

SCA

small craft advisory

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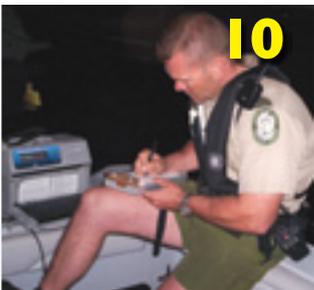
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ABOUT THE COVER

An officer and boaters await the results of a portable breath testing device. Over the last decade, alcohol has continued to play a major role in approximately one quarter of all boating-related deaths. Government agencies and nonprofit organizations across the country are working to educate boaters on the dangers of mixing alcohol and boating.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission photo



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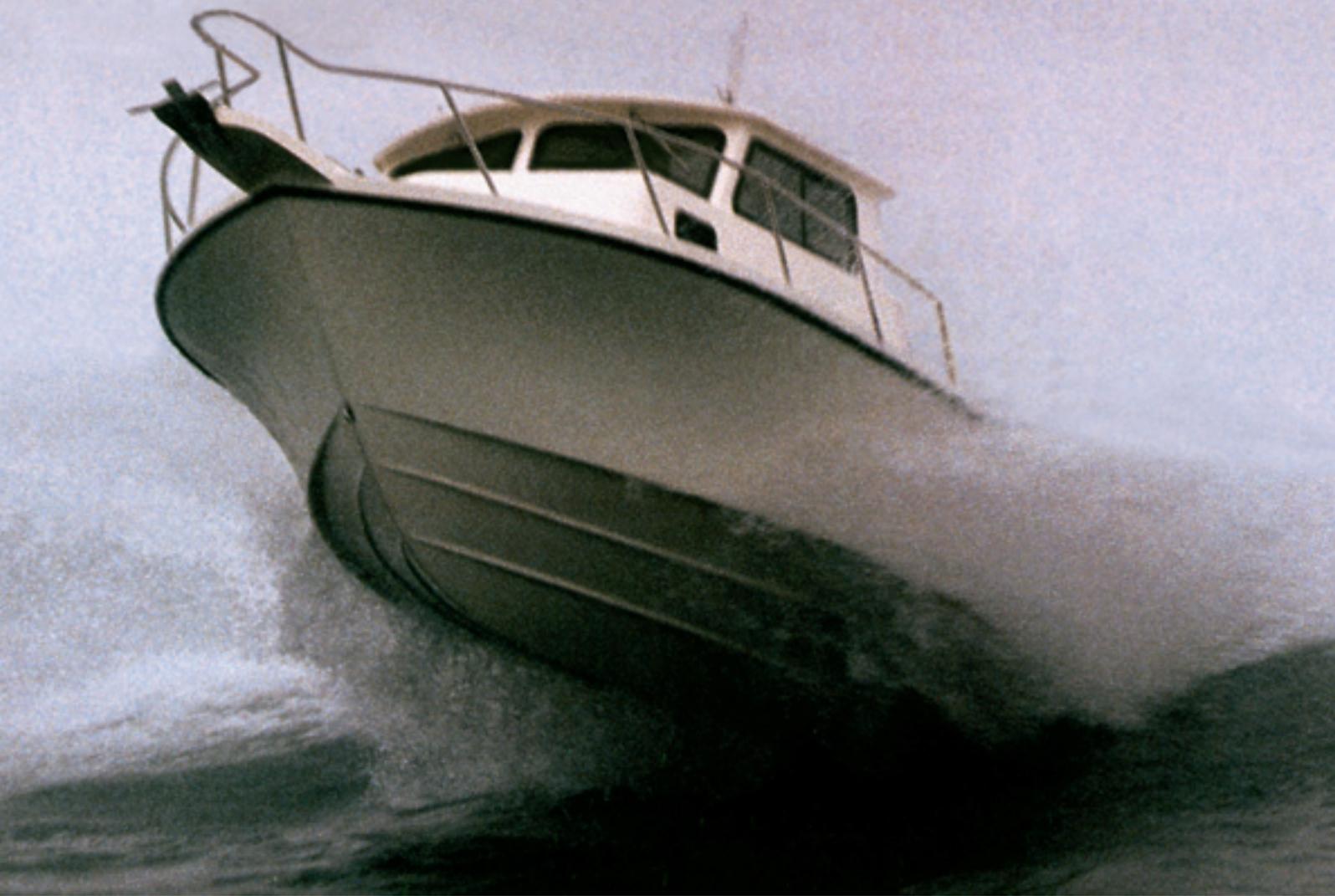
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BUI Enforcement Remains Critical



Richard Moore
NASBLA President



John Johnson
NASBLA Executive Director

As we reach full stride in another recreational boating season, numerous state agencies are facing one of the toughest economic periods any of us can recall. State budgets are stretched beyond capacity and virtually every aspect of state government is being asked to do more with less. From coast to coast, historic revenue shortfalls are forcing boating programs to reduce officers and on-water patrols, curtail nonessential purchases and activities, and reallocate critical resources while we weather this protracted economic storm. Some agencies are even fighting for their very survival.

