Polar Security Cutter Contract Awarded to Replace Aging Icebreakers



Members of the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star participate in various activities on the ice about 13 miles from McMurdo Station, Antarctica, Jan. 26, 2018. Stationed aboard the only U.S. heavy ice breaker, the crew is able to set foot in places few people ever experience. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Fireman John Pelzel.

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard and Navy have awarded VT Halter Marine Inc. of Pascagoula, Mississippi, a contract for the detail, design and construction of the Coast Guard's first polar security cutter (PSC), which will replace the nation's aging fleet of icebreakers.

The award is valued at $745.9 million and supports nonrecurring engineering and detail design of the PSC class as well as procurement of long lead-time materials and construction of the first ship, an April 23 Coast Guard release said.

The fixed price incentive (firm) contract also includes options for construction of two additional PSCs. If all options are exercised, the total contract value is $1.9 billion. PSCs support a range of Coast Guard missions such as search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, environmental response and national defense.

"Against the backdrop of 'Great Power Competition,' the [PSC] is key to our nation's presence in the polar regions," Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz said. "With the strong support of both the Trump administration and the United States Congress, this contract award marks an important step towards building the nation's full complement of six polar icebreakers

to meet the unique mission demands that have emerged from increased commerce, tourism, research, and international activities in the Arctic and Antarctic.”

The Naval Sea Systems Command is the lead contracting authority.

“This contract award reflects the great benefit achieved by integrating the incredible talents of Coast Guard and Navy acquisition and shipbuilding professionals to deliver best value at speed,” said James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

“Working with our industry partners, the team identified approximately $300 million in cost avoidances and accelerated the schedule for delivery of this capability to the nation by almost three years. This reflects the urgency in which we are operating to ensure we deliver capabilities necessary to support the Coast Guard and the nation’s missions in the polar regions.”

Construction on the first PSC is planned to begin in 2021 with delivery planned for 2024. However, the contract includes financial incentives for earlier delivery.