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## TY Offshore hiring 50 more employees to build barges

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MARY PEREZ/SUN HERALD Champagne splashes Tuesday as Cindy Hull christens an oil barge built for Florida Marine Transports. Her brothers John, left, and Dennis look on. The barge was built at TY Offshore in Gulfport.

Picasa

By MARY PEREZ — [meperez@sunherald.com](mailto:meperez@sunherald.com)

GULFPORT -- The first of 10 barges was christened and launched Tuesday at TY Offshore in Gulfport and company officials said they need more workers to keep pace.

"We're looking to hire at least 50 welders and shipfitters right now," said John Dane III, TY Offshore president.

The next barge for Florida Marine Transporters is already under construction and will be ready in six weeks. Then the barges will be built on a four-week schedule, said Dane.

Beyond the initial order of 10 barges, Florida Marine has an option to buy 18 more.

"We intend to be building these barges for a number of years," said Dane.

Each barge costs more than \$3 million, said Dennis Pasentine, owner of Florida Marine in Mandeville, La.

They are 297 feet long and 54 feet wide and carry 30,000 barrels of crude oil, or about 1.3 million gallons in a double skin steel hull.

His daughter, Cindy Pasentine Hull, and sons, Dennis J. and John, work with him in the business and christened the barge.

After Hull broke the champagne bottle, the barge was lowered for hydro testing. It could get Coast Guard approval and be under way by Friday.

Pasentine said his company operates 200 tank barges and 150 hopper barges, traveling on the Intercoastal Canal from Florida to Texas and on the Mississippi River system from Chicago to New Orleans and Texas.

"We really compete against the pipeline and go where the pipeline doesn't go," he said.

Billy Smith, TY Offshore vice president and one of the owners, said also under construction are patrol boats going to Kuwait, four supply boats and four yachts, one of which is the largest the company has ever built.

A liquefied natural gas boat, the first of its kind in the United States, will burn LNG, not just carry it.

"Everything about the boat is being designed with environmental considerations," he said.

The barge launched Tuesday was lowered into the water. Smith said the company is readying a new launch area in preparation for building 100-by-400-foot barges he said would be fabricated under cover in the 10-acre shop, brought to the waterfront in three sections, assembled and side launched.

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