WASHINGTON – The Navy today awarded Austal USA, Mobile, Ala., a $185,433,564 fixed-price incentive contract modification for detail design and construction of a Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV). The contract modification also includes options for the construction of nine additional ships and associated shore-based spares.

“This is an exciting procurement for the Navy, Marine Corps and Army. We are very excited to be getting this new asset,” said Rear Adm. Willam E. Landay III, Program Executive Officer for Ships. “After operating similar, leased high-speed vessels in the past, the Services agree that this platform is urgently needed. This is a perfect example of the military branches working together to define and execute a mutually beneficial capability.”

The JHSV program is a joint effort between the Army and the Navy to acquire high-speed vessels for the two branches of the U.S. military. JHSV will be used for fast intra-theater transportation of troops, military vehicles and equipment. The U.S. military currently leases two HSVs each capable of achieving speeds of more than 30 knots.

A Memorandum of Agreement allows the U.S. Navy to use its surface ship acquisition expertise in acquiring five vessels for the Army. The JHSV program merges the Army Theater Support Vessel and the Navy High Speed Connector programs, taking advantage of the inherent commonality between the two programs.

JHSV will be capable of transporting 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots. The ships will be capable of operating in shallow-draft ports and waterways, interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, and on/off-loading a combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank (M1A2). Other joint requirements include an aviation flight deck to support day and night air vehicle launch and recovery operations. JHSV will be operational in Sea State 3 and survivable in Sea State 7. Also, JHSV will have airline style seating for more than 300 embarked forces and fixed berthing for approximately 100 more.

The contract calls for a total of 10 ships, five to be operated by the Navy and five to be operated by the Army. The Army will own and operate the Army-funded vessels after procurement. Army responsibilities for their vessels will include crew training and vessel maintenance. The Navy will have the same responsibilities for the Navy-funded vessels. The first ship, an Army vessel, is expected to be delivered in 2011. The first Navy JHSV will be delivered in 2012.

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