

GENERAL DYNAMICS

Electric Boat

Electric Boat NEWS

FEBRUARY 2004



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USS Seawolf Returns To Shipyard For SRA

Arriving from the sub base with a dusting of snow, USS Seawolf (SSN-21) enters Graving Dock 2, where it will undergo a Selected Restricted Availability. During the peak of the seven-month work period, up to 630 employees will be assigned to Seawolf.



Norfolk Naval Shipyard Commander Praises EB Team For Their Work

A team of 10 outside machinists (242) led by Russell Perkins traveled to Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia to support work on the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75) recently as part of the Navy's "One Shipyard" initiative supporting all operational fleet units. The commander of Norfolk Naval Shipyard specifically commended their outstanding performance in a message to EB President John Casey. Seated are, from left, Eugene Tillinghast, Keith Decesare, George Turner and Russell Perkins. Standing are, from left, Adophe Kmon, Mark Gavitt, George Gregory, Francis Tessier and Charles Lobato. Missing from the photo is Alfred Gulowsen.

Army Salutes EB For Support Of Employees Called To Active Duty

The U.S. Army has recognized Electric Boat for its support of employees in the Reserve or National Guard who have been called to active duty.

In a recent letter, Gen. Larry Ellis, commander – U.S. Army Forces Command, wrote: “The mobilization of valued employees to active military duty requires a sacrifice that many employers do not understand. The hardship you

“The mobilization of valued employees to active military duty requires a sacrifice that many employers do not understand. The hardship you endured in ‘keeping America running’ without your citizen-soldiers exhibits the highest degree of patriotism and makes our nation the greatest in the world.”

endured in ‘keeping America running’ without your citizen-soldiers exhibits the highest degree of patriotism and makes our nation the greatest in the world.

“When challenged by the forces of evil, America responded. As long as our soldiers are trained and ready, we ensure the security of our homes and freedom from tyranny worldwide. Your continued support of citizen-soldiers is vital to that effort.

“In my travels throughout our country, many employers tell me how honored they are to support the Guardsmen and Reservists in their companies during this difficult and challenging time. Any

soldier will tell you that kind of support from the ‘home front’ is crucial to mission accomplishment.

“Please understand that your contribution and that of your employees have been a key part of the Army’s successful fight in the global war on terrorism. Again, please accept my heartfelt thanks for what you do for the Army and your country.”

Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 30 Electric Boat employees have been called to active duty. 

Electric Boat **NEWS**

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From left, foreman Rick Longo and carpenter John Benoit (both of 252) show off new lock rings that make the process of sealing hazardous waste drums quicker, easier and safer. Missing from the photo is carpenter Joe Guerra (252).

Keeping The Lid On: *Carpenters Find A Better Way*

“It’s a benefit for the worker because of the ease of opening a drum and locking it back up again, and it’s safer, too, because we used to hurt our fingers opening the older, bolt-equipped rings.”

– John Benoit (252)

After watching new hires struggle to lock the lids on hazardous waste drums, two carpenters and their foreman agreed that there had to be an easier way to seal them.

So, after initiating a process improvement, John Benoit and Joe Guerra and foreman Rick Longo (all of 252) did a little research on the alternatives and found a new lock ring that makes the job a snap. EB has since purchased a few dozen, and they have already won favor among many carpenters.

“It’s a benefit for the worker because of the ease of opening a drum and locking it back up again,” Benoit said. “And it’s safer, too, because we used to hurt our fingers opening the older, bolt-equipped rings.”

Longo said the bolt rings, when properly installed, would seal the drums in accordance with Electric Boat and state environmental regulations. Trouble is, if the bolt was stripped, or the ring wasn’t welded properly by the manufacturer, the lid could sometimes be pulled off by hand, resulting

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Navy Awards Electric Boat \$21.8 Million In New Work

The U.S. Navy has awarded Electric Boat a \$15.6 million contract modification to manufacture and procure long-lead-time material required for the conversion of the USS Georgia (SSBN-729) Trident ballistic-missile submarines to a Trident SSGN, a multimission submarine optimized for tactical strike and special-operations support.

This award modifies a five-year, \$443 million contract announced in September 2002 for design and related support work to convert the first four Trident ballistic-missile submarines to an SSGN configuration. If all options are exercised and funded, the contract will be worth a total of \$847 million.

