

Acquisition Update: Coast Guard Completes NAIS Along Coastline Of Contiguous U.S. With Great Lakes Install

July 24, 2015

The Coast Guard installed Nationwide Automatic Identification System equipment along the shores of the Great Lakes and in the ports of Chicago and Duluth-Superior in June, completing coverage for the shorelines of the contiguous United States.

NAIS allows the Coast Guard to observe vessel traffic in U.S. territorial waters and broadcast navigational and safety information to ships. The system uses digital radio technology to voicelessly communicate with ships carrying an Automatic Identification System, which is required on all passenger vessels and most ships longer than 65 feet. During operational testing, ports used the system to set up environmental protection areas, clear traffic for docking cruise ships and create a safety zone around the America's Cup sailing races. NAIS can also transmit electronic buoys to mark hazards such as bridge supports to help pilots navigate in low-visibility conditions.

The NAIS program will install the system in ports along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and in Alaska by the end of 2016. Those locations currently have an interim capability that allows them to receive navigational information but not send it.

