On May 3, 2012, Congressman Bonner "authenticated the keel" for AUSTAL's newest Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV-3) which is being built for the U.S. Navy. During the ceremony, Congressman Bonner was joined by AUSTAL's Jeff Cellon in welding a plate which will be attached to the ship. Shown above, a JHSV-3 "module", and Congressman Bonner and Jeff Cellon. (Photo, courtesy of AUSTAL USA)

Below are excerpts from Congressman Bonner's remarks at the JHSV-3 Keel-Laying Ceremony:

The AUSTAL JHSV program - like its LCS line - is already living up to expectation.

JHSV-1, the USS Spearhead, was launched in September and just completed Builder's Sea Trials in the Gulf of Mexico on April 19th.

The Spearhead's shakedown included more than 50 "demonstration events" to verify that the ship and all of its systems meet Navy standards.

The JHSV's high-speed turns as well as "ahead" and "astern" maneuvers were near textbook perfect. The vessel's stability and agility are a testament to AUSTAL's sound engineering and a dedicated and talented workforce.

The high quality of work performed here is not the only benefit to the American taxpayer who is investing $5.1 billion collectively in AUSTAL's JHSV and LCS programs. Increases in efficiency have resulted in faster ship completion times.

AUSTAL's modular manufacturing facility, like its two cutting-edge ship designs - is state of the art. I have walked through the shipyard and personally inspected the construction process of each type of ship. There is no waste of materials and every effort is made to maximize efficiency.

AUSTAL is not only proud of its tremendously skilled workers, but also its safety record. For the fourth year in a row AUSTAL USA has won the Shipbuilders Council of America annual Award for Excellence in Safety, earned by member shipyards with the lowest rate of recordable workplace injuries. Given the size of the workforce – already approaching the largest in Mobile – and the complexity of the work performed here, Austal's safety performance is remarkable.

Mobile has a proud history associated with Navy shipbuilding and AUSTAL continues that tradition with world class vessels like that JHSV.