The long-lead-time manufacturing effort includes material acquisition, manufactur-

ing, inspection, test and storage. The conversion is scheduled to take place at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia beginning in October 2005.

Additionally, the U.S. Navy awarded Electric Boat a \$6.2 million contract option to provide on-board repair parts for the Virginia-class submarine Hawaii (SSN-776).

Work will be performed at Electric Boat in Groton (55 percent) and Northrop Grumman Newport News (45 percent) in Virginia, EB's teammate in the Virginia-class submarine program.

The option was exercised under the \$4.2 billion contract awarded to Electric Boat in September 1998 for the construction of the first four Virginia-class submarines. ♦

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in an environmental discrepancy report from EB's Environmental Management group, which conducts daily audits of the company's hazmat drums.

"We kept getting these discrepancy reports due to the problems we were having with the bolt rings," Longo said. Because they work every time, the lock rings have eliminated the discrepancies.

Benoit said another benefit of the lock rings is that they can be applied or removed without any tools. This is especially beneficial for an employee who has to make repeated trips to the same hazmat drum throughout the workday, because such a drum must be resealed each and

every time.

Longo said the state Department of Transportation requires that bolt rings be installed on a drum when it is removed from the shipyard for disposal, which means the lock rings can remain behind for use again and again. And at only \$7 apiece, he said, they're a real bargain.

Rock Martel (670), chief of process improvement for Groton Operations, said the lock rings were first tried out in the Mold In Place workshop in the South Yard, but have proved so successful that they'll now be distributed for use throughout the shipyard.

"Clearly it's the right thing to do," he said. ♦

General Dynamics Was Fourth Largest Defense Contractor In 2003

The Department of Defense has announced the top 10 defense contractors for fiscal 2003. They were:

(IN BILLIONS)

1. Lockheed Martin Corp.	\$21.9
2. The Boeing Co.	17.3
3. Northrop Grumman Corp.	11.1
4. General Dynamics Corp.	8.2
5. Raytheon Co.	7.9
6. United Technologies Corp.	4.5
7. Halliburton Co.	3.9
8. General Electric Co.	2.8
9. Science Applications International Corp.	2.6
10. Computer Sciences Corp.	2.5

In fiscal 2003, DoD prime contract awards totaled \$209 billion, \$28.2 billion more than in fiscal 2002. ♦



Machine Shop Makes Crucial Paperwork Stronger, More Robust

Above from left, machinist foreman Robert Reed (100) and production planner Jonathan Palmer (355) display new traveler notebooks, which are much more durable than travelers in plastic bags.

It's not easy being a piece of paper, especially in the Electric Boat shipyard.

One type of EB document that has a particularly tough time is a traveler, a form that literally follows a component around as it is being manufactured.

Until recently, travelers were protected by nothing more than a plastic bag as they made their rounds. As a result, they were subject to wear and tear in the manufacturing environment, requiring EB to recreate them from scratch if damaged or lost.

Tired of seeing time and money wasted, Machine Shop foreman Robert Reed (100) asked production planner Jonathan Palmer (355) to make the travelers more durable by creating special binders for them. Palmer

took the idea and ran with it, not only adding binders but printing the travelers on heavier paper.

"The notebooks just make them more visible and more durable," Reed said of the process improvement. "I don't think we've had one damaged or lost since we started this seven or eight months ago."

"I used to have to search for travelers every day," Palmer said, referring to the ones in plastic bags. "That's what started this. I'd scream at Bob about it.

"Some of the jobs in the Machine Shop take over a year to do," Palmer continued. "They'll travel about 3 or 4 miles through the shop, back and forth. And the travelers have to go with them."

continued on page 7

EB Employee Rescues Man From Burning Car

An Electric Boat employee who recently transferred to an SSGN job in Puget Sound is being credited with helping a man out of a burning car following an accident last month in Hansville, Wash.

Bill Osowski (802), a human resources labor representative, was stopped at a light waiting to make a left turn when a car driven by a Hansville, Wash., man rear-ended him. Osowski said the other car caught on fire, but the driver, apparently dazed from the crash, wasn't getting out of his car despite Osowski's pleas to do so.

