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Contact: Ashley Rainer/Marketing Administrator
251.981.3700 (office)
480.444.9969 (cell)
arainer@saundersyacht.com
www.saundersyacht.com

Saunders Yachtworks Announces Grand Opening of Largest Full-Service Boatyard and Basin on the Gulf Coast

Gulf Shores, Ala. – February 16, 2012 – Saunders Yachtworks’ full-service boatyard and basin on the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) in Gulf Shores, Ala., is now opening its newest and largest facility.

The only brand new full-service boatyard to be built in the U.S. in recent memory will also be the largest in the Gulf Coast region. To celebrate, Saunders will host a grand opening event on Friday, March 30 to coincide with the 2012 Gulfcoast Boat & Yacht Show.

The new facility includes an in-water boat basin with 14 slips and out-of-water space for more than 20 boats serviced by a brand new 150-ton Marine Travelift. As a result, Saunders can now offer its full portfolio of in-house services to a wider range of sportfish boats, cruisers and yachts, as well as commercial and military vessels up to 130 feet in length.

“We’re thrilled to introduce to the boating community the newest and largest boatyard in the Gulf Coast,” John Fitzgerald, Saunders’ president and CEO, said. “It’s been a long and arduous process to complete this project, but the demand from the boating community has made it worth the effort.

“Between the BP oil spill and the economic downturn to our country, we’ve had our challenges,” Fitzgerald said. “But we never stopped pressing ahead, and the final result is better than we could have imagined. We’re grateful for the help we received from our local partners, including the City of Gulf Shores and the Gulf Shores Airport Authority, along with a generous grant from the Federal Economic Development Authority (EDA).”

The Gulf Shores facility, located on Gulf ICW mile marker 155, is the second location for Saunders. The company continues to operate a full-service yard with 60-ton lift capacity at its original location in Orange Beach, Ala.

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“We’re confident that our convenient location on the Gulf ICW and increased hauling capability will allow us to reach out to a wider range of vessel owners and operators from the inland waterways of the U.S., the Great Lakes and South Florida, in addition to our customers from the Gulf Coast,” Saunders’ Chairman of the Board of Directors Jim Bronstien said.

The 14-acre site includes a 15,000-square-foot headquarters building with administrative offices, service shop and warehouse; a 3.5-acre service and transient basin; and a dock shop to support below-waterline hardware service and equipment storage. Additionally, a fully enclosed works building for indoor projects is underway and will be complete by September 2012. Six acres remain available for future expansion and development.

“Saunders has a 53-year history of providing excellent customer service,” Fitzgerald said. “With a staff of 60 that’s growing every month, we are committed to retaining highly skilled craftsmen and service technicians so we can ensure that our customers’ needs are met every single time they call on us.”

The Saunders family has been in the marine service business since 1959 and has operated Yachtworks at Orange Beach Marina since 1995. The company offers a full array of mechanical services, vessel systems installation and repair and boatyard crafts.

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