

# WESMAR Thrusters Important Equipment For Side and Stern Loading on Alaska Ferry

For years the citizens of Prince of Wales Island in southeast Alaska were only able to commute to the Island of Ketchikan on a weekly basis, leaving them frustrated and isolated.

In January of 2002 the 150 passenger car/ferry Prince of Wales entered service providing a much awaited daily transportation link between the two islands, and providing the 5,000 residents of the remote southeast Alaska region with a critical link and regular, reliable service—something they had long been without.

It took long years of hard work to accomplish this contact with the outside. The community, unhappy with the level of service provided to them by the Alaska Marine Highway system, took matters into their own hands and in 1998 established their own ferry system to serve the Prince of Wales Island communities of Craig, Klawock, Thorne Bay and Coffman Cove, connecting them to the Island of Ketchikan. The project created its own Port Authority with the State's blessing and built the new \$12 million ferry.

The Prince of Wales, is 197 feet long by 53 feet wide, and was built at Dakota Creek Industries in Anacortes, Washington. It is a modern ship with airline-style seats throughout, a reading lounge, work and study areas, a galley, a children's area and an outside covered passenger walkway with a solarium and overhead heaters, making it as comfortable as possible for the 6-hour daily round trip from the



*A WESMAR bow thruster is responsible for tight docking onboard the 197-foot Prince of Wales Passenger/Car Ferry in SE Alaska.*

Hollis dock on Prince of Wales Island to Ketchikan.

The terminal at Hollis is set up for side-loading, so the new ferry has a side door for loading and unloading at Hollis. The need for a bow thruster on the Prince of Wales ferry was established in part because it loads and unloads alternately from the stern and the starboard. Positioning and holding the vessel close to the dock in both cases requires the combined power of the bow thruster, and dual controllable pitch propellers.

This is where the powerful WESMAR 200 horsepower dual prop electric bow thruster earns its keep as it holds the ferry tight against the dock. In Ketchikan, the ferry backs into a new dock and loads and unloads through a center door in the stern. Here much of the work is done with the 72" controllable pitch propellers. Together the thruster and the controllable pitch propellers move the 96-ton vessel to and from the dock, front and back, port to starboard.

The car deck capacity is 30 autos or a combination of cars and up to 10

freight vans. To save space and weight, the vans are generally loaded and unloaded with small yard tractors at each end. Further accommodations have been made for large trucks to go in the middle or on the port side. Maximum height is just over 15 feet.

The Prince of Wales was built by Dakota Creek Industries Inc., Anacortes, Washington, 90 minutes north of Seattle one of the most modern, mediumsized shipyards in the United States. The facility is located on a deep water, protected channel in Anacortes and is recognized for its quality new vessel construction, ranging from high speed aluminum catamaran ferries to factory trawlers and ocean-going tugs. Ship repair, conversions, and upgrades have also been an important service provided to both U.S. and international ship owners.

Dakota Creek Project Manager on the Prince of Wales was Dave Longdale. He said the WESMAR unit works well and the installation was smooth.

