

# Austal Lays Keel of Future LCS USS Kingsville



Ship sponsor Katherine Kline, center, welded her initials onto a USS Kingsville keel plate with the assistance of Austal A-class welder Joseph Bennett Jr., to the right of Kline. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA celebrated the keel laying of the future littoral combat ship USS Kingsville (LCS 36) at its ship manufacturing facility on Feb. 23, the company said in a release.

Kingsville will be an Independence-variant LCS, one of 18 the Navy has contracted Austal to build. The ship is the first U.S. Navy ship named for the city of Kingsville in Texas.

A keel laying ceremony is the formal recognition of the start of a ship's construction. At Austal USA, the keel laying symbolically recognizes module erection in final assembly and the ceremonial beginning of a ship.

The ship's sponsor is Katherine Kline, a member of the sixth generation of the King Ranch family, descendants of Capt. Richard King who founded the King Ranch located in Kingsville, Texas, in 1853. Naval Air Station Kingsville, located three miles from Kingsville, was founded in 1942 and continues a special relationship with the King Ranch.

As the keel authenticator, Kline welded her initials onto an aluminum keel plate with the assistance of Austal USA A-class welder, Joseph Bennett Jr.