Despite the economic downturn, however, the challenges for boating safety continue unabated. Overall boating participation might even be on the upswing as families and outdoor recreationists choose to vacation and recreate closer to home. Longer, more expensive trips may be postponed in favor of local outings, and groups of boaters may choose to cruise less and raft-up together more to save money on fuel and other related costs.

It is hard to predict just how individual families and boaters will respond to these tough financial times, but based on growing evidence throughout the U.S. and Canada, one thing consumers are not consuming less of is alcohol. Over the last 12 months alcohol sales have been reported to be on the increase anywhere from 5 to 15 percent across North America. One can only assume that alcohol consumption rates are higher as well. This, combined with our widespread and long-held cultural acceptance of drinking and pleasure boating and, well, you do the math.

Whether we can predict an uptick in incidents of boating under the influence (BUI) or not, data for the last 10 years and longer indicates that as many 20 to 25 percent or more of all boating-related fatalities nationwide involve alcohol use. That statistic hasn't changed a lot in the last decade, probably because human nature has not changed much either. But the way states respond to this challenge has changed.

First, at least among law enforcement professionals, and to a lesser extent the boating public, there is much less tolerance for alcohol use, and especially alcohol abuse, on our water-

ways. Thanks to a general shift in cultural attitudes where we no longer look the other way regarding impaired driving, there is a much greater awareness of the dangers of drinking and boating as well.

Second, state boating programs are increasingly sharing manpower and expertise to concentrate scarce resources for higher impact initiatives by cooperatively targeting shared waterways with special BUI enforcement events and patrols. State political boundaries are easily blurred (literally and figuratively) as impaired boaters from multi-state areas congregate on a common stretch of river or in a popular party cove that affects multiple jurisdictions, so it makes good sense for our collective resources to follow the action.

Finally, the states are working together through NASBLA and on their own to raise the bar on training for BUI detection and enforcement to make it easier for marine patrol officers to spot impaired operators and to give them the tools for successfully preparing BUI cases for prosecution. Since 2004, working under grants from the U.S. Coast Guard, NASBLA and its participating states have trained hundreds of marine law enforcement officers in techniques and technologies for getting impaired boaters off the water.

As we look to the future, NASBLA is in the final phase of a multi-year research and development project that will take BUI enforcement to a completely new level as we work with researchers at the Southern California Research Institute to devise and adapt a new generation of standardized field sobriety tests developed specifically for use in on-the-water scenarios. Given the unique challenges that often accompany BUI field tests on the water, the new afloat battery of tests will give officers a menu of methods that can be administered to subjects in a seated position. This could significantly expedite the BUI detection process, particularly in remote areas, and lead to stronger cases and more effective prosecutions over time.

As many of our readers are already aware, this year on June 26-28, NASBLA will launch the first-ever nationwide BUI enforcement initiative.

continued on page 16

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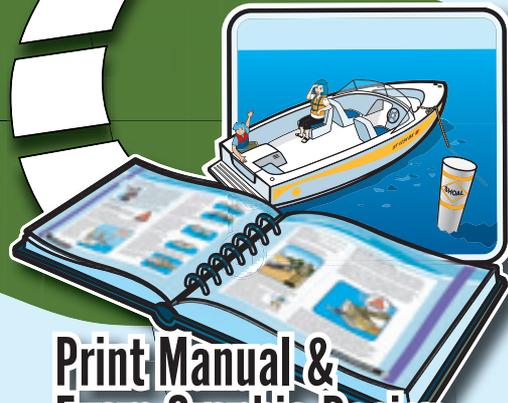
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AFWA, NASBLA Meet

Earlier this spring, NASBLA Executive Director John Johnson and Deputy Director Ron Sarver, along with NASBLA President Richard Moore, met with Matt Hogan, executive director of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, and Ron Regan, resources director and reauthorization liaison. The five had a very productive meeting and fully anticipate the enhanced relationships between AFWA and NASBLA to yield fruit well into the future.



NASBLA Presents Legislative Award to Senator Nelson

NASBLA President Richard Moore, NASBLA Executive Director John Johnson and NASBLA Deputy Director Ron Sarver (not pictured) recently presented NASBLA's Legislative Award to Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida for his efforts related to passage of the Clean Boating Act of 2008. Sen. Nelson is a tremendous supporter of boating-related issues both in Florida and across the nation.



