The Coast Guard is acquiring the offshore patrol cutter to address its long-term need for cutters capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups to conduct law enforcement, search and rescue, homeland security and defense missions across a full range of anticipated operational conditions.

Compared to the 210-foot and 270-foot medium endurance cutters it will replace, the OPC will feature increased range and endurance; improved seakeeping; a larger flight deck to accommodate helicopters and unmanned aircraft; and the latest command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment.

The Coast Guard is using a two-phased design-build strategy to acquire the OPC. This approach establishes stable requirements and design early in the acquisition to help mitigate cost and schedule risks. The Coast Guard awarded preliminary and contract design awards to three vendors – Bollinger Shipyards Lockport LLC, Eastern Shipbuilding Group Inc. and General Dynamics, Bath Iron Works – in February 2014. After evaluating an extensive range of contract deliverables submitted by each of the phase I contractors, the service will select one vendor to complete phase II, which includes detail design and options for construction of up to nine OPCs.

For updates on the OPC, visit the program’s website at http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/opc/