

Navy Secretary Names Newest Towing, Salvage, Rescue Ship



An artist rendering of the future USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek. U.S. Navy

WASHINGTON

– Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer has announced that the newest towing, salvage and rescue ship (T-ATS 8) will be named Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek in honor of the history, service and contributions of the Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan, Spencer’s public affairs office said July 26.

The Saginaw Chippewa people are made up of Saginaw, Black River and Swan Creek bands. Ojibwe is also referred to as Chippewa and Anishinabek means “original people.”

“I am deeply honored to announce that the history of the Saginaw Chippewa people will once again be part of Navy and Marine Corps history,” Spencer said. “The future USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek honors the original people of modern-day Michigan, with their original name, and will carry the proud Ojibwe legacy for decades to come.”

This is the first ship to bear the name Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek, and the fifth U.S.

ship to be named in honor of the Saginaw Chippewa people.

“It’s a great honor to have the name and language of our people on a Navy ship,” said Ronald Ekdahl, chief of the Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan. “We hold our veterans in high regard, and we have a proud tradition of having many of our men and women provide service to our country. ‘Chi Miigwetch’ (thank you) to the U.S. Navy for recognizing the culture in such a distinct way.”

Gulf

Island Shipyards was awarded a \$64.8 million contract option for the detail design and construction of the new ship, which will be based on existing commercial towing offshore vessel designs and will replace the current T-ATF 166 and T-ARS 50 class ships in service with the U.S. Military Sealift Command. The future USNS Cherokee Nation is the second ship in the new class of towing, salvage and rescue Ships and will be designated T-ATS 7.

The

contract includes options for potentially six additional vessels, and each additional ship will be named in honor of prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

The T-ATS will serve as

open ocean towing vessels and will support salvage operations and submarine rescue missions. The ship will be built at the company’s shipyard in Houma,

Louisiana, and is expected to be completed in July 2021.