Contract Awarded for Construction of State's First Passenger Ferry

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RALEIGH - Passenger ferry service between Hatteras and Ocracoke Village is a major step closer to reality this week. On Tuesday, the N.C. Department of Transportation awarded a $4.15 million contract to Armstrong Marine Inc. of Port Angeles, Washington, for construction of a 98-passenger catamaran-style ferry. The vessel will be built at Armstrong Marine's eastern shipyard in Swansboro, North Carolina.

"Although we've been laying the groundwork for quite some time now, this contract officially puts the passenger ferry project on the public's radar," said Interim Ferry Division Director Jed Dixon. "We are hoping that by this time next year, direct passenger ferry service to Ocracoke Village will be up and running."

The ferry will run between Hatteras and Silver Lake Harbor, allowing passengers to disembark in the heart of Ocracoke Village. From there, visitors will be able to navigate the village on foot, bicycle or golf cart, or catch a new shuttle service that Hyde County will be providing in conjunction with the passenger ferry. The new ferry service will supplement the Ferry Division's existing car ferries, and is designed to ease summer traffic congestion on the popular route.

Much of the project funding comes from a Federal Lands Access Program grant. The grant also covers infrastructure improvements at Hatteras and Ocracoke that will accommodate ferry passengers. Under the terms of the contract, Armstrong Marine is expected to deliver the new ferry by April 28, 2018.

This contract was one of 14 road, bridge and ferry projects recently awarded by the N.C. Department of Transportation. They totaled $186.8 million, and were awarded to the lowest qualified bidders, as required by state law.

(NCDOT)

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(Caption: Artist rendering of NCDOT Passenger Ferry, to begin operation between Hatteras and Ocracoke Village next summer)