

SECNAV Del Toro Attends USNS Lansing Keel Laying at Austal Shipyard



Artist rendering of the future USNS Lansing (EPF 16). (Austal USA)

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MOBILE, Ala. (Sept. 6, 2024) – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro attended the keel laying ceremony for USNS Lansing (EPF 16) alongside ship sponsor Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in Mobile, Alabama, Sept. 6, 2024.

The Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) shipbuilding program provides high speed, shallow draft transportation capability to support the intra-theater maneuver of personnel, supplies and equipment for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Army.

“Our EPFs are force multipliers for our combat logistics fleet,” said Secretary Del Toro. “They allow for quicker responses to crises, strengthen our ability to conduct humanitarian and disaster relief operations, and provide logistical support for special forces missions.”

Lansing will be manned by dedicated crews, comprised of both civilian mariners from the Military Sealift Command and embarked military personnel, whose expertise and teamwork will ensure the ship operates at peak efficiency, delivering critical resources and services exactly when and where they’re needed.

The keel laying represents the success and importance of our Maritime Statecraft initiative, which encompasses a national, whole-of-government effort to restore the comprehensive maritime power of our nation.

“Michigan has a world-class skilled workforce and is a leader in developing the techno-industrial workforce we need to build and assemble the ships, munitions, parts, and pieces our Navy, Marine Corps, and indeed our nation need to promote peace around the world,” said Del Toro. “Austal, building this ship, represents another key line of effort under our new, national approach to Maritime Statecraft—a foreign shipbuilder establishing a U.S. subsidiary, investing in America, and partnering with us to build American ships.”

USNS Lansing is the first ship named in honor of Michigan’s capital city, Lansing. A previous USS Lansing (DE 388) was named for Aviation Machinist Mate First Class William Henry Lansing and decommissioned in 1965.

Bridging the gap between low-speed sealift and high-speed airlift, EPFs transport personnel, equipment and supplies over operational distances with access to littoral offload points including austere, minor and degraded ports in support of the

Global War on Terrorism/Theater Security Cooperation Program, Intra-theater Operational/Littoral Maneuver and Sustainment and Seabasing. EPFs enable the rapid projection, agile maneuver and sustainment of modular, tailored forces in response to a wide range of military and civilian contingencies such as Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.

Secretary Del Toro made the announcement alongside Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Mayor Andy Schor of Lansing, Michigan, July 22, in addition to announcing the Michigan Maritime Manufacturing (M-3) initiative.

Austal USA, located in Mobile, Alabama, was realized in 1999 for the purpose of reaching the ever increasing commercial and defense aluminum vessel market in the United States. Our shipbuilding facility occupies 164 acres on the eastern shore of the Mobile River and is strategically positioned at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico.