



Contact: Jason P. Wilson, ENS/NOAA

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Tel: 907-254-2852

Cell Phone: 804-413-1796

Email: Jason.Wilson@NOAA.gov

## NOAA SHIP FAIRWEATHER ARRIVES AT NEW FACILITY IN NEWPORT

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**After an exceptional field season the Ketchikan, Alaska-based Fairweather docked at NOAA's brand new Marine Operations Center in Newport to winter until the next season.**

The NOAA Ship *Fairweather* arrived at the newly-built NOAA Marine Operations Center today after a successful sailing season. The 241 foot Hydrographic Survey Vessel, based in Ketchikan, AK, is NOAA's only multi-role Arctic survey platform. Data collected by the ship will be used to update critical chart areas in Alaska and the Arctic. The ship and her crew will be in Newport until next April conducting repairs, training, and preparing the ship for next season.

The winter inport will be a welcome rest after the long surveys in the Arctic. Over the next few months, the ship's crew will wind down from the 2011 season and begin the repair and planning that will be necessary for the 2012 season. Anywhere from 20 to 48 officers, sailors, engineers and surveyors will be living on the ship or in the Newport area over the winter providing business to local shops, restaurants, transportation and area entertainment. Some crew-members have already relocated to Newport area apartments and more will be looking for properties for the coming winters. Additionally the ship will conduct survey and small-boat operations in the area to provide training for their crew and information about the area for NOAA's pacific fleet.

*Fairweather* and her six small boats are a uniquely capable platform. She is NOAA's only ship capable of collecting deep-water, shallow-water and mid-water sonar bathymetry; both ship-based

and small boat side-scan sonar imagery and establishing tidal and GPS observation stations. In 2011 the ship's crew collected 9,381 linear nautical miles of bathymetry, and 3,563 linear nautical miles of side-scan imagery. This data will be used to update nautical charts throughout Alaska and Washington. Data collected by the ship will also support efforts to install mooring buoys for stricken vessels in Dutch Harbor and a fuel transfer terminal in Kotzebue, AK.

"You [*Fairweather*] exceeded our expectations this year," CDR Jim Crocker, told the crew in a recent meeting. Crocker, currently the Chief of NOAA's Operations Branch in Silver Spring, MD will take over as Commanding Officer of the Fairweather in December.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources.

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