"The fire was getting bigger, so I tried to open his door," Osowski said. "It was stuck, so I really tugged at it and finally got it open. I yelled at him again to get out, but he still didn't respond. So basically I yanked on his arm and sleeve, and he finally came out of the car.

"I wasn't going to let him sit there – I don't think anybody would have," he added.

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Reed said the bagged travelers could be mistaken for scrap and thrown away, or could otherwise get ruined from exposure to solvents, heat sources or other hazards that paper was not designed to withstand.

Palmer said not every traveler is being converted to the new style – only those whose components have the longest journey through the Machine Shop.

Doug Bourque (100), senior manufacturing representative for the machinists, praised Reed and Palmer for creating more durable travelers.

"These documents contain the signoffs by the tradespeople and their foremen, and by inspectors and so forth," he said. "They're the objective quality evidence for the manufacture of that part. And now, thanks to Bob and Jon, they're less apt to get lost or damaged."

TECHNICAL LECTURE SERIES *Restarts in March*

Electric Boat's spring 2004 Technical Lecture Program will begin March 4 when Greg Morea, Ernie Vetelino and Rob McDermott provide an explanation of Digital Data Exchange.

The Tech Lecture Program was developed to provide employees with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the company's products, services and resources. The Tech Lectures are also designed to impart personal and professional pride in Electric Boat products and the part employees play in the company's various business activities.

Spring Program

Date	Topic	Hosts
March 11	Littoral Combat Ship	Tom Plante
March 18	National Missile Defense	Bill Lillie
March 25	CVN-21 Update	Kevin Poitras, John Porter
April 1	EB's Return to Overhaul and Repair	Rick Geschrei
April 15	Submarine Life Cycle Support	John Padgett
April 22	Process Improvement Projects	Deneen Thaxton
April 29	ASTUTE and Technology Transfer Issues (ITAR)	Larry Runkle, Rose McBride

Program Information

- Open to all employees
- Lectures will be presented Thursdays at 2:30 PM and 4 PM in the Technology Center cafeteria. The lectures will be made available to all company sites by videocassette.
- Attendance is voluntary; however, it is recorded. Employees who attend 60 percent or more of the lectures in a series receive a certificate and letter for commendable attendance.
- No charge numbers are provided.

Check the Electric Boat intranet for updates to the program.

Retirees



- 100 **Huey Taylor**
38 years
Foreman
- 414 **John F. Fichtman**
29 years
Engineering Specialist
- 447 **Dennise F. Cray**
27 years
T/A Material
- 456 **Patricia A. Rossi**
40 years
A/A Administrative Aide
- 460 **Robert E. Elms**
23 years
Senior Engineer
- 508 **Kenneth T. Guarneri**
40 years
Mfg Rep
- 641 **David C. Elks**
26 years
HR Staff Specialist
- 650 **David E. Kickham**
38 years
Senior Contrast Specialist
- 660 **Joan Haberek**
40 years
Administrative Clerk
- 742 **Louis Tirelli**
30 years
Principal Engineer
- 904 **William R. Caron**
28 years
Install Mech I
- 950 **Robert L. Hendricks**
26 years
Production Planner

SSGN Conversion Work Accelerates At EB West

PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD, Wash

For the last three months, Electric Boat's team here has been picking up the pace as it converts the Trident submarine, USS Ohio (SSBN-726), into the nation's first SSGN, a multimission platform designed for tactical strike and special operations support.

"We started conversion on the Ohio Nov. 19," said Site Manager Mike Mulligan.

"We're currently engaged in heavy steel and piping installation such as superstructure, foundations for the ASDS (a mini-sub for SEALs), tank modification and associated penetrations and piping.

We're also working on missile-tube penetrations and installing large foundations.

We're scheduled to start testing the first missile tubes in March," he said.

Currently, there are more than 300 workers engaged in the USS Ohio conversion. Of these, about 218 are EB employees from Groton and Quonset Point; the remainder have been hired in the area, which is about an hour west of Seattle by ferry. Of the total workforce, about two thirds are skilled tradespeople. The EB site comprises planning, engineering, materials and installation (production) departments as well as support organizations – quality, finance and human resources.

Puget Sound is the U.S. Navy's third largest fleet concentration area. The Navy spends about \$2.8 billion annually in the region, which is home to approximately 26,000 active duty members, 16,000 civilian employees, 6,000 drilling reservists, 80,000 family members, and 45,000 Navy retirees. Region installations and facilities occupy more than 28,000 acres.

