



MV Susitna

A new icebreaking catamaran under construction at Alaska Ship and Drydock will take passenger across Knik Arm between Anchorage and Port MacKenzie. Artwork courtesy of Mat-Su Borough.

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commissioned to improve ferry service between the mainland terminal at Vancouver and the Nanaimo terminal on Vancouver Island, while at the same time providing a boost to the region's lagging shipbuilding industry.

Problems including delays and cost overruns plagued the vessels, which were finally delivered more than two years late at double the cost. Operational issues included poor performance, high fuel consumption, frequent breakdowns and unacceptable wake wash. The first two boats operated for less than a year, and the third boat never saw service.

A statement by WMG says the three ferries will be transported from Vancouver Harbor via heavy lift deep-sea vessel, with the first scheduled to depart this month.

Icebreaking Ferry for Alaska

Alaska's "Bridge to Nowhere" is just a memory, but Alaska Ship and Dry Dock in Ketchikan is building a replacement in the form of a \$68 million icebreaking catamaran to take passengers across Knik Arm between Anchorage and Port MacKenzie.

The \$68 million ferry, to be christened the *M/V Susitna*, is a "catamaran variable draft watercraft" that will have a moveable center section, allowing the ferry to change from the Small Waterplane Area Twin Hull (SWATH) mode to barge mode by lowering or raising its center deck.

The ferry, which will operate year-round, will carry at least 20 cars and 100 passengers at up to 20 knots. The US Navy, which contributed to the funding of the project, will take delivery of the vessel for three months upon completion to study the technology for its potential as a new type of expeditionary landing craft, prior to handing the boat over to Mat-Su Borough.

New Washington State Boats

Seattle's Todd Pacific shipyard has begun construction of a 64-car ferry for the State of Washington to replace four 80-year-old boats pulled from service last year. The State had

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