



Capt. David Pendleton of the Portland, Maine, fire department and Michael Mason of shipbuilder A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. aboard the fire boat the MV City of Portland. The Nova Scotia-built vessel is joining the American city's fire service.

(BRIAN MEDEL / Yarmouth Bureau)

N.S.-built fire boat heads south

Advanced vessel going to work for Portland, Maine

By BRIAN MEDEL
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METEGHAN RIVER — One of the most advanced firefighting boats in the world was launched this week from a Nova Scotia shipyard and will soon see service in Portland, Maine.

The MV City of Portland is a 20-metre, aluminum-hulled fire boat built by A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. in Meteghan River.

"We think it's great," said the skipper of the new vessel, Capt. David Pendleton of the Portland Fire Department.

"The workmanship is wonderful. It feels like it's going to be stable and sturdy," he said Friday at the shipyard.

It's a state-of-the-art boat, too. A 13-horsepower bow thruster will help keep the boat on station.

And the large water gun on the tower atop the flying bridge is remote-controlled, so it does not require a firefighter in bad weath-



The City of Portland fire boat was launched this week in Meteghan River.

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er or in a smoky environment.

"Portland has the only true fire boat ... north of Boston," said Capt. Pendleton.

Portland is a city of some 65,000 but swells to 100,000 during the day, he said.

Five inhabited islands in Portland Harbor are quite exposed to the ocean.

A couple of uninhabited islands are part of a state park and have campers using them from time to time, he said.

A cruise ship terminal used by the Cat ferry from Yarmouth and a bulk cargo terminal are active.

"Portland's quite a busy harbour," said Capt. Pendleton.

Since 9-11 more emphasis is being placed on harbour protection.

"The federal government has made homeland security funding available. ... A lot of (municipalities) like the City of Portland have taken advantage of grants to get boats.

"Probably a third of our funding was (from) homeland security."

The vessel is worth about US\$3.2 million now, he said.

The City of Portland is powered by twin 454-horsepower Caterpillar marine diesel engines.

"This is probably a little bit more powerful than most fire

boats of its type and size," said Michael Mason, the project manager. "The expected speed of this vessel is about 18 knots (33 km/h). A similar-sized fishing boat would travel at 10 or 11 knots," said Mr. Mason.

A 11,356-litre-per-minute water cannon on top of a tower is driven by its own 525-horsepower diesel engine.

The boat has two smaller cannons mounted on the bow and a portable unit on the aft dive platform.

Another interesting feature is a medical bay that is identical to the back of an actual ambulance, right down to the same sliding cupboards where equipment is stored.

It was duplicated so paramedics sailing on the fire boat would feel like they are in the back of one of their own ambulances.

"It was the first fire boat that's been built at A.F. Theriault (and) was fairly complex," said Mr. Mason about the project.

The yard was eager to build it and hope it can do more, he said.

Design began in September 2007 and construction began in January 2008.

The boat will sail to Portland later this month.

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