

CASE STUDY: RELIABLE POWER DOESN'T TAKE A HOLIDAY

CUSTOMER

Marquette
Transportation
Company

LOCATION

US

CAT DEALER

Boyd Cat

PRODUCT

Cat Marine
Engines

INDUSTRY

Inland Waterway

MARQUETTE TRANSPORTATION TEAMS UP WITH BOYD CAT® TO KEEP GOODS MOVING 24/7/365

Boats don't slow down for the holidays — at least not the ones operated by Marquette Transportation. The Kentucky-based company's 134 vessels move essential goods across U.S. waterways 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

So, what happens when an engine on one of those boats encounters a problem at 10:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve? The Marquette team doesn't panic. They just get on the phone to Cat® dealer Boyd Cat.

"I can't think of a time we've asked them to send a team to a vessel that was down and the answer was, 'We can't get to it' or 'It'll be a couple of days,'" says Josh Esper, executive vice president of engineering and procurement for Marquette. "They always figure out how to get us the support we need. We're extremely confident they'll do everything in their power to stand behind their products and provide the service our business demands."

THREE DECADES ON THE WATER

Building a relationship that strong doesn't happen overnight. Marquette began purchasing Cat marine engines from Whayne Supply (which was purchased by Boyd Cat in 2020) in 1992. The first engines, three 3606s and two 3612s, were for the Justin Paul Eckstein and Alix Anne Eckstein, respectively. Then, between 1997 and 2000, the company built three new boats powered by Cat engines.

"I wasn't around back then, but I've heard the stories," Esper says. "We were the first operator of towboats with Cat 3600 engines. We were the pioneers of putting these high-horsepower, medium-speed Cat diesel engines on the river."

All five of those original Cat powered vessels are still running strong today. "These vessels remain core to our vessel fleet and operate at very high annual utilization rates," Esper says. "Very rarely do we pull them out of service."



POWER FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Reliable power is critical for Marquette, which transports primarily grain but also dozens of other much-needed commodities — aggregates, fertilizer, salt, building materials, energy products, petrochemicals and wind turbine blades, just to name a few.

“If we aren’t moving, we aren’t providing our customers the high level of service they expect from Marquette,” Esper says.



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-JOSH ESPER,
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
OF ENGINEERING AND
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Keeping vessels on the water requires reliable power. That’s why Marquette operates 170 Cat marine engines across its fleet today — and continues to work closely with both Caterpillar and Boyd Cat on new engine developments.

“We’ve used Marquette as a test bed for new innovations and technologies over the years,” says Neilly Allen, marine engine product support representative at Boyd Cat. “They’ve been a great partner in helping us ensure our products are meeting the needs of dynamic river operations.”

Esper expects that to continue as companies in the marine industry take on new challenges in the coming decades.

“We are entering some very interesting times in the next 10 years when it comes to green initiatives and reducing our carbon footprint,” he says. “Our mode of transportation is the safest and most environmentally friendly compared to trucking and rail, but we are all evaluating opportunities to further enhance the efficiency of our vessels. There are a lot of innovative Cat products out there, and we look forward to continuing to evolve with state-of-the-art equipment.”

ROUND-THE-CLOCK SUPPORT

For Marquette, keeping employees safe is mission #1. Moving cargo more efficiently is always a priority. To achieve these goals — and meet its customers’ demanding requirements — the company needs its vessels to operate as reliably as possible, every minute of every day.

That’s where the relationship with Boyd Cat takes center stage.

“Caterpillar has been a strong partner for Marquette,” Esper says. “Obviously engine reliability and parts availability matter, but what really counts is the support you have behind you when a boat goes down on Christmas Eve or Easter Sunday. We can absolutely count on Boyd Cat to help us mitigate any situation no matter what day it is or what time of day it is.”

As Marquette continues to look for ways to increase performance and drive productivity on board its vessels, Esper is confident the company will keep partnering with Caterpillar and Boyd Cat for solutions.

“We wouldn’t have 170 Cat engines in our boats if we didn’t think Caterpillar had a strong products and excellent service,” he says.