



Seaspan operates the largest solid-bottom drydock operation on the west coast of the Americas at its Victoria Shipyards location, where they repair and refit vessels ranging from submarines and frigates to barges and cruise ships. Their growing client base includes the Royal Canadian Navy, tug and barge operators, cruise ship companies, commercial fishing operations, and the New Zealand navy (through Lockheed Martin).

#### Operations

Victoria Shipyards offers ship repair and conversion for frigates, submarines, commercial vessels and special projects. The shipyard operates within the federally owned Esquimalt graving dock.

**Year founded** 1994

**Primary Market** Domestic and international

**Employees** 1,200 full-time

## Q & A

Joe O'Rourke | VP General Manager

[www.seaspan.com](http://www.seaspan.com)

#### Describe the nature of the workforce in Victoria.

The Island lifestyle, the climate, natural beauty and the outdoor type of culture yields us access to a pretty darn good workforce. We also do have a lot of youth who go through apprenticeship or training and then go off to Alberta to work the oilfields. But at some time, when they want to stop being travelling bodies and settle down, plant themselves and raise some kids, they have a tendency to come back to the Island.

#### What is your relationship with academic institutions?

Seaspan has basically funded a chair at UVic and we have contributed money for the metal fabrication skill set, equipment, things like that. Camosun College is our closest partner and our largest pipeline going

“When one Canadian dollar is worth 80 cents US, or just below, we can compete quite effectively with competitors on the West Coast.”

Joe O'Rourke

in to our apprenticeship program. We do believe they're supportive and we also support them. We're now talking with them about our future needs, such as providing our workers with advanced skills.

### Are there opportunities for smaller companies to work with Seaspan?

There's always opportunities because we continue to grow. We do have a preference for local suppliers first, Canadian suppliers second, which is actually a requirement on some federal contracts. So we're definitely moving towards Canadian suppliers and the smaller ones rather than the big ones.

### Success in the past year?

Last year, this year and next year we're at the highest volume in our history, mainly because of two projects. The frigates continue to grow and we won the first LNG dual-conversion on a major vessel with TOTE Maritime. We pushed ourselves to the next level, which is a workforce that averages weeks as high as 1,200 people that execute across our four different platforms.

### What are your plans moving forward?

Canada's navy on the West Coast is going to increase in size and since they're our primary customer, that is going to drive staffing and revenue growth all by itself. There's natural growth in revenue just in ship repair looking after our primary customers and commercial customers. There's also a program headed by TELUS that we're starting to talk to them about, and there's some market in LNG conversions but you've got to find the right partner.

