

Helping To Keep The Economy Afloat

(NAPSA)—From the time of its birth, America has been a maritime nation. Even today, its merchant marine plays an important role in this country's economy and national security.

A great number of America's exports and imports move by sea, so even in relatively slow times, the merchant marine keeps sailing along. Merchant mariners also play an important role in inland operations and military support missions.

With several large U.S. ports facing the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Pacific, it can often be more economical for businesses to send goods by water than by plane. Cargo that moves on the rivers eventually ends up moving by truck or rail, too. As long as there are overseas imports and exports, there will be mariners. Even when the economy is ailing, many believe port traffic will continue to grow.

Given these factors, it's easy to see why there is a constant demand for reliable, loyal, well-trained American mariners to help meet the needs of both this country's armed forces and business community. Fortunately, there is a training facility designed to meet that demand.

Founded in 1967, the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, affiliated with the Seafarers International Union (SIU), prepares students for successful careers as U.S. merchant mariners.

Based in Piney Point, Md., the school offers entry-level training, a program for military veterans, ongoing vocational classes, academic support and more. Graduates of



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the entry-level training program are guaranteed a first job aboard one of the SIU's contracted vessels.

Courses range from entry training to license preparation to academic support and more. Students at the southern Maryland school may also receive college credit recommendations for successfully completing certain sanctioned courses.

The school's wide variety of training tools includes the bridge and engine simulators, the Joseph Sacco Fire Fighting and Safety School and the culinary lab.

Chartered in 1938, the SIU prides itself on representing the best-trained, most-efficient crews in the world. Today, it is the largest North American union representing merchant mariners.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.seafarers.org.