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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*EDC launches Mariner Training Initiative for island workers*

In response to the critical lack of maritime and ferry transportation workers, and the continued need for high-wage careers for islanders, the EDC has launched a *Mariner Training Initiative*.

Workers seeking a new career are invited to the EDC's new program on mariner workforce development. First, on Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the EDC will offer a one-day workshop – *Getting Started in Maritime Careers* – at Seafarers Worldwide in Anacortes. The workshop will cover career options and pathways while providing hands-on experience with skills expected of mariners, such as ropes, life rafts, and firefighting.

Participants who successfully complete the workshop may then apply for coaching and financial support to defray costs of obtaining their Ordinary Seaman Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). The EDC will pay for successful applicants' TWIC card and MMC applications, and for the Coast Guard physical and drug test, and assist applicants through the process.

To register, please visit the EDC's website at [www.sanjuansedc.org/trades](http://www.sanjuansedc.org/trades). For more information, email the EDC Trades Coordinator at mickey@sanjuansedc.org.

Applicants must be 18 years old or older and residents of San Juan County. Space is limited and likely to fill quickly. There is a \$20 fee to register for the workshop. The number of awards will depend on funds available, and the EDC gratefully invites donors to support the program; please visit [www.sanjuansedc.org/mariner](http://www.sanjuansedc.org/mariner) for more information.

This program is intended to help create the workforce that islanders depend on for transportation. The ferry cancellations and delays highlight the community's dependence on a robust maritime workforce, and the Ordinary Seaman MMC is a requirement for applicants for ferry crew positions. Ferry and other maritime careers are good careers with many opportunities; however, obtaining the MMC is a complex and expensive process. The EDC's program intends to lower this barrier.

This program is made possible by the generosity of private donors, and grants from the Harvest Foundation, San Juan County, the Town of Friday Harbor, the Port of Friday Harbor, the Raynier Institute and Foundation, and other funders of the EDC's Trades Training Initiative and our *Adopt a Future Mariner* Program. The EDC offers special thanks to the Boden, Corbin, Levinson, Madsen, and VanHynning families, and the many other individual donors whose support was critical to launching training programs in 2021 and 2022.

*The San Juan County Economic Development Council (EDC) strives to support small rural enterprises, and conduct projects to stimulate new job creation, strengthen the economic base for working families, and support overall quality of life for islanders.*

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