

D I N G S

A U C T I O N

Old Beth Steel Shipyard Back In Operation

The Bethlehem Steel Sparrows Point Shipyard, once a mainstay of Baltimore industry, will rise again. The failing yard was sold to Baltimore Marine Industries in 1997 for \$16 million. Six years later, on November 5, it went on the auction block. Dr. Robert Willis, of Barletta Willis Investments, a Boston LLC formed to purchase shipyard assets, won the bid at \$11.25 million at a live auction held at the yard.

The 250-acre property includes a mile of waterfront, a VLCC-capable drydock, a Panamax floating dock, and all the shipyard buildings and tools.

Although initially there was uncertainty about the future of the 100-year-old yard, the auction was ultimately a success.

“In order to maximize the return to the estate and in order to expose this valuable entity to the world of buyers, we have adopted [a flexible] approach” to selling the property, said David S. Fox, CEO of Michael Fox International, the North American division of GoIndustry.

The auction was broadcast live on the Internet. Barletta Willis’ bid was accepted and the scores of bidders who had come anticipating a piecemeal auction of the equipment left empty-handed. “We all hoped that the yard would go to someone who would operate it and we accomplished that today,” said Fox.

“We plan on using this facility for multiple maritime uses,” said Dr. Willis. He hopes to have the yard running by the second quarter of 2004. With an eye to what he terms “pipeline management,” Bartletta Willis will go after repair work, light ship construction, OPA 90 tank barge construction, and power barge construction.

The yard at one time employed 775. When it sought protection under Chapter 11, there were 200 employees left. Finally, a skeleton crew of six was left to prepare for the auction. Willis said he hopes to return many of the displaced workers to the yard.

“The industrial base is something we need to preserve in this country, especially on the East Coast,” said Willis. He added that his company is looking forward to becoming part of the Port of Baltimore community. “We recognize that this property doesn’t float in its own orbit; it is part of the fabric of Baltimore.” 🌐

~ Kathy Bergren Smith



Below, left to right: Chief Mate Mike Flanagan; Captain Steve Kayser; Cindy Burman, Manager machinery, railcars and project business, MPA; Chief Engineer J.P. Parenteau.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL MCALLEN

M A I D E N V O Y A G E

Maiden Voyage Industrial Challenger

Intermarine’s heavy-lift, box-hold multipurpose motor vessel *Industrial Challenger* called on a Maiden Voyage to Baltimore recently to discharge shell rail cars from Brazil.

The U.S.-flagged ship was built in 2000 and is enrolled in the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) program sponsored by the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), and the Department of Defense’s Sealift Readiness Program.

She is 119.8 meters long, 20 meters wide, and has a DWT of 8,000 MT. Her service speed is 16.5 knots. She has 80 reefer plugs and can hold 506 20-foot containers. 🌐