Mercury Marine is hoping that two new 18,000-gallon testing tanks will help the engine manufacturer gain share in saltwater markets.

Mercury will be able to take partial advantage of a $20 million expansion at its Fond du Lac, Wis., headquarters beginning in June, even though the endeavor won’t be completed until late in 2013, Mercury spokesman Steve Fleming told Trade Only Today.

“We’re augmenting our ability to create more and larger products with the addition of a new engineering segment,” Fleming told Trade Only. “We will have larger testing facilities. That’s really going to enable us in product development, particularly in the saltwater market product lineup.”

The 17,000-square-foot facility is attached to the 1.5-million-square-foot facility, Fleming said. The two testing tanks are massive, measuring 15 by 22 feet, and 9 feet deep.

“They’re huge and provide a great opportunity for more testing,” Fleming said.

Product development has been a major focus of the Brunswick Boat Group and Mercury since the recession took its toll on the marine industry. The company had announced the expansion after opting to close its Mercury plant in Stillwater, Okla., during a consolidation that followed the recession.

Brunswick CEO Dusty McCoy told investors and analysts during a first-quarter earnings call that there are plans in place to further penetrate saltwater markets, but that it’s too soon to tell whether they are working.

“Boston Whaler’s 100 percent Mercury. It's doing a nice job of gaining shares, so of course, we're getting that pull-through,” McCoy told analysts last week. “That's a part of the market. Even in this difficult, weather-driven retail first quarter, that improved. So my statement at this point in time is that we're getting slight market share gain, but now we need to let all the programs we've put in place evolve into the selling season.”