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GREAT LAKES TOWING INTRODUCES FIRST OF ITS "HANDY-SIZE" TUGBOATS

Completing another step in a long-term strategy for expansion of its shipyard and modernization of its own tug fleet, Great Lakes Towing (GLT) has delivered the first of its "handy-size" tugboats suitable for ship-assist and general utility work around the country. GLT plans to build a number of these tugs, in different power and propulsion configurations, on speculation.

The first tug, named *Handy-One*, is a 2,800-hp twin-screw workboat that,

according to its builder, could be a moderately priced choice for those operating in the marine construction trades or for those providing ship-assist and general towing services in smaller ports where 2,800 is still considered a lot of horses.

In March, *Handy-One* underwent sea trials in Cleveland after construction at GLT's newly revitalized shipyard on the Cuyahoga River. A second, near-identical boat will follow later this year, while the third in this new series will be modified

slightly for z-drive propulsion for delivery in mid-2009. The 74-foot hulls were designed by Jensen Maritime Consultants to work with either form of propulsion and a range of horsepower up to 3,200. The company is using Cummins power for the first few hulls.

"Our plan is to keep popping out these tugs until we feel we have built enough of them," said Joe Starck, vice president of engineering for this century-old company that has, for decades, operated the largest

Handy-One is the first new tug built by the Great Lakes Towing shipyard in many years. The 2,800-hp tug, built on speculation, is a twin-screw vessel with conventional propulsion, while others to follow could be either of the same configuration or set up for z-drive propulsion. The company may use some of the tugs in its own Great Lakes fleet, depending on how they sell within the tugboat community.



fleet of tugs on the Great Lakes and also one of the largest in the country. GLT typically has close to 50 tugboats on its roster, including four z-drive tractors out on charter, three tugs in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and now the first handy tug.

It remains to be seen whether GLT will be able to sell or charter its first few handy tugs as it hopes. If not, however, the company has a strong need for any number of such vessels in its own operations on the lakes. "If a few of them go to work for our fleet here on the lakes, that's perfectly okay with us," said Starck. "*Handy-One* will probably stay here in Cleveland, close to home, as she will be used as the showboat for future sales." The company usually has three or four tugs based in Cleveland, according to Starck.

The new tug, with a 30-foot beam and an 11-foot draft, is powered by a pair of Cummins QSK 38 diesels, each generating 1,400 hp at 1,800 rpm, with Twin Disc MG 540 reduction/reverse gears.

The 72-inch four-blade Rice propellers are contained in stainless steel lined CNF nozzles, each with a pair of rudders located immediately behind. The nozzles and rudders are protected by substantial struts. This power combination, one of many available to prospective buyers, is designed to give the tug a 12-knot light running speed with 36 tons of forward bollard pull. A hydraulic steering system using Kobelt controls was manufactured by Gulf Coast Air and Hydraulics. All four rudders are linked for simultaneous turning. The first tug gets its auxiliary power from a pair of 65-kw Cummins Onan generators, one of which is set up to occasionally power the Barnes fire pump.

Handy-One is equipped with a hydraulic towing winch on its aft deck, provided by JonRie Intertech of Manahawkin, N.J. JonRie is also the provider of a bow-mounted hawser winch as an option on all vessels. Jeff Stabler is senior captain on *Handy-One*, which is the first new vessel built by

GLT's own shipyard in many years.

The theory behind these new tugs is that they are small and of relatively low horsepower, and thus, perhaps, is their appeal.

"What we are doing is offering a new tug that goes against the trend of constantly increasing horsepower," said Ron Rasmus, GLT president for 25 years. "We think there is a market for this type of midrange, multipurpose tug and that many small operators can't get the attention of shipyards that can take their pick of projects for much larger and more expensive vessels."

Rasmus estimated that his new tugs could sell for \$3 million to \$4 million, considerably less than what companies are paying for higher profile, tractor-style tugs. They are being marketed as a new type of tugboat that leaves a smaller environmental footprint, goes easy on fuel burn and avoids many of the regulatory requirements that force large tugboat operators to hire administrators

with words like safety and compliance and training on their business cards.

With their small size and gross tonnage of less than 100, these tugs can be operated by a two-person crew, only one of which — the captain — needs to be a licensed operator, according to Rasmus.

With its new 11,000-square-foot fabrication building attached to its new headquarters office building on the Cuyahoga,

GLT has the capability of turning out new tugs in considerable numbers should the market respond with orders. This company is no stranger to building tugs on speculation. Its fleet of five z-drive tractors built in the 1990s (Z-One to Z-Five) has been successful, and it hopes to build upon that track record with a long string of handy tugs.

GLT has been operating on the lakes

since 1899, according to its own written history, and its little green and red tugs, most named after states with a notable white G affixed to the stack, are today found in just about every port. There were times when GLT enjoyed almost exclusive market share in many Great Lakes ports, a situation that occasionally led to legal troubles. The classic image of Great Lakes Towing vessels is a tiny tug stationed heroically at the bow or stern of a big lakes bulker, assisting it, perhaps single-handedly, in or out of a berth or around a tight turn in a river. Since these tugs seemingly last forever — many of them are single screw and 50 to 100 years old or more — none of that is about to change. But with its recreated Cleveland shipyard, the company is in a position to begin turning out replacement or supplementary tugs to shore up its existing fleet and sell some to responding tug operators as well.

HANDY-ONE

SPECIFICATIONS

Owner/Operator	Great Lakes Towing
Contact	Ron Rasmus, president
Dimensions	74 X 30 X 11, less than 100 gross tons
Naval Architect	Jensen Maritime Consultants, Seattle, Wash.
Builder	Great Lakes Shipyard Cleveland, Ohio

ENGINES (2)

- ◆ Cummins QSK 38 diesels
- ◆ 1,400-hp each at 1,800 rpm
- ◆ Cummins Onan 65-kw elec. generators

PROPULSION

- ◆ Twin-screw nozzles and twin rudders
- ◆ Twin Disc MG 540 reduction/reversing gears
- ◆ Rice Aqualoy 72-inch four-blade propellers
- ◆ CNF stainless steel-lined nozzles
- ◆ 36 tons forward bollard pull
- ◆ 12 knots light running speed

OTHER SPECIFICATIONS

- ◆ Kobelt steering controls
- ◆ Gulf Coast Air and Hydraulics steering system
- ◆ Duramax main engine cooling system

- ◆ Heli-Sep oil-water separator
- ◆ Barnes fire pump
- ◆ JonRie Intertech Series 500 aft towing winch
- ◆ Owens Kleen Tank MSD system
- ◆ Techsol monitoring & alarm system

WHEELHOUSE EQUIPMENT

- ◆ Furuno radars
- ◆ NavTech GPS plotting system
- ◆ Simrad autopilot
- ◆ Furuno satellite compass
- ◆ Icom VHF radios

TANK CAPACITIES

- ◆ Fuel: 25,000 gallons
- ◆ Water: 1,800 gallons

TYPE & AREA OF OPERATION

- ◆ Ship assist & general towing, Great Lakes
- ◆ Offered for sale or charter in Cleveland, Ohio