According to Mulligan, managing a decentralized operation presents its own set of special challenges – chief among them the need to familiarize everyone on site with the work methods and practices being used for the con-

version.

"We have a significant number of local hires as well as people from Groton and Quonset Point who are not familiar with working on a commissioned vessel or at PSNS," said Mulligan.

"Additionally, significant numbers of Puget

Sound tradespeople will be working on the conversion through a partnership agreement between the company and the shipyard. With the substantial amount of Subsafe and Deep Submergence Scope of Certification work now ongoing as part of the conversion, it's vitally important that everyone receives proper training in the requirements of the work they're going to perform," Mulligan said.

He described the management of the SSGN conversion operation as rewarding. "In the past year we have accomplished a great deal. We've built the facilities, bought the tools and equipment, developed the work methods, and hired or relocated the people who will form the core team for the conversion of both USS Ohio and USS Michigan (SSBN-727). These achievements are attributable to the dedication and hard work of the site team, and the sense of independence that 3,000 miles and three time zones bring," he said.

Looking forward, Mulligan said 2004 will present a full range of challenges. "We'll finish most of the exterior, missile-tube and lock-out-chamber work, undock the Ohio and finish the conversion at a pier in another part of the shipyard," he said. "We'll also start conversion on the Michigan. By the end of the year, we'll more than double our trade manning on site to get the job done." ♦

Editor's note: Meanwhile at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, a second Electric Boat SSGN conversion team is ramping up to begin work on USS Florida (SSBN-728) and USS Georgia (SSBN-729). Activities at that site will be covered in future issues of EB News.

Currently, there are more than 300 workers engaged in the USS Ohio conversion. Of these, about 218 are EB employees from Groton and Quonset Point; the remainder have been hired in the area, which is about an hour west of Seattle by ferry.



Corey Hassett, left, and Ruth Moreau, both of L&M Hospital's facility on-site at Electric Boat, prepare for a functional capacity evaluation.

EB & L&M

Teaming Up For Healthy Employees

If you're in need of rehabilitation services, you should know that Lawrence & Memorial Hospital (L&M) has a facility on-site at Electric Boat.

L&M's Occupational Rehabilitation & Physical Therapy Department is located directly across from the shipyard's Occupational Health Clinic. For the convenience of EB employees, the facility accommodates all shifts by opening early in the morning and

staying open late in the afternoon. Both workers' compensation clients and private health insurance patients are treated at the facility, which welcomes referrals from outside physicians and health care practitioners.

L&M's services include treatment for sprains/strains, post-surgical rehabilitation, carpal tunnel treatment, consultation with a certified hand therapist, manual therapy, pain relief, back-care education, repetitive-strain

injury education, exercise programs, work-site evaluations and more.

If you're interested in using L&M's services, you'll need a prescription for therapy from a doctor, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, dentist or chiropractor. You can then call the office at 433-3142 or stop by to make an appointment. ♦

Classified

AUTOS/TRUCKS

CHEVY, 1977 – P-30 delivery truck, Grumman Kurbomaster body, gas Chevy V8 350 Cl. Good wrench motor, at, pb, ps, 16 ft. all alum body, 2 swing out doors; \$3,800. 912-2302.

FORD ESCORT WAGON, 1993 – red, at, ps, pb, no dents, good paint, well maintained, 106k miles; \$1,200. 444-0818.

FORD F-150 TRUCK, 1984 – 1/2 ton black, 106k miles, 4 speed, manual trans, straight 6 cyl, ps, pb, no dents; \$1,200. 444-0818.

FORD FOCUS 2x3, 2001 – black w/black interior, excellent condition, 5 speed, a/c, abs, cd, 28/36 mpg, 30k miles; \$6,500. 464-0128.

FORD RANGER, 2001 – 6 cyl, auto, 4 wd, ac, stereo, cd, XLT, 4 door, 29.6k miles, silver, bedliner, like new; \$15,995 or best offer. 401-364-9421.

HONDA ACCORD, 1993 – LX, 5 speed, ac, pwr windows and locks, am/fm cassette, cruise control, 165k miles; \$2,399. 401-322-9107.

