



GREAT LAKES BOAT BUILDING SCHOOL

A Marine Trades Institution

**For Immediate
Release**
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Great Lakes Boat Building School Breaks Ground on \$3.8 million Skills Training Center

Cedarville, Michigan - After much anticipation, the Board of Directors and leadership of Great Lakes Boat Building School (GLBBS) hosted a ceremonial groundbreaking of its \$3.8 million Marine Technology Center on Saturday, October 1, 2022 on campus in Cedarville, Michigan.

Great Lakes Boat Building School Board Chairman Joe Reid introduced President Nikki Storey, who presided over the event with some remarks and introduced the special guests who attended to celebrate a monumental day in the history of the school.

"Today, we celebrate what many thought was an insurmountable challenge we faced several years ago ~ expand facilities to enroll more students and enhance programming," said Storey. "Not only did we secure a \$2.7 million EDA grant, a Mass Timber Grant with Michigan State University, we also had to raise our \$1.1 million match through a privately funded capital campaign. Thank you to those who have participated. We are almost to the finish line."

Construction for the 10,000 square foot marine skilled trades training facility will commence in the second quarter of 2023. This expansion of the GLBBS instructional infrastructure is in direct response to the needs of the marine industry. The structure will facilitate instruction with hands-on skills training in marine service and marine electronics technologies. The new Marine Electronic Technology program will be the first of its kind in the nation.

The project also includes new docking and waterfront improvements along with interior student life improvements like a student commons area.

Gary McDowell, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development provided a greeting from Governor Gretchen Whitmer and expressed that he was pleased the school was expanding and embracing the long heritage of wooden boats in the Les Cheneaux Islands.

Next, State Representative John Damoose spoke about the notoriety of GLBBS in Lansing and around the Great Lakes. Since the school is so well-received by both sides of the aisle, he believes there are opportunities for bipartisan cooperation in advancing the institution's mission.

Jay Gage, U.P. Regional Manager for US Senator Debbie Stabenow spoke about the positive momentum at GLBBS. He introduced a video by the Senator referencing the importance of the marine industry's impact on Michigan's and the Great Lakes region's economy, as well as how GLBBS is playing a key role by being a leader in workforce development for the industry.

Steve Van Dam, the founder of Van Dam Custom Boats in Boyne City and the Chairman of the GLBBS Program Advisory Board addressed the audience about dire shortage of qualified skilled tradespeople like the school's graduates. Following Van Dam's comments, Mackinac County Commissioner Mike Patrick and Clark Township Supervisor Mark Clymer touched on the importance of the school to this area.

At the end of the program, the group proceeded to the future building site for the ceremonial first shoveling to break ground.

GLBBS continues to produce qualified students from their Comprehensive Career Boat Building Program and the Marine Service Technology Program (MST), in partnership with Mercury Marine University, with a consistent 100% placement rate. The School is continuing to address the shortage of skilled trades and craftspeople in the marine industry following graduation. For prospective student enrollment information go to www.admissions@glbbs.org or call 906.484.1081.

Information about the "Come Aboard...Launch Careers" capital campaign and "Fill in the Planks" program is available by contacting Tom Coates, Director of Development at thomas.coates@glbbs.edu or <https://glbbs.edu/support/> also by calling 906.484.1081.

Great Lakes Boat Building School is a non-profit organization recognized as a charitable organization and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges.



Digging In - Special guests dig in during a ceremonial Groundbreaking Event at Great Lakes Boat Building School, Saturday, October 1, 2022. Left to right are Matt Edmondson, GLBBS lead instructor; Jason Dunn, Capital Campaign Co-Chair; Steve Van Dam, Van Dam Custom Boats; Nick Van Nocker, Mercury Marine; Brad Butcher, Sidock Group; Nikki Storey, GLBBS President; Joe Reid, GLBBS Board Chair; Mike Patrick, Mackinac County Commissioner; John Damoose, Michigan State Representative; Jay Gage, Senator Stabenow's UP Regional Manager; Gary McDowell, State of Michigan Director - Director of Agriculture & Rural Development and Mark Clymer, Clark Township Supervisor.



Presidential Address - Nikki Storey, President ~ Great Lakes Boat Building School addresses the audience prior to a ceremonial Groundbreaking on a \$3.8 million, 10,000 sq. ft Marine Technology Center on the Cedarville, MI campus.