

All Pawtucket All The Time

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Community Rallies Behind Rhode Island's Tall Ship Oliver Hazard Perry

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Hull Moored in Newport Harbor for the Summer

NEWPORT, R.I. (June 10, 2009) - The 132-foot hull of Rhode Island's [Tall Ship Oliver Hazard Perry](#) has a new home for the summer. It sits comfortably and rather ominously (due to its impressive size) on a Tall Ship mooring in Newport Harbor, awaiting its transfer to Warren, Rhode Island's Blount Marine for construction of its deck and interior. The final fitting out of its

spars, rigging and hardware will take place on the Newport waterfront at a location accessible for public viewing. When it is ready to sail in 2011 the *Oliver Hazard Perry* will be a 207-foot, three-masted square-rigged Class A Tall Ship, rivaling the height of Trinity Church steeple, which currently stands as the most iconic structure on Newport's historic waterfront



Now adorned with a splash of white topside paint to make it stand out in the harbor, *Oliver Hazard Perry*'s black hull was bought last fall by the non-profit organization [Tall Ships Rhode Island](#) (TSRI), and towed 892 miles from its former home in Amherstburg, Ontario to a berth provided by Bowen's Wharf. Then in May, with a tow sponsored by **Gencorp Insurance Group (East Greenwich, R.I.)**, and **Hunt Marine (Warwick, R.I.)** the ship moved across Newport Harbor to the New York Yacht Club's Harbour Court for an "All Hands on Deck" fund

raiser. The gala affair, with Governor and Mrs. Donald L. Carcieri leading its Honorary Chairs, raised over \$50,000 and confirmed Rhode Island's and the Tall Ship community's long-term commitment to the *Oliver Hazard Perry* project.

“We are very excited that so many people - history buffs, Tall Ship aficionados, yachting enthusiasts, marine education and community leaders — have rallied behind this,” said TSRI Chair Bart Dunbar (Newport, R.I.), who explained that the *Oliver Hazard Perry* will be a 21st Century version of the naval vessels used in the Battle of Lake Erie, where Rhode Island war hero Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry commanded a victorious fleet. “Bank Newport was the

first business to step up to the plate, with a \$25,000 grant, and now it has guaranteed a \$1.5 million loan to further support the construction stages of the ship. When completed, the *Oliver Hazard Perry* will be the largest privately owned, active sailing training



ship in the United States, exceeded in size only by the Coast Guard's barque *Eagle*.”

With this extraordinary ship, TSRI, which has been dedicated to education at sea for more than a decade, plans to proudly proclaim and advance the Ocean State's rich maritime heritage: past, present and future. The ship will integrate with the school systems, Rhode Island's marine trades industry and the various waterfront-related programs in the state for both youths and adults. In the summer, it will sail in New England with trips to Canada and the Great Lakes, while in the winter it will sail in the Caribbean. Plans are for it to play a significant role in the country's planned Bicentennial Celebration of the War of 1812.

TSRI has now raised over one-third of the \$5.7 million dollars needed to complete the transformation of the *Oliver Hazard Perry*. Much of the construction's first phase has been completed: the steel hull has been built, fuel and water tanks installed, and shafts and propellers fitted for a twin-engine propulsion system. Steel platforms await the ship's twin generators, while initial work on a bow thruster and a mechanically sophisticated rudder system has begun.

“Once completed, the *Oliver Hazard Perry* will be owned and operated in trust for the people of Rhode Island by Tall Ships Rhode Island,” said Dunbar. “She will be based in Newport, serve America and sail the world as an ambassador of our proud state.”

The success of the Tall Ship *Oliver Hazard Perry* relies on the generosity of donors and supporters, both large and small, from individuals and businesses to students and corporations. The project is supported by the Governor’s office, the Newport County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and the Newport City Council, among other organizations. To make a gift or donation to the project, contact [Perry Lewis](#) at the TSRI office, 49B Bowen’s Wharf, Newport, R.I., 02840, tel. 401-841-0080, tsri07@verizon.net, or visit <http://www.tallshipsrhodeisland.org>