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SENEAIA to Build Submarine Shipbuilding Pipeline with \$18.6M Defense Contract

Employers, Employees to Benefit from Workforce Development Initiative

MIDDLETOWN, RI - The Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEAIA) today announced it has secured its first-ever contract from the Department of Defense: an \$18.6 million award to develop a robust regional workforce development partnership that will serve the needs of submarine shipbuilding employers and open up job exploration and employment opportunities to more than 5,000 potential workers.

In launching this effort, SENEAIA distributed a survey to hundreds of manufacturers throughout the region to better understand workforce gaps so that training programs can be tailored to the needs of industry, focused on General Dynamics Electric Boat, the nation's prime submarine builder, and its Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island supply chain. Results from this survey, and subsequent collaboration with employers, will be used to develop hands-on training opportunities in early 2021.

“This is an outstanding opportunity to solidify our region as the hub for innovation in submarine shipbuilding,” said Molly Donohue Magee, SENEAIA’s executive director. “The best-in-class workforce development initiatives forged now will power this high-demand, high-skill industry for the next 30 years.”

The 2-year DoD contract was awarded through the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) Program. IBAS works to improve readiness and support innovation across our national security, including closing gaps and vulnerabilities in defense manufacturing capacity.

Over the past four years, the submarine shipbuilding sector has collaborated with state and local governments to establish new training programs in direct support of General Dynamics Electric Boat's hiring needs in Groton, Conn., and Quonset, R.I., to deliver Virginia and Columbia Class submarines. This new partnership effort will continue and enhance that work, providing future workers with a solid foundation in basic industrial and manufacturing skills and exposure to robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence.

"Electric Boat congratulates our federal delegation, SENEDIA, and our training partners for their success in securing this award," said Kevin Graney, President of Electric Boat. "EB has collaborated with regional partners to create training pipelines to support our mission of building and delivering Virginia and Columbia class submarines for the US Navy. This award will expand these programs and provide a skilled workforce to meet the need for increased hiring at both Electric Boat and at our critical supply chain partners."

Federal and state officials have lauded the award for its potential to help kickstart the economy and create new opportunities for the workforce, especially in southeastern New England.

"The submarine work being done at Quonset is critical to national security and strengthens our economy. We have invested billions of dollars in these next-generation submarines. This contract means SENEDIA will continue finding innovative ways to recruit and train a workforce ready and able to do this complex work. I commend SENEDIA for bringing together leaders from academia, business, manufacturing, and the workforce development sectors in a coordinated, collaborative effort to ensure we are connecting people with in-demand skills and training to land good-paying jobs that contribute to the development and manufacturing of the most advanced submarines in the world," said U.S. Senator Jack Reed (RI), Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee.

"The submarines made in Quonset are some of the most advanced vessels ever to sail the seas," said U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI). "Well done to SENEDIA on securing this federal funding to help equip Rhode Islanders with the technical skills to land good-paying jobs in Electric Boat's state-of-the-art submarine building program."

"This contract is a testament to the talented workforce in southeastern Connecticut and will be critical to ensuring that our workers are ready to simultaneously construct the Virginia and Columbia class

submarines. I would like to congratulate Electric Boat and all of our submarine suppliers for their steadfast dedication to providing world class subs to the U.S. Navy while investing in the next generation of shipbuilders. I look forward to celebrating this exciting contract with our Connecticut workforce and working with my colleagues in Congress to ensure robust federal funding will continue to support our submarine industrial base,” said U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (CT).

“When I travel across Connecticut, I’m thrilled by the number of young men and women who want to gain the skills necessary for a career in submarine manufacturing. Connecticut has seen a lot of success with our Eastern Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, but this massive grant will go a long way in solidifying these gains to make sure that our workers have the skills they need and jobs when they are ready. I’ll continue to be Connecticut’s champion on the Senate Appropriations Committee to keep these wins coming,” said U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (CT).

“Education and training programs are critical to building a high-skilled workforce that can deliver cutting-edge ships to our warfighters so they never enter a fair fight,” said Congressman Jim Langevin (RI-01), a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee and co-chair of the Congressional CTE Caucus. “The Ocean State plays an important role in defense manufacturing with hard-working Rhode Islanders constructing the world’s finest ships at Quonset Point. I’m thrilled that the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance has been awarded this contract to help prepare workers for rewarding careers and boost the capabilities of our forces.”

“There’s no shortage of exciting activity at the Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, and throughout our region’s manufacturing supply chain,” said Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-02), Chairman of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee. “It takes a highly skilled workforce to deliver on these opportunities, and our manufacturing sector has proved they’re up to the challenge. This new federal contract award to SENEDIA is another vote of confidence in what we’ve been doing in Connecticut to build a new generation of shipbuilders to answer the nation’s call for undersea capabilities. This award will support new training to grow our manufacturing workforce with high-pay, high-skill jobs so that we’re well-prepared to keep taking full advantage of these opportunities for decades to come.”

“Rhode Island has a long and rich shipbuilding history. The Virginia and Columbia Class Submarines are a feather in the cap of Rhode Island’s shipbuilding know-how,” said Congressman David Cicilline (RI-01). “I was proud to support the effort to fund this program, which will help provide training for an

expanded workforce in the submarine industry, and I'm glad that the Department of Defense awarded SENEDIA this important contract, bringing good paying, innovative jobs to Rhode Island."

This submarine shipbuilding initiative is one element of SENEDIA's comprehensive approach to workforce development and training across the defense industry. It complements regional and state-level programming, including the Real Jobs Rhode Island Defense Industry Partnership through the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT).

"We are thrilled to see this effort come to fruition and are grateful for the Rhode Island congressional delegation, especially the leadership of Senator Reed, on making this a reality, said Scott Jensen, Director of Rhode Island DLT. "We are looking forward to continuing our partnership with SENEDIA, General Dynamics, the U.S. Department of Defense, and our counterparts in Connecticut and Massachusetts. This award will solidify southern New England's place as the strongest regional defense ecosystem in the country."

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The Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance is a catalyst for thought leadership and innovation in undersea technology, cybersecurity and defense technologies. The organization is focused on growing regional opportunities in the defense and homeland security sectors and facilitates associated workforce development efforts. For more information on SENEDIA, please visit www.senedia.org.