American owners look to LNG

Issaquah is one of six in its class proposed for an LNG propulsion retrofit

Washington State Ferries (WSF) has received the results of a study into the economic viability of running its newbuild 144-car ferries on LNG. US-based naval architects, Glosten Associates, reported that LNG has the potential to reduce WSF's fuel costs by 40 to 50 per cent, as well as significantly cutting its emissions.

Furthermore, WSF proposed trialling LNG aboard the Issaquah class. David Moseley, WSF's assistant secretary, said, "There are six vessels in this class, more than any other in WSF. This provides the greatest opportunity to save conversion and operational costs, and decrease environmental impact. The Issaquah vessels have an open sun deck which would provide space for the LNG tanks.

"Costs for the first conversion are estimated as US$14.5 million. The total investment would be approximately US$65 million. The savings in current fuel pricing for marine diesel compared to LNG would be US$9 million if all six Issaquah Class vessels were converted, equating to a seven-year return on investment."

Elsewhere, Lloyd's Register reports that Canada's BC Ferries is also investigating retrofitting one of its mid-life ferries with LNG propulsion in drydock in 2014. In parallel, plans are being laid to build new LNG-powered ships for this fleet.

French battery ferries to launch in 2012

Keolis, France's largest private sector transportation group, will introduce a hybrid ferry service in Bordeaux across the Garonne river. The shuttle service will begin in 2012 and is expected to carry around 200,000 passengers per year.

Two diesel-electric ferries will operate the service, with electric power being provided by 140 kWh Saft lithium-ion batteries. The quiet, efficient, low emission power should enable the Urban Community of Bordeaux to meet stringent environmental targets.

One battery aboard each vessel will work in conjunction with a diesel engine. The batteries will be charged overnight from the local grid and during diesel propulsion. A fully charged battery should provide six hours of autonomous operation.

in brief

- **Construction of Viking Line's 214m LNG cruiseferry has begun at STX Finland, Turku.**
- **Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology's 10m battery-powered *Raicho I* has won the Japan Society of Naval Architects and Ocean Engineers' small passenger ship award.**
- **CalMac chose Glasgow's Ferguson Shipbuilders to build its two 23-car/150-passenger ferries, powered by batteries and diesel.**
- **SeaFrance's main staff union, the CFDT, has filed a takeover bid for the ailing cross-Channel operator. DFDS and LD Lines have also made a joint bid.**
- **Vigor Industrial (ex Todd Pacific Shipyards) delivered the third and final vessel in Washington State Ferries' 64-car Kwa-di Tabil class, *Kennewick*, in November.**
- **Flensburger Förde Reederei Seetouristik (FRS) has founded a Danish daughter company, Kattegat-Ruten, following the purchase of the Aarhus to Kalundborg route from Mols-Linien.**
- **The first of Attica's 145.9m newbuild pair, *Blue Star Delos*, has been delivered from Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering in Korea.**