maritime craft professionals the credentials they deserve and ensure that individuals coming into the industry get the training needed to succeed.

Mike Torrech, president of American Maritime Holdings, in speaking of the importance of the national program stated, "This is the best approach to 'total' workforce development that I've seen in my 30 plus years in the business."

The Lighthouse Campaign, launched officially at the Shipbuilders Council of America's fall meeting October 26, 2011, in Biloxi, Mississippi, is a drive to raise funds for the development of standardized training curriculum and assessments that will be the foundation of the national program. The drive targets shipbuilding and repair and offshore marine companies, skilled trade providers, regional and national trade associations, and equipment manufacturers, as the major investors.

To date, the following companies and organizations have provided formal commitments or contributions to the campaign: Alaska Ship and Drydock, American Maritime Holdings, Bollinger Shipyards, Gulf States Shipbuilders Consortium (GSSC), Ingalls Shipbuilding, Signal International, Quality Shipyard, Virginia Ship Repair, VT Halter Marine, and WESCO Gas & Welding Supply.

The National Maritime Council will meet March 28-29, 2012, in Mobile, Alabama in conjunction with the GSSC's 2012 annual meeting. At that time, the National Maritime Council interim board, comprised of initial contributors to the Lighthouse Campaign, will draft bylaws, establish committees and formalize

the group's structure. The interim board will provide oversight until a permanent board is installed at the group's fall meeting.

According to John Lotshaw, director of Workforce Training and Development at Ingalls Shipbuilding, "This training initiative, designed for the maritime industry, is long overdue. It can provide the trained personnel resources to allow our industry to cut costs and be more competitive. The time is now for maritime industry to invest in their future."



About NCCER — *NCCER is a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) education foundation created by the construction industry to develop standardized curriculum with portable credentials and to help address the skilled construction workforce shortage. NCCER is recognized by the industry as the standard for developing the construction and maintenance craft professional. For more information, visit <http://www.nccer.org> or contact NCCER customer service at 888.622.3720.*



About the Lighthouse Campaign - The mission of the campaign is to fund the development of and establish a foundation for a formal workforce development system for the maritime industry by developing standardized curriculum beginning with three crafts – Welding, Pipefitting and Electrical and Maritime Core Curriculum; and to establish a means to sustain and expand the system to include all shipbuilding and repair production crafts. Visit gship.org/lighthouse or contact Dr. Audrey Bandy at 205-943-4737 to find out more about the campaign.