

## **Big News! Theodore Tugboat to Become Marine Career Ambassador**

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Today we are announcing that Nova Scotia's life-sized TV replica tugboat, Theodore Too, has been acquired by Blair McKeil (founder of McKeil Marine, one of Canada's leading marine service providers). In his new role, Theodore will embark on new promotional missions, spanning ports throughout the Great Lakes and Atlantic Canada.

Theodore's new owner, Blair McKeil has deep connections to the Maritimes and, specifically, Nova Scotia. His paternal grandfather and his father hail from Pugwash, and his maternal grandfather was from Cape Breton. McKeil is a regular visitor to Nova Scotia and has business interests in the province. McKeil's strong personal interest in encouraging youth to choose marine industry careers prompted him to invite Theodore to join the cause.

"We really need Theodore's help engaging more awareness among young people, of the very satisfying and lucrative marine career options available," said Blair McKeil, "Theodore will be a very busy 21-year old- traveling, port to port, with such promotions, and, of course, he'll continue to be an ambassador for the Maritimes and Nova Scotia throughout.". Theodore's launching point for these promotional missions will his new homeport: Hamilton, Ontario. According to the Canadian Marine Industry Foundation (CMIF), the Canadian marine sector is facing a severe labour shortage within the next decade, the impacts of which are already being felt in the industry. The CMIF estimates that over 10,000 new employees will be required to replace retiring captains, officers, marine port workers and engineers.

"When we listed Theodore for sale several months ago, we focused on helping him create a new chapter that would harmonize with his roots," said Dennis Campbell, CEO, Ambassatours Gray Line, "While fielding inquiries from all over the world, it was the offer from Blair McKeil that felt like the best fit for Theodore's personality, experience and potential."

Although Theodore will soon be based in Hamilton, Campbell is confident that Maritimers will still see Theodore during his port to port promotional tours. It is also expected that Theodore will continue his philanthropic activities.

Prior to becoming a Halifax Harbour tour vessel (operated by Murphy's and Ambassatours), Theodore spent many summers plying the Great Lakes (with other Canadian ports in between), and down the full expanse of the US eastern seaboard (as far as Florida) representing and promoting Nova Scotia as a destination.

Theodore is expected to depart for Hamilton later this spring - his specific departure date subject to weather and inter-provincial Covid protocols.