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The annual edition of *MN100*, our review of the most compelling companies serving the workboat, brown water, inland and coastal markets, always comes in August. This much we know. What we don't know – until we actually sit down to put it all together – is who will make the cut in any given year. To that end, the 'buck' always stops at my desk. Every year, culling out the 100 best firms in this workboat sector is one of my most difficult tasks. At the same time, believe it or not, it is also one of the most valuable editorial efforts that I make time for. All that said; *if you didn't apply, then you couldn't be considered.*

Looking back over the twelve months since we last looked at the 'best of the best,' it is no secret that it has been an up-and-down year. Offshore energy continues to see challenges, while the ferry-building boom has, during the same period, been nothing short of spectacular. Those boatbuilders with a wider portfolio have weathered the storm nicely, some boasting some of the better backlogs that they've experienced in some time. Our feature focus on four of those Gulf Coast-based shipyards starts on page 44.

Separately, it is also true that there is no need for shipyards if operators don't put those boats in the water. Spotlighting the inland markets, *MarineNews* contributor Tom Ewing gives his slant on why three of these firms are prospering in brown water. Each has a unique business plan, unusual operating conditions, and recent business deals that collectively position them for what comes next. **Spoiler Alert:** no one is sitting on their hands, even when times can and do get tough.

"Diversify, diversify, diversify ... always," is the way that Sean Fernstrum neatly summarizes the challenge of running an efficient business to and through the many up and down cycles. In the November 2016 edition of *Maritime Reporter and Engineering News*, he says it best, insisting, *"You have to be in different markets. You try to ride an even line (with diversification). We rode the oil wave for a number of years, but you always have to have other pieces in place for when a market drops off."* It should be no surprise then, that Fernstrum holds a very prominent spot (page 62) in this year's *MN100* edition.

This annual exercise is a valuable effort, immersing me still deeper into the industry that I already serve. It requires collation of, poring over and ultimately ranking scores of entries from every corner of the collective waterfront. Where some might find it tedious, I instead find it instructive; something which can provide better understanding of the markets and, at the same time, provide that course correction that allows me to provide more cogent analysis for our market-leading BPA audited readership. **Sure:** some might view the North American brown water, workboat market as a narrow niche. It is anything but. And that market diversity is where we at *MarineNews* draw our strength.



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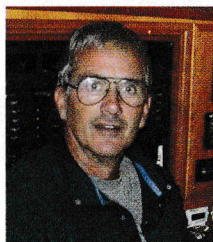
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THE COMPANY:

OceanMedix was launched in 2006 to provide a line of First Aid and Prescription Medical Kits and Prescription Medical Products specifically designed to be carried on board vessels engaged in extended coastal or ocean voyages. In 2014, OceanMedix expanded its focus to meet the needs of the Fishing, Commercial and Industrial Marine, Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, and Military Communities with a comprehensive offering of premium products. OceanMedix kits are available in both coastal and offshore configurations and various sizes. For commercial towing vessels, kits are configured to exceed the requirements of 46CFR and/or Subchapter M. OceanMedix can also make arrangements for AED Training and Certification.

THE CASE:

OceanMedix is the preferred source for Medical, Emergency and Safety Equipment. Through its proprietary offering of first aid, medical and defibrillator kits, and an extensive network of manufacturers and distributors, the firm provides direct access to a broad range of products.

Pacific Power Group



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THE COMPANY:

Established in 1958, Pacific Power Group has been a trusted partner for the marine power needs of the Western U.S. for more than 50 years. Pacific Power Group (PPG) is known for providing propulsion and engineering services to some of the U.S.'s most notable boat building projects including the new San Francisco WETA ferries, U.S. Coast Guard, Harley Marine barges, National Geographic tour vessels and more. Today, PPG holistically supports customers from design all the way through post-launch operation, and the company's core mission has shifted to be focused on partnership and collaboration with builders, architects and vessel operators.

THE CASE:

PPG continues to redefine the engine distributor model through a solutions oriented approach to propulsion design. In the last 12 months, PPG became the world's first Rolls-Royce Waterjet distributor, was awarded sole provider for the USCG's \$39 million V396 overhaul contract, and continues to power the industry's most well-known vessels.