



PRESS RELEASE

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NOAA Ship Oscar Dyson Arrives at Ketchikan Shipyard, Marking New Momentum for Federal Maritime Work in Alaska

KETCHIKAN, Alaska — NOAA Ship Oscar Dyson has arrived at the Ketchikan Shipyard, underscoring growing federal maritime activity at the AIDEA-owned facility operated by JAG Ketchikan LLC. The vessel's arrival follows NOAA's June 2025 award of a fully funded \$95.4 million contract to JAG Alaska Inc. for the Oscar Dyson midlife extension program, as well as JAG Ketchikan's separate NOAA contract award highlighted in AIDEA's June 29, 2026, press release, "JAG Ketchikan Secures \$99.6 Million NOAA Contract, Builds Momentum at Ketchikan Shipyard," available on AIDEA's website.

The timing gave that contract momentum added visibility: the Oscar Dyson arrived the day before JAG hosted a tour for 2026 Southeast Conference attendees, giving regional civic, business and economic development leaders a firsthand look at the shipyard's growing federal workload and the facilities supporting it. The work strengthens Alaska's role in supporting federal research and maritime readiness missions while helping sustain year-round demand for skilled trades, engineering, electrical, mechanical and fabrication expertise in Southeast Alaska.

The NOAA contract runs from June 5, 2025, through Dec. 5, 2027, and covers expanded upgrades and essential maintenance intended to extend the Oscar Dyson's service life and modernize shipboard systems. NOAA has said the work will improve fuel efficiency, operational safety and scientific capability for missions in Alaskan and Arctic waters, with the vessel expected to return to service for the 2028 field season.

The work includes replacing the propulsion system with variable-speed Tier 4 generators, quiet air-conditioning motors, new pumps, fans, cranes, fire detection systems and radars, as well as adding single-person staterooms. The modernization is also expected to incorporate advanced propulsion technology designed to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions.

AIDEA's June 29 announcement described the separate NOAA award for the NOAA Ship Henry B. Bigelow as another major expansion of multi-year-federal vessel modernization work supporting Alaska's maritime industrial base. That release noted that JAG Ketchikan had secured a \$99.6 million federal contract from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the Henry B. Bigelow Modernization and Revitalization Program, beginning June 10, 2026, and extending through April 14, 2029.

Together, the Oscar Dyson's arrival and JAG's growing portfolio of NOAA work demonstrate how federal vessel modernization is translating into active shipyard demand in Alaska. With the substantial number of contracts and projects JAG has secured, employment at the Ketchikan Shipyard has grown significantly and is expected to approach 200 employees by the end of the year.

The vessel's arrival also reinforces AIDEA's broader focus on expanding the Ketchikan Shipyard's capacity and long-term competitiveness. The facility includes about 25 acres, vessel hall capacity and two floating dry docks with 10,000-ton and 2,500-ton lift capacity, positioning it to serve federal, state, commercial, fishing, tourism and research-vessel customers. NOAA's investment in the Oscar Dyson supports Alaska's blue economy by directing high-value vessel work to an Alaska shipyard while creating demand for skilled trades, technical labor and marine industry support services. AIDEA is pursuing federal funding for a third dry dock that would allow the shipyard to expand and serve larger vessels, including icebreakers and Navy vessels, and accommodate construction of new ferries. The new dry dock could provide an estimated addition of 303 jobs and \$148 million in annual economic activity for the region.

"The arrival of NOAA Ship Oscar Dyson is another visible sign that the Ketchikan Shipyard is building momentum and competing for important federal maritime work," said **Randy Ruaro, AIDEA executive director**. "The partnership between AIDEA and JAG at the Ketchikan Shipyard has been incredibly successful in a very short time since JAG took over operations. This is exactly the kind of activity AIDEA has worked to support — more vessels, more skilled jobs and more long-term opportunity for Southeast Alaska."

"JAG Ketchikan is focused on growing the shipyard's capabilities, bringing more work to Alaska and building a trades workforce that can support long-term maritime demand," said **Doug Huff, JAG president and co-founder**. "The arrival of the Oscar Dyson reflects the confidence customers are placing in the Ketchikan Shipyard and the skilled Alaskans working here."

The growth is supported by workforce development efforts underway in Ketchikan. In January 2026, JAG Marine Group, Generations Southeast Vocational Training Center, Tlingit & Haida, Sealaska and state of Alaska partners announced a training-to-employment collaboration designed to connect Alaskans with shipyard careers. AIDEA and local leaders

have emphasized that sustained vessel work can create more opportunities for young people, returning workers and skilled trades professionals while strengthening Ketchikan's economic foundation.

The Ketchikan Shipyard has long been a cornerstone industrial asset for Southeast Alaska and an important partner in maintaining Alaska's public marine transportation system. Its proximity to the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry facility makes it especially important to AMHS vessel maintenance, repair and long-term fleet reliability, helping support ferries that connect coastal communities, move residents and visitors, and sustain commerce throughout Southeast Alaska. AIDEA acquired the shipyard in 1997 and continues to steward the facility as part of its mission to promote economic development, job creation and infrastructure investment for Alaskans. The shipyard's location adjacent to the AMHS ferry facility positions it to support AMHS vessels as well as commercial fleets, federal maritime missions and future Arctic and North Pacific opportunities.

During the Oscar Dyson's yearlong maintenance period following the 2026 field season, NOAA has said it is modifying NOAA Ship Bell M. Shimada to help backfill Alaska research operations and keep fisheries data collection moving while the vessel is modernized.

AIDEA will continue working with JAG Ketchikan, local partners and state and federal stakeholders to support shipyard growth, additional vessel work, expanded maritime employment and federal funding opportunities for capacity improvements, including a proposed third dry dock that could broaden the shipyard's role in serving larger vessels, icebreakers, Navy vessels and Alaska's ferry fleet. More information about the earlier NOAA contract award is available in AIDEA's June 29, 2026, press release on www.aidea.org.

About AIDEA

[The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority](http://www.aidea.org) is an independently governed public corporation of the State of Alaska established by the Legislature in 1967 to promote, develop, and advance economic growth and diversification in Alaska by providing financing and investment tools that support economic development, job creation, infrastructure, and responsible resource development.

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Photo of the Oscar Dyson NOAA vessel arriving at the Ketchikan Shipyard. Photo provided by JAG Alaska, Inc.



Video of the Oscar Dyson NOAA vessel arriving at the Ketchikan Shipyard. Video provided by JAG Alaska, Inc.



Photo of the Oscar Dyson NOAA vessel arriving at the Ketchikan Shipyard. Photo provided by AIDEA.



Southeast Conference attendees enjoying an informative tour the Ketchikan Shipyard.
Photo provided by AIDEA.



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