AUTO PARTS

TRUXEDOTONNEAU COVER – for 1997 – 2004 Dodge Dakota Quad cab. Brand new in box, never installed, color grey; \$250. 446-4372.

BOATS

WEST MARINE INFLATABLE – by Zodiac, model RU-260 with storage bag, length 8'6"; excellent condition, used only twice, stored inside; \$265. 464-5229 or 908-8952.

FURNITURE

BABY CRIB – "Whitewood Trading Co." full length, turned spindles at ends and sides, white, well made and in good condition; \$40. 464-6255.

MISCELLANEOUS

ADULT'S ROCKING CHAIR, typewriter, man's size 48 winter car coat, Star Wars collectibles, Wolf-schmidt Vodka framed mirror, maracas, ravioli maker, studio couch cover, vintage jewelry. 401-596-5788.

AMERICAN GIRL DOLL CLOTHES and furniture, child's rocking chair, doll's wooden cradle, children's books, collectible 35" doll, metal Tonka dune buggy, Mickey Mouse earrings, Crissy doll, crutches. 401-596-5788.

BABY CRIB – Simmons, great condition; \$75. 572-1833.

BATHROOM VANITY – 30 x 22, maple with brownstone sink, new; \$100. 642-4165.

CUB CADET SNOWTHROWER – 2 cycle single stage 4 hp, tuned up last winter, 20" wide; \$150. 908-4580.

DISC/BELT SANDER – with stand, industrial grade 9" disc, 6" belt, runs great, some parts required if needed; \$45. 536-1190, leave message.

DOUBLE HUNG WINDOW – brand new, white Carole Industries model 1450. 0.50 U-Value 27 1/2" x 61' 7/8" clear glazing; \$35. 464-6255.

Classified Ad Form

Name _____

Dept. _____

Ext. _____

One form per ad; 25 words per ad; two ad maximum per issue. No faxed or phoned-in ads.

Include item description, price and home telephone (List area code if outside 860)

Circle category:

Appliances	Computers	Pets	Real Estate /
Autos / Trucks	Furniture	Real Estate /	Sales
Auto Parts	Miscellaneous	Rentals	Wanted
Boats	Motorcycles		

Mail to Crystal Smith • EB Classifieds • Department 605 • Station J88-10

LOAD HANDLER PICKUP, UNLOADER – LH3000, unload up to 3,000 lbs. in 30 seconds. Fits most full size trucks; \$125. 536-3274.

NORDICTRACK SKI EXERCISE MACHINE – Excel model, like new, sturdy steel and wood construction; \$60 or best offer. 885-0520 ask for Tim.

PANASONIC PORTABLE DVD – 7" screen, adapter and battery pack; 10 movies played; \$700. 434-2634.

SKIS – Kastle Equipe 150 cm w/Marker M26 Bindings, \$100; youth Nordica boots size 3-4, \$15. 535-4355, evenings.

SNOWBOARD YOUTH – Burton "Chopper", 122 cm, \$100; Burton bindings, \$30; Burton boots size 4, \$50; Salomon boots size 7, \$75; all excellent condition. 535-4355, evenings.

STATIONARY TABLE SAW – 10", w/sliding miter table and many accessories included, like new; \$250. 536-1190, leave message.

SUBWOOFERS – (2) 12" Rockford Fosgate Punch Z, 400 watt max at 4 ohms w/box; \$200 or best offer, also have amp if interested. 235-9667.

WOOD STOVE – large all-nighter; \$150. 572-1833.

REAL ESTATE

CONDO – Sunset Beach, North Carolina, 7 miles from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on Maples golf course, 3br/2ba, long term lease, 6 months minimum. 401-539-8792.

VILLA – for rent, direct beachfront, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. 2br/2ba, full amenity package, price range \$1,200 - \$2,000 week. Available year round. 376-9029.

WANTED

AMERICAN FLYER – model trains. 464-2653.

BUNK BEDS – with ladder. 447-9471.

