**Dakota Creek Builds Out a Game-Changing Capability**

***Stierli: The Little Bender That Could***

Okay it’s not that little – it can bend up to 220 metric tons (240 US tons).

But in the larger scheme of the United States economy, security and infrastructure; or of the country’s maritime competitiveness; or even the financial health of the Dakota Creek Industries shipyard and its 300 production jobs; this little bender has the potential of making a mighty big difference.

Dakota Creek recently installed the Stierli-Bieger 2200 SE CNC horizontal ram bender in its Anacortes, Washington shipyard. It is the first of its kind in the United States and adds a steel fabrication capability that was previously only available in Europe. The Stierli bender is an important link in the shipyard’s – and the country’s – production process. It gives Dakota Creek the ability to craft complex opposing port and starboard hull rib frames that shift in angle and radius from bow to stern. The shipyard will use it initially to form bulb profile hull stiffeners for the tugs, fishing boats, barges, research vessels and oil recovery ships that it produces for fleets on the Pacific, Gulf and Atlantic Coasts.

The addition of the Stierli bender will dramatically increase productivity for Dakota Creek. According to Mike Nelson, Dakota Creek owner and vice president, “The Stierli will allow us to expand our daily production from around three sets of hull frames (six total port and starboard) for three people to 12 sets (24 total frames) using only one or two people and, as we get our team’s familiarity and skills up to speed on the new machine even greater productivity will be possible. It will also allow us to bid jobs more competitively – because it will take us fewer manhours to do the same work. Where we once might have been priced out of a job, we will have a better shot at winning the bids.” The Stierli bender’s CNC controls will also help automate parts of the process and make production of these complex designs even more efficient. The maximum bending capacity on the Stierli 2200 is HP300 bulb profiles.

With the bender in place, Dakota Creek also raises its ability to do more sophisticated hull forms. “The complexity of new ship hull designs has only increased,” says Nelson. “As ship designers work to make hulls more hydrodynamic and energy efficient and make the factories or workspace on the boats more effective, hull designs are becoming more challenging. Now we can more efficiently take on these challenges here in Anacortes.

The Dakota Creek purchase of the Stierli bender was made possible by a grant from the Maritime Administration (MARAD). It was part of $9.8 Million in grants designed to strengthen U.S. shipyard competitiveness. The MARAD grants invested in 18 small U.S. shipyards through its Small Shipyard Grant Program, supporting industrial modernizations that increase productivity and allow these shipyards to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

Nelson sees great potential for applying the new bender to future projects – both new builds and repairs. “We have a number of projects in the queue where we see the Stierli bender being a great addition to our process.”

The installation of the machine on the floor of the Dakota Creek manufacturing facility caused something of a stir. It attracted a crowd of ten or so operators to see how it worked and what it was capable of bending. Under the guidance of Stierli-Bieger’s Felix Meier, who set up the bender and trained the Dakota Creek staff, the operators began to realize the real capabilities of the machine. “Now that we are seeing how it functions and how easily it can be adapted, we are only starting to realize what other tasks we can perform with it, says Nelson. “It is great to see the enthusiasm of our team as they explore and discover the Stierli’s capabilities. It is that kind of interest and excitement in doing great work that makes Dakota Creek successful. ”

**About Dakota Creek Industries**

Located in Anacortes, WA, Dakota Creek Industries is a complete shipbuilding and repair facility specializing in construction and repair of steel and aluminum vessels up to 400 feet (120m). Projects include tugboats, offshore support vessels, research vessels, fireboats, ferries, and fishing vessels. Its deep-water location on Guemes channel in the Puget Sound provides easy access to it drydock facilities. State of the art equipment and an experienced and dedicated workforce of 300 assures efficient and timely construction and repairs.

**About Stierli-Bieger**

Stierli-Bieger has designed and built universal horizontal bending and straightening machines, turning devices and storage systems in Sursee, Switzerland, outside of Lucerne since 1936. Today Stierli-Bieger AG is a world market leader in horizontal bending and straightening machines. Its customer base includes the metal processing industry and well-known steel producers, machine, ship and rail manufacturers throughout the world. Stierli is represented in the United States by Boschert USA [www.bochertusa.com](http://www.bochertusa.com).

**About MARAD**MARAD – the Department of Transportation’s Maritime Administration is the agency responsible for the US waterborne transportation system. It fosters and promotes the maritime transportation system including landside infrastructure, the shipbuilding and repair industry, and labor to meet the economic and national security needs of the nation. It supports the technical aspects of the maritime infrastructure – ships and shipping, ports and vessel operation, national security, environment and safety. It works to maintain the overall health of the US Merchant Marine, commercial mariners, vessels and shipyards.