

Keel Laid for Future USNS Muscogee Creek Nation



By Team Ships Public Affairs, March 21, 2024

HOUMA, La. – A keel laying ceremony for the future USNS Muscogee Creek Nation (T-ATS 10), the fifth ship of the Navy's Navajo class of Towing, Salvage, and Rescue vessels was held at Bollinger Houma Shipyards, Mar. 20.

Sponsors Geri Wisner, Attorney General of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Nicole Foster, wife of Rear Admiral Calvin Foster; and Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill attended to authenticate the keel. Members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation were also in attendance.

The keel laying ceremony formally marks the start of a ship's life and the joining of the ship's modular components. The keel serves as the symbolic backbone of the ship.

During the ceremony, the keel authenticators watched a welder etch their initials into the keel plate and declared it to be "truly and fairly laid."

"We are honored to have representatives of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation here to celebrate this milestone with us," said Program Executive Office, Ships Auxiliary and Special Mission Ships Program Manager, John Lighthammer. "The ship is critical to the operations of our fleet. Today's ceremony is a reminder of the pride and determination of the Muscogee people it is named to honor."

The Navajo class of ships will provide ocean-going tug, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support Fleet operations. The 10 ships are intended to provide continuity of capability following on after the Powhatan and Safeguard classes of vessels, which are nearing the end of their expected service lives.

Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems. The platform will be 263 feet long, have a beam of 59 feet, and will be able to carry a load of nearly 2,000 tons.

In addition to the future USNS Muscogee Creek Nation (T-ATS 10), Bollinger Houma Shipyards is in the process of constructing the future USNS Navajo (T-ATS 6), USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7), USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek (T-ATS 8) and USNS Lenni Lenape (T-ATS 9).

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.