35 years

200 Steven A. Giesing
 229 Charles E. Sprague
 230 Clarence M. Brayman Jr
 243 Herbert G. Chappell
 243 Tommy D. Vickers
 246 George S. Martell
 248 Alan W. Patridge
 251 Efrain Mendez
 341 Keith A. Gould
 355 Frederick C. Butts
 423 Thomas J. Dumais Jr
 431 Linden C. Baton
 452 Daniel M. Castano
 456 Alan F. Clarke
 650 Mark R. Chartier
 795 John P. Sior

30 years

100 Domenic J. Paolucci
 100 John F. Timm
 227 Clarence Hill
 228 Richard E. Tyler
 229 William H. Berger
 229 James E. Clemens
 229 Alan T. Smith
 252 Andrew J. Miller
 248 Patrick K. Bearden
 248 Charles H. Monte
 272 Harold M. Rice

272 Rene L. St. Pierre
 274 Raymond L. Arbour Jr
 321 John F. Lang
 333 William D. Ponder
 333 William A. Rebello
 341 Mark S. Panosky
 355 James A. Carbone
 355 John A. Fitzpatrick
 405 Donald S. Slawski
 433 Joseph J. DeSandre
 448 John G. Dodge III
 449 Peter W. Champagne
 459 Matthew T. Forsberg II
 459 Michael B. Kennedy
 459 Francis J. Ledoux Sr
 459 Kenneth M. White
 460 James R. Hull
 496 Kenneth A. Walker
 501 Gerald T. Simonds
 604 James S. Hicks Jr
 642 Dayton T. Trehern
 650 Norman G. Ingham
 691 Kendall L. Adams
 706 David P. French
 911 Marvin J. Taul
 911 John H. Weiss
 957 John C. Kopka

25 years

229 Larry D. Crandall
 241 Arthur H. Caporale
 241 Frank S. Mather Jr
 241 Robert W. Rossi
 242 Charles H. Beckwith
 242 David E. Russ
 243 Richard L. Ratelle
 246 Margaret M. Fowl
 246 John J. Sylvester
 251 George S. Dunnack
 252 Burton W. Jacobs
 252 Jay M. Lopriore
 252 Sidney H. Petrie
 400 James M. Costello
 405 David L. Giambattista
 415 Kevin B. Johnston
 427 Edward R. Lemieux
 449 Nicholas J. Pedro
 452 John W. Casagrande
 453 Reginald G. Neto
 459 Thomas W. Bassett
 459 Arthur J. Hocking
 472 Michael J. Rzewuski
 501 Joseph L. Causey
 601 John P. Casey
 604 Robert A. Bunting
 643 Henrietta C. Gardella
 915 James E. Bridges
 915 Robert G. Gauthier
 936 Dennis A. Orlando
 950 Christel G. Wilcox

20 years

226 Morris C. Page Jr
 243 Daniel J. Nelson
 252 Carlton F. Bray Sr
 252 Melvin Moreau Jr
 355 Peter J. Nulty
 405 Laurie A. Brodhead
 431 Jeffrey P. Page
 447 Kevin J. Oles
 447 Charles B. Shindell Jr
 449 Joseph W. Nimley
 452 Robert E. Gannon
 456 Edward T. Burke
 459 Eric A. Fallgren
 459 Anthony C. Giordano Jr
 459 Brian J. Jordan
 459 Steven L. Minick
 472 Patricia C. Rychlec
 495 Jeffrey L. Fout
 545 Keith R. Coppin
 545 Frank S. Kovalik
 626 Mary A. Loutrel
 702 Diane D. St. Germain
 902 Guy W. Drake
 911 Peter D. Slowinski
 911 Dennis R. Taillon
 915 Daniel C. Blair
 915 Ronald E. Kingsborough
 950 Pamela F. Thimas
 970 Gary L. Ashley



GENERAL DYNAMICS
Electric Boat

Electric Boat NEWS

STANDARD PRESORT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GROTON, CT
PERMIT NO. 392

Groton Shuttle Service Gets New Wheels



From left, Electric Boat drivers Michael Gilman and Jim Mortimer (both of 545) stand alongside a 2004 International school bus that the company recently purchased for its regular parking lot runs. The bus will replace one of EB's two older buses, both of which were bought new in 1986. Transportation foreman Walt Keane (545) said the new bus will be a welcome change, both for the drivers and passengers. "This new one has many of the latest features," he said. "It has safety features such as padded seating and escape hatches, and it has air conditioning, which the other buses don't have. It also has a stereo system. And it's an automatic, while the others are standard shift. It's really an improvement."