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Leg

Liftboat operator features newest fleet in the U.S.

BY **KEN HOCKE**, SENIOR EDITOR

The Gulf of Mexico liftboat market may be facing some lean times. Recent reports have highlighted the slowdown on the shelf and the shrinking backlog of construction and repair work associated with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

However, Avis Bourg, vice president of sales with **Offshore Marine Contractors (OMC)**, said he isn't worried. There's plenty of work for liftboats in the Gulf. "Whether it's the majors or the independents, with the price of oil today, it's going to keep the producers very aggressive," he said.

Bourg added that reports about construction work from Katrina and Rita coming to an end are premature. "There's quite a bit of damage still to be repaired," he said.

Mandeville, La.-based OMC is a (two) family-run company that has combined the experience of its owners into a liftboat operation that offers the



The 175'-class liftboat *Wyatt Lee* was delivered in November.

Offshore Marine Contractors

industry the best service and equipment out there, said Bourg. "The majority of the liftboat fleet has become pretty long in the tooth," he said. "We want to provide the newest, fastest, state-of-the-art boats to the industry."

Mike Eymard and Avis Bourg were liftboat industry veterans before teaming up to form OMC. Eymard launched the company in 1998 when Morgan City, La.-based **Conrad Industries** delivered a 200'-class liftboat, the *Kaitlyn Eymard*. Then in 2000, Bourg came aboard as a full partner. Today, there are four partners in the company — Bourg, Eymard, and Eymard's sons Toby and Raimy.

"The four co-owners have a hundred years of experience in liftboats — not in the industry — in liftboats," said Bourg.

BUILDING PROGRAM

OMC currently boasts a fleet of eight boats. Five are 175'-class vessels (*Lacie Bourg*, *Kathryn Eymard*, *Courtney Gabrielle*, *Louie Eymard*, and *Wyatt Lee*). Four of the five were built at Conrad and one at New Iberia, La.-based **Marine Industrial Fabricators**. The fleet also includes three 200'-class liftboats (*Kaitlyn Eymard*, *Nicole Eymard*, and *Will B.*). In addition, Conrad is building another 200' class, the *A.J. Bourg*, set for delivery later this month, and another 175' class, the *Lucas Bourg*, set for delivery in March. The class reflects the

OMC 175'-CLASS LIFTBOAT

Builder: Conrad Industries, Marine Industrial Fabricators
Designer: Dynamics Marine
Owner: Offshore Marine Contractors
Mission: Offshore oil-and-gas support in the Gulf of Mexico
Length: 110'3"
Beam: 64'6"
Depth: 9'
Legs: (3) 175'(L)×54"(dia.)
Main Propulsion: (2) Caterpillar 3412, 540 hp
Ship's Service Power: (2) John Deere, 143 kw
Marine Gear: Twin Disc, MG-516, 5:1
Propeller: (2) Rolls-Royce, 60"×47", 4-bladed
Controls: Kobelt 6505S Electronic Engine Control
Steering System: Huber AF 12A
Speed: 6 knots
Hull Construction: Steel
Usable Deck Area: 4,000 sq.ft.
Deck Load: 422,000 lbs.
Crew/Passenger Capacity: 6/23
Tankage (Gallons): Fuel, 8,547; potable water, 13,625
Ancillary Equipment/Systems: Tech-crane 125 ton with 100' boom; Elevating Boats 30 ton with 70' boom
Classification/Certification: USCG

certified 46 CFR, Subchapter L and Lloyd's Registry classed load line only
Delivery Dates: *Lacie Bourg*, *Kathryn Eymard*, *Courtney Gabrielle*, *Louie Eymard*, *Wyatt Lee*, *Lucas Bourg* (2000-2008)

