

Bollinger Shipyards Opens Advanced Workforce Training Center to Expand America's Maritime Industrial Base



GULFPORT, Miss. – Bollinger Shipyards today announced the opening of a new, 7,200-square-foot Workforce Training Center located at its Gulfport, Mississippi facility. Developed in partnership with the Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) Program Office and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, the facility will expand hands-on skilled trades training to help meet growing national demand for shipbuilders supporting America's defense and maritime readiness priorities.

"This Training Center is a testament to Bollinger's commitment to investing in the next generation of skilled maritime workers," said Ben Bordelon, president and CEO of Bollinger

Shipyards. “By partnering with the Submarine Industrial Base Program Office and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, we are creating a direct pipeline of qualified talent that will strengthen not just our operations in Gulfport, but the broader national shipbuilding workforce. We are proud to bring this resource to our Gulf Coast community.”

The Training Center opening comes as the U.S. maritime sector faces increasing pressure to expand shipbuilding capacity and strengthen the skilled labor pipeline needed to support naval modernization efforts and long-term industrial base resilience. The training center will offer intensive bootcamp-style programs in marine electrical, electronics, and sheet metal mechanics, reinforcing the Gulf Coast region’s role as a critical hub for American shipbuilding and defense manufacturing. Classes are scheduled to begin Fall 2026, providing students with industry-recognized, hands-on training that directly prepares them for careers in the maritime industry.

The Gulfport training center builds on Bollinger’s growing and proven bootcamp program, launched in 2024. Since inception, Bollinger’s fourteen-week Shipfitter, Pipefitter and Pipewelder apprenticeship bootcamps have embedded safety training into workforce development from day one, and the results speak for themselves. In less than 19 months, the program attracted more than 4,000 applicants from 22 states, demonstrating that national demand for quality maritime careers is real, growing, and accelerating.

Application volume has grown in every successive bootcamp cohort, rising approximately 700% from Bootcamp 1 to Bootcamp 6, with the most recent cohort drawing roughly 1,200 applicants alone, a 53% jump over the prior class. Graduation rates have climbed in parallel: from 61% in Bootcamp 1 to 80% in the most recent specialty cohort, with an overall 2025 graduation rate of 75%. Critically, approximately 70% of graduates have remained at Bollinger, validating the program’s

ability to convert training investment into long-term workforce retention.