Derektor's new boatlift first of its kind in Florida

"The average customer vessel today is bigger, and it's no longer adequate."

James Brewer, Business director for Derektor, speaking of its aging boatlift, which is being replaced.

BY AREKN J. SAPPITHEL Staff writer

It's the 500-ton gorilla on South Florida's marine industry block and at 79 feet tall, 180 feet long and 60 feet wide, it's the newest tool in Derektor of Florida's mega-yacht servicing arsenal.

The newly installed mobile boatlift, or hoist, is expected to give the Dania Beach mega-yacht repair and refit facility an edge in catering to today's larger mega-yachts.

Its previous 500-ton lift and transfer system, in place since its founding in 1967, could no longer sufficiently meet the needs of a growing mega-yacht market, said James Brewer, who handles business development for Derektor.

"It served us very well, but it's showing its age," Brewer said Monday. "The average customer vessel today is bigger, and it's no longer adequate."

The new boatlift will allow Derektor to put up to eight mega-yachts ashore on blocks, which will more than double its existing capacity of three at any given time. The mega-yachts will be lifted by straps and then driven to a site on the 17-acre campus to be worked on.

For sure, the mega-boatlift is a stand out. It's the largest mobile unit of its kind in Florida and the tallest in the world, according to Derektor.

And it's the second-largest in the United States behind a 1,000-ton mobile lift at Colonna Shipyard in Virginia, which is used mainly for commercial applications.

It was built by Cimolai Technology in Italy for $3.5 million, Brewer said. Another $2.5 million was spent on-site to prepare its boat slip.

Derektor plans to conduct final tests on the lift in two weeks and have it operational ahead of the 53rd Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, which runs Oct. 25-29. A ribbon cutting is planned for Oct. 25.

Since last November, Derektor has quietly tested the arrival of its new boatlift but plans to ramp up promotional at the boat show, which typically draws many mega-yacht owners or their crews to town.

Some 1,500 mega-yachts visit South Florida annually for recreation or maintenance, according to the latest data from the Marine Industries Association of South

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Colleges get high-tech funds

"There's a big demand for these types of skills."

Joyce Edelstein, spokeswoman for Palm Beach State College

BY MARCIA HEDURQ POWDENS Staff writer

Colleges in Broward and Palm Beach counties have been awarded several million dollars in federal grants to train and place workers in manufacturing, high-tech and health-care technology jobs.

Broward College will receive more than $4 million in grants from the Labor Department to support training and placement of workers in manufacturing and high-technology jobs.

"This grant provides us with the tools needed to help workers develop 21st-century skills, increase employment
opportunities and strengthen the labor force," said Broward College President J. David Armstrong, Jr.

The school will receive $3.2 million to accelerate training and placement of skilled workers into high-technology jobs. The program is designed to help individuals earn certificates and degrees in less time and at a lower cost than traditional college instruction.

Broward College also will receive $1 million to address the shortage of skilled workers in the state's manufacturing industry.

Some of the money will go toward completing a lab for use in training students in high-tech manufacturing, said Geraldine Klonarides, associate dean for engineering. She said the associate's degree will be geared toward workers who don't have a degree or are looking for a new type of work.

Klonarides said the college is seeking input from local manufacturers such as Nipro Diagnostics and Mako Surgical, asking, "what skill sets are you needing?" The programs are built around those requirements, she said.

Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth will receive $975,000 in federal grants to enhance its machining technology and welding technology programs and $3 million to develop online learning in health information technology.

"There's a big demand for these types of skills. A lot of graduates go right into a job," spokeswoman Joyce Edelstein said.

Eric Kennedy, associate dean of trade and industry programs for Palm Beach State College, said the college's program is focused on skills for high-tech machining, welding and quality control.

"Today these workers have to have a higher level of skills," Kennedy said. The training program "fills in the gaps" for the needs of employers in biotech, aviation and the marine industries, he said.

The college also plans to use the grants on a health information technology associate in science degree and a newly launched certificate in health data collection, analysis and reporting. The program is designed to meet a federal mandate to switch from paper to electronic health records by 2014.

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