OMC 200'-CLASS LIFTBOAT

Builder: Conrad Industries, Marine Industrial Fabricators
Designer: Dynamics Marine
Owner: Offshore Marine Contractors
Mission: Offshore oil-and-gas support in the Gulf of Mexico
Length: 111'3"
Beam: 66'6"
Depth: 10'
Legs: (3) 200'(L)×66"(dia.)
Main Propulsion: (2) Caterpillar 3412, 720 hp
Ship's Service Power: (2) Caterpillar, 105 kw
Speed: 6 knots
Hull Construction: Steel
Usable Deck Area: 5,000 sq.ft.
Deck Load: 760,000 lbs.
Crew/Passenger Capacity: 7/36
Tankage (Gallons): Fuel, 9,730; potable water, 15,154; lube oil, 2,383
Ancillary Equipment/Systems: Tech-crane 125 ton with 100' boom; Elevating Boats 30 ton with 70' boom
Classification/Certification: USCG certified 46 CFR, Subchapter L and Lloyd's Registry classed load line only
Delivery Dates: *Wil B*, *Nicole Eymard*, *Kaitlyn Eymard*, *A.J. Bourg* (1998-2008)



Ken Hocke

length of each of the boats' three legs. The platforms' actual measurements are 110'3"×64'6" (175s) and 111'3"×66'6" (200s).

"[The *Wyatt Lee*] is the fourth of seven that Conrad is building for us," said Bourg. "Each one is better than the one before."

"They've got a lot of choices where they could have their boats built," said Gary Lipely, director of marketing and

One of the 200'-class liftboats underway at Conrad Industries.

BOATS & GEAR

LIFTBOATS

sales for Conrad. “We’ve established a great working relationship.”

Bourg downplays the recent sluggishness on the shelf, saying that the activities there still need equipment. And companies that offer the best equipment and service get the most work. “Our day rates are holding and our utilization is holding,” he said. “Our end users are very interested in the technology and capability of our fleet. We’re on an approved master service list of all major oil companies and most independents.”

Another concern of customers these days is safety. “The learning curve is behind us with these new boats — adding again to our success,” he said. “If you

go by the latest Coast Guard rulemaking, that probably makes us the safest fleet in the industry.”

Bourg said crew retention is important when it comes to safety aboard OMC’s liftboats because his crews know how important the issue is. Crews tend to be loyal when the money is good and the equipment is first class. “We do have a good core member group on each boat. We pay more than our competitors do,” he said. “Our guys have been taught properly. They carry around a handbook on safety procedures. We offer good benefits. We give our guys incentives to work safely.”

Yet Bourg stressed that safety is not

just a matter of abiding by Coast Guard rules and meeting customer demand. It’s also a matter of caring about your employees, which is another way of boosting retention rates. “At the end of the day,” he said, “we want them to go home to their families.”

POWER POINTS

The real measure of any liftboat is the length and strength of its legs and the muscle behind its cranes. OMC’s boats have plenty of both. For the 175’ class, the steel legs measure 175’ with 54” diameters and a maximum water depth of 130’ in 5’ seas. The 200’ class has 200’ legs with 66” diameters and a maximum depth of 160’ in 5’ seas. Jacking speed for both classifications is 8 fpm.

Both classes sport main 110-ton deck cranes with 100’ lattice booms that were custom made for OMC by **Techcrane Global Corp.**, Covington, La. There’s also a 38-ton auxiliary crane from **Elevating Boats LLC**, Houma, La., with a 70’ lattice boom.

“It’s actually a 125-ton capacity crane that’s been backed down by 15 tons as a safety measure,” said Bourg. “We have two **Caterpillar** [C18s] engines to run those cranes.”

There are twin Cat 3412 diesels that provide the main propulsion for all the boats. On the 175s, they produce 540 hp each, and on the 200s they pump out 720 hp each. All vessels are capable of running at 6 knots in seas up to 5’. “We’re buying the most expensive Cat packages for these boats,” said Bourg.

The barge deck on the 175s measures 4,000 sq.ft. and can hold up to 422,000 lbs. Deck space on the 200’ class shakes out at 5,000 sq.ft. and can handle a deck load of 760,000 lbs.

Ship’s service power for the 175’ class is the responsibility of twin **John Deere** gensets, each sparking 143 kw. The 200s are electrically supported by twin 105-kw Caterpillar 3304 gensets.

Tankage includes 8,547 gals. of fuel and 13,625 gals. potable water for the 175s and 9,730 gals. of fuel and 15,194 gals. potable water for the 200’ class.

“We have the newest fleet in the U.S., probably the newest fleet in the world,” said Bourg. “Customers love them.” **WB**

