



ABCFI BEGINNINGS

More than fifteen years ago, a gathering of organizations and individuals within BC's marine sector came together to form the **West Coast Shipbuilding and Repair Forum (WCSRF)**. The informal forum brought together players from industry, government, and academia concerned with the development of a sustainable marine sector on the West Coast.

The aim of the WCSRF was "to promote a viable and competitive shipbuilding and repair industry on Canada's West Coast that can provide high quality, reliable, innovative services to domestic and international customers." The forum provided a focal point for raising and discussing matters of common interest that included building and sustaining a highly skilled workforce and safeguarding and expanding strategic industrial marine infrastructure necessary to support the industry.

The work of the WCSRF persevered and, where needed, created new trades unique and critical to the marine sector. It also led to the creation of the Industrial Marine Training and Applied Research Centre (IMTARC), now known as the Camosun Coastal Centre, which had done much to train and educate the sector's evolving workforce.

The WCSRF was always meant to be an informal group but there was a real need to carry out labour market and other studies on behalf of the sector so, in 2015, the WCSRF evolved into an incorporated, not-for-profit association known today as the **Association of British Columbia Marine Industries (ABCFI)**.

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

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THE MARINE INDUSTRY
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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RAINHOUSE AND ABCFI

ESTABLISHMENT

Although the genesis of ABCMI comes from the shipbuilding and ship repair sector, the association has worked to become much broader and all-encompassing in its representation of BC's industrial marine sector. Boatbuilders, boatyards, marine repair facilities, marine service companies, fleet owners, ocean and marine technology companies, shipyards, suppliers and manufacturers, labour groups, educators, designers, engineers, naval architects, marine lawyers, consultants, industrial development policy makers and public entities are all part of the ABCMI member base.



**Association of
British Columbia
Marine Industries**

ABCMI CORE ACTIVITIES

ABCMI's core activities include workforce and skills development; facilitating and enabling innovation and new technologies in the marine space, identifying and cultivating business opportunities, business and supplier development, supply chain training, supporting international business development to increase export of products, and services; and sectoral advocacy.

In short, ABCMI:

- Strives to represent and advocate as broadly as possible for the BC industrial marine sector.
- Spans all facets of the sector with activities that grow and strengthen companies and the sector's collective prosperity.
- Works with industry, labour, and education to ensure that there is a full supply of talent to fuel a diverse and highly skilled workforce.
- Identifies, facilitates and enables business opportunities.
- Promotes and supports the development of new technologies and enables innovation in the marine and ocean space.
- Represents companies and the sector in the national and international marketplaces and helps grow exports.
- Creates networking opportunities for companies seeking to grow.
- Connects the many stakeholders that have interests in the industry.

A KPMG study, commissioned by ABCMI in 2020, determined that the industrial marine sector in BC comprises over 1000 companies, and directly employs 22,000 individuals while sustaining 33,000 jobs and generating almost \$7 billion in total output in 2019. The sector is dominated by small firms, with half the companies in the sector employing 1-9 employees, and is expected to grow by 30% in employment by 2027.



THE INDUSTRY

Due to retirements, work transitions, and sector growth, an estimated 16,560 job openings are projected. This speaks to the absolute need to develop and apply pro-active human resource strategies focusing on attraction and recruitment, retention, education, and training in all areas where ABCMI is working with industry and government to make advances.

British Columbia's industrial marine sector is an integral and important part of the province's economy.

The British Columbia industrial marine sector is an integral part of the province's economy. The industrial marine sector provides goods and services that drive the marine economy, innovate ocean and marine technologies, and enable crucial supply chains and seaborne trade that support commerce and the well-being of British Columbians. The industrial marine sector is vibrant and growing, and its companies are delivering products that are leading the world and getting the attention of the global marketplace.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ABCFMI is known for creating networking opportunities, and they were very fortunate with their timing. They held their last in-person event in March 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic stopped all in-person gatherings and pushed the association to change how they help companies connect.

