



**Press Release**  
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## **Eleven Local Marine Service Technicians Begin the Inaugural Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship**

Bellingham, WA – Nov. 7, 2022 – Responding to the Whatcom County maritime sector’s needs for workers to fill the increased demand for skilled technicians, the Whatcom Working Waterfront Foundation responds with an exciting new training program.

The Foundation, an affiliate of the Working Waterfront Coalition of Whatcom County, proudly announces the launch of the inaugural comprehensive professional non-union training program – **the Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship**. In celebration of the [8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Apprenticeship Week](#), the **Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship** welcomes all apprentices.

Provisionally approved by the [Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council](#) in 2021, the Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship educates professional **Marine Service Technicians**, a United States Department of Labor certified occupation.

Beginning with eleven apprentices (*dubbed “Ocean’s Eleven”*), these apprentices work during the day at their regular place of work and then attend a one-night/week class and one/Saturday/month workshop for eight months. Working towards Journey-level Certification as professional **Marine Service Technicians**, these inaugural eleven apprentices began Level One of this four-year program on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2022. The evening and weekend classes/workshops run through April 2023. This group of apprentices will move to Level Two in Fall 2023 and will be joined by a new cohort of apprentices entering Level One with corresponding growth for the full four years. The program provides foundational learning in the whole boat with the opportunity to specialize in years three and four in up to six marine service specialty areas via the advanced competency program.

The students participate in “Related Supplemental Instruction” (RSI) in twelve subject areas including general marine technology and safety; gasoline and diesel engine repair; repair of wooden/fiberglass metal and composite hulls; installation and repair of electrical systems and electronic navigational equipment; repair/maintenance of shaft and propellers; paint and finish applications; operations/maintenance of steering, throttle, remote fuel and sanitation systems; master sailboat rigging techniques; practice rules and regulations of maritime law; and more. Each unit is taught by Industry/Subject Matter Experts.

The classroom-based supplemental component (RSI) is adapted from a similar training program in British Columbia. The [Quadrant Marine Services Institute in B.C.](#), operating for 27 years, graduates over 40 apprentices each year in three training sites, ensuring a trained and competent workforce serving the needs of the skilled marine trades and recreational/commercial boat sector.

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With a thriving maritime sector in Whatcom County (over 6,000 jobs representing 7% of our region's workforce), marine trades businesses are in desperate need of trained workers. From diesel engine repair to boat building/repair to fitting and rigging, this comprehensive, competency-based education/training program will provide Whatcom and Skagit County businesses with the trained workers needed to maintain and grow this booming sector.

Two Whatcom County companies, [Northwest Diesel Power](#) and [NW Explorations](#), have worked diligently with Gary Peterson (Washington State Labor & Industries Apprentice Consultant) and Deborah Granger (Working Waterfront Foundation) to develop the many required components for the State of Washington Registered Apprenticeship program. [Washington Sea Grant](#) and [Career Connect Washington](#), have provided key financial support in developing this important educational program. Private donations and tuition for each apprentice also provide financial support.

“This Marine Service Technician Apprenticeship offers waterfront businesses the clear opportunity to hire and train workers in a competency-based progression. With this program, new hires are able to contribute fully to a company's bottom line much sooner”, says Matt Hardin, CEO/Owner of NW Diesel Power, Inc.

The Working Waterfront Foundation and members of the Committee (NW Explorations and NW Diesel Power), following the state provisional approval of the Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship, are proceeding full-steam ahead with the many steps required to launch this program.

Positioned on the shores of the Salish Sea, our region is blessed with abundant marine waters. Building, repairing, and maintaining vessels to ply these waters requires highly-skilled and competent workers to ensure safe and successful navigation and environmental stewardship of our marine waters. Programs such as the newly-approved Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship program, producing trained competent Marine Service Technicians, ensures that our region continues as a hub of skilled marine service technicians.



Cohort of Level One apprentices receive fire suppression training.

**About the Whatcom Working Waterfront Foundation** - A 501c-3 tax-exempt organization, the Foundation supports programs (education/training, scholarships, maritime heritage, etc.) to enhance the maritime sector of Whatcom County.

**About the [Working Waterfront Coalition of Whatcom County](#)** - With over 135 members representing businesses and individuals in 7 sectors (marine trades, charter/broker/passenger boats, marine retail/chandlery, commercial fishing, seafood processing, manufacturing/boatyards, and associates) the Coalition works to promote the vitality and economic benefits of the maritime sector for all residents of Whatcom County.

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