

LCS Santa Barbara Christened



Ship sponsor Lolita Zinke christens the future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32). *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA hosted the christening ceremony for the future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32) Independence-variant littoral combat ship at the company's Gulf Coast shipyard Oct. 16, the company said in a release. Ship sponsor Lolita Zinke performed the ceremonial bottle break over the bow of the Santa Barbara, the 16th LCS designed and constructed by Austal USA and the third U.S. Navy ship to be named after the California coast city.

Zinke, wife of former U.S. member of Congress and former U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, was selected by then-Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer to be the ship sponsor of the future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32). Zinke was born and raised in Santa Barbara.

"I could never have imagined I would be standing here today ready to christen a Navy ship," Zinke said, "let alone one named after my home town."

Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh welcomed the official party and community members and employees who attended the ceremony.

"I am proud to represent the Austal shipbuilding team today as we commemorate a significant milestone in the life of this incredible warship," said Murdaugh. "Our talented team of shipbuilders is proud to provide our Navy with an extraordinarily capable vessel that will honor the great city of Santa Barbara as she becomes a vital part of the U.S. naval fleet protecting our Nation."

Santa Barbara (LCS 32) is the 16th of 19 small surface combatants Austal USA is building for the U.S. Navy. Five

littoral combat ships are under various stages of construction. Austal USA is also constructing two Expeditionary Fast Transport ships for the U.S. Navy with another beginning construction next month, and the company also was recently awarded a contract to build two steel Navajo-class Towing, Salvage and Rescue ships.