



SD Port OKs Koehler Kraft \$1.125 Million Boatyard Concept

The San Diego Port Commission has unanimously approved a \$1.125 million redevelopment concept for the Koehler Kraft Co. boatyard on Shelter Island that will make it one of the most modern small-craft repair facilities in San Diego, the company said.

The San Diego Port Commission approved the Koehler Kraft redevelopment plan in January 2003. Concept approval granted April 13 represents the last major hurdle before construction can begin this summer.

Improvements already completed at the yard bring the total cost of the renovation to \$2.2 million.

Work is expected to begin this summer following the 14th annual San Diego Wooden Boat Festival, held every year at

Koehler Kraft on Father's Day weekend. The redevelopment should be completed by mid-2005.

"I think my father would be proud to see the boatyard he established more than 65 years ago get launched into the 21st century," said C.F. Koehler, owner of Koehler Kraft Co., Inc.

"The new yard facilities and our team of marine experts will enable us to provide the highest level of service to owners of modern, high-end craft, as well as wood-en-boat owners," he added.

The redevelopment plan calls for a new 9,000 square-foot boat-repair shop, which would include in-floor dust collection and drainage systems for capturing liquids and solids, preventing their release into the environment.



Log File Photo

REDEVELOPMENT APPROVED — The San Diego Port Commission has approved a \$1.125 million redevelopment concept for the Koehler Kraft boatyard. The redevelopment is expected to be completed by mid-2005.

When construction is completed, Koehler Kraft boatyard will be expanded 50 percent to accommodate 20 boats up to 70 feet in length, including eight indoor bays.

The plan will incorporate a railroad cradle system for hauling boats out of the water without the height requirements of other systems, such as cranes or Travelifts.

Koehler Kraft was founded by C.F. Koehler's father Clarence F. Koehler Sr. in 1938 in downtown San Diego, before the existence of Shelter Island. The yard is San Diego's oldest family owned boatyard.

Many consider Koehler Kraft itself to be a notable part of San Diego's maritime history and between the late 1930s and the 1960s, the yard built a line of semi-custom wooden powerboats ranging in size from 17 to 32 feet.

In recent years, Koehler Kraft has become a Southern California Mecca for wooden-boat enthusiasts and the yard founded and has hosted the San Diego Wooden Boat Festival for six years.

C.F. Koehler, 39, has become well known for his innovative methods utilizing high-tech materials to keep traditional wooden boats afloat.

The yard has restored five Pacific Class sloops, a class of 32-foot racing sailboats that was popular in the 1930s.

Thanks in part to Koehler's work, PCs are enjoying a renaissance, and San Diego Bay is now home to a fleet of close to 20 of the sleek racers, which can often be seen sailing on weekends.

In March 2003, Koehler Kraft relaunched *Wings*, the oldest known existing PC, restored for the San Diego Maritime Museum.

Wings is an important part of San Diego history and was owned and raced by several prominent San Diego families. *Wings* underwent an extensive, year-long reconstruction by Koehler Kraft shipwrights and is in near-new condition.

Koehler Kraft currently employs nine skilled shipwrights, mechanics, and support staff. Roughly 500 boats visit the yard every year for repairs.

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