

Title:

A Popularity Wave For Careers At Sea

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Summary:

Opportunity is high at sea for those seeking employment, and there are a number of reasons for this.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Opportunity is high at sea for those seeking employment, and there are a number of reasons for this.

With the expansion of the Maritime Security Program (MSP), the MSP fleet is growing from 47 to 60 ships. There is also growth in the U.S.-flag cruise ship industry. Because there are so many different types of vessels, there is a range of choices that is unmatched. That means as employees working under contracts between maritime companies and the Seafarers International Union, merchant mariners have the opportunity to sail on a wide variety of vessels, including deep-sea cargo vessels and military support ships, where mariners continue to support U.S. troops in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Also in the opportunity mix are Great Lakes vessels, cable ships, tugboats and passenger ferries.

The place for many American men and women who set their sights on setting sail is the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education. The state-of-the-art school, affiliated with the Seafarers International Union, offers the most U.S. Coast Guard-approved courses of any maritime school in the nation-from entry level to license preparation to academic support.

In addition to academic support, the school offers GED and college degree programs. In fact, many of the maritime classes can be used for college credits.

Since its opening in 1967, approximately 145,000 students have trained there. The apprentice program blends hands-on training with classroom instruction. It consists of three phases, including 90 days aboard a U.S.-flag ship. That

particular phase has helped boost the industry's retention rate-approximately 75 percent of students who complete the entire program are still sailing four years later.

At any given time there are 100 trainees at the school-some in Phase 1, others in Phase 3 (Phase 2 is at sea).

Based in Piney Point, Md., the school's training tools include bridge and engine simulators, the Joseph Sacco Fire Fighting and Safety School and a culinary lab.