They pivoted to live webinars creating content with broad appeal to continue supporting their members, and since March 2020, they have held more than 30 live event webinars. They know their members prefer meeting face-to-face, but there's still a benefit on online communication, and they foresee having hybrid offerings of virtual and in-person events.

In efforts to return to in-person meetings, the association made sure to work closely with venues, developed event-specific covid protocols, and ensured all public health orders were strictly followed, which allowed them to host two events during the Covid-19 global pandemic. The first event was the BC Ferries Business Opportunities Forum in June 2020. The second was the annual Business Opportunities Conference and Trade Show in November 2021 at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

As with most not-for-profit associations, financial sustainability is one of the big challenges. It's difficult to plan and make financial commitments years into the future without having secure sources of core activity funding. ABCFMI relies on revenues from annual memberships and sponsorships and is continually looking to undertake projects that can benefit its members. They keep their membership fees low cost for it not to become a barrier to entry. They are delighted to see how members appreciate their efforts and continue to support and recognize the value of the membership.

ABCFMI also started working on an international business development plan to support BC companies with export activities, but the pandemic hit the pause button. They began working with other Canadian organizations to bring BC companies under the Canada brand at international trade shows and conferences. And now, they are hoping to pick up where they left off and expect to participate in Oceanology International this March with four BC companies in the Canada Pavilion.



MEET LEANN COLLINS

Leann has been with ABCMI since the very beginning and started working part-time shortly after its incorporation in 2015. She remembers taking the very first Membership cheque and being responsible for setting up the day-to-day operations. She is proud to see how their proposals turned into projects allowing her to start working full time.

Leann shared her memories from the early days and remembers how ABCMI was incubated in the office of one of their members, underpinning the support by the industry for this initiative.

In 2018, ABCMI received a multi-year project from Western Economic Diversification to Grow an Inclusive and Innovative West Coast Marine Industry. That project was their steppingstone and a real game-changer because it enabled ABCMI to sign a lease for its own office space and all the administrative and marketing support that goes along with it.

After fifteen years of believing in the significance of ABCMI and working to establish the association, Leann Collins is the association's Director and manages Projects & Stakeholder Relations. Her passion and determination have allowed her success in the association, and today she shares, "I enjoy being involved in all the activities associated with a lean and nimble organization. The best part is interacting with passionate people and continuing to learn about the exciting and innovative ideas BC companies are working on. Knowing that I play any role in helping to grow these companies is extremely satisfying."



RAINHOUSE AND ABCMI

Rainhouse and ABCMI's relationship goes way back to WCSRF's beginnings.

As a loyal forum member, Ray was there for WCSRF and its transition into ABCMI. He joined the board in the early years of the association's establishment as the Director at large from 2016 until 2019.

ABCMI's mission resonates with Ray as he firmly believes that having affinities and strengthening partnerships is a great way to promote industrial development and growth in the BC industry.

He fosters a collaborative environment, as he has witnessed how it's possible to build more efficient and fruitful projects when different teams and organizations work together towards the same goal.



Leann Collins presenting the People's Choice Award at the Rainhouse Engineering Showcase.

ABCMI has been a massive help to Rainhouse by providing exposure to a broad range of companies in the marine industries and fomenting executive relationships. Whether through social events, conferences, or even online sessions, ABCMI has continually provided value to small and medium-sized organizations that compete with large corporations to find their place in essential projects or gain collaboration.

Moreover, Rainhouse couldn't ask for a better ally than ABCMI when hosting events. For instance, we started our Annual Engineering Showcase, and Leann provided her expertise, charisma, and people skills paramount for the event's success. She helped us set ideals, brought people together, and helped us achieve our mission to promote engineering projects from grade and university students.

ABCMI has united marine industries throughout the west coast and provides the tools to improve business practices and growth. Rainhouse is thrilled to see SMEs having proper representation and witnessing how ABCMI became essential for many Canadian West Coast businesses.