Staff photo

New Nav Rules Training Program Available

NASBLA has developed a comprehensive national Navigation Rules training program. Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, this program is being distributed to each of the state boating law

administrators (BLAs) as well as other agencies that conduct marine law enforcement training.

Created especially for marine law enforcement officers, the Navigation Rules training program is comprised of an introductory PowerPoint presentation, practical exercises, an on-water checklist, final exam and a quick reference guide to the Navigation Rules. Each BLA will receive one set of training materials in the mail in the coming weeks. BLAs may order additional sets free of charge (a small shipping fee will be required) through the NASBLA online store while supplies last.

If you have any questions about this training program, please contact Gail Kulp at gail@nasbla.org.

NASBLA's BUI Course Accepted for Accreditation Pilot Project

NASBLA's Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement course was accepted as a participant in the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Certificate Accreditation Program (ANSI-CAP) pilot project. NASBLA is one of 10 organizations that will be participating in the pilot program.

Certificate programs will be evaluated for potential accreditation against the standard ASTM E2659-09, Standard Practice for Certificate Programs. This American National Standard, developed by ASTM International, was selected by the ANSI-CAP Accreditation Committee, a group of volunteer leaders who were chosen for their expertise in the field.

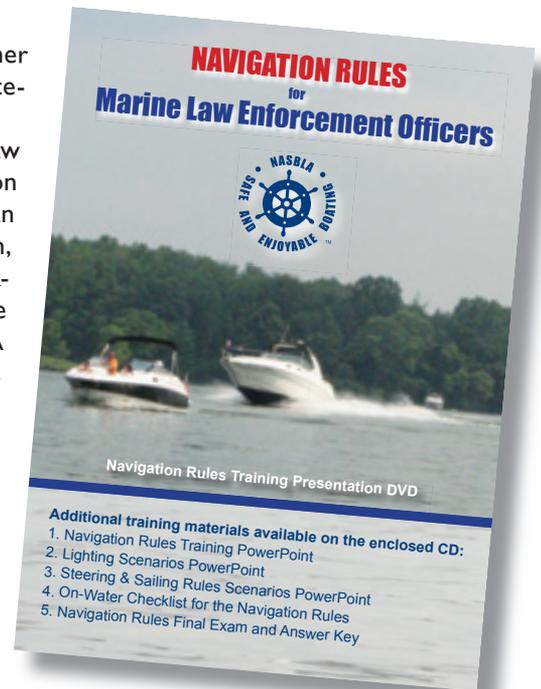
Others represented in the pilot group include government agencies, educational institutions and private industry. NASBLA will submit initial paperwork in late August. The on-sight audit will occur this fall. NASBLA will also be included in the review of the standard and audit procedures, with input on improvements to both aspects of the program.

Past NASBLA President Honored by Maine Senate

Major John Fetterman, coastal boating law administrator for Maine and the immediate past president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), received a "Legislative Sentiment" from Senator Dennis Damon earlier this spring.

In the Sentiment, which was read in the Senate on March 19, 2009, Senator Damon cited the undertakings that Major Fetterman achieved during his term as NASBLA's President from September 10, 2007 through September 10, 2008. These accomplishments include:

- Streamlining NASBLA's committee process;
- Building strong ties with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, a significant contributor to the resulting consensus agreement that will guide the reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund;
- Cultivating strong personal and professional relationships with key U.S. Coast Guard officials, which have helped elevate NASBLA's credibility and national partnership status with the Coast Guard; and





Major John Fetterman (second from left) receives recognition from the Maine Senate. (Left to right) Colonel Joe Fessenden, chief of the Maine Marine Patrol, Cathy Fetterman, planning & research associate with the Marine Patrol, and Senator Dennis Damron attended the formal presentation. Maine Marine Patrol photo

BLA Promotions



Randy Edwards
Iowa BLA

Randy Edwards, Iowa's boating law administrator (BLA) and past NASBLA president, has been selected as chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Law Enforcement Bureau. Having served the past 10 years as assistant chief, Randy brings exceptional administrative skills to the position. Randy joined the DNR in 1975 and has been the state's BLA since 1996.



Mike Fields
Kentucky BLA

Mike Fields, Kentucky's BLA and current NASBLA Conference Committee chairman, has been promoted to captain of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources' Law Enforcement Division. In this new position, Mike oversees the division's training, boating and communications. Mike joined the Kentucky State Water Patrol in 1989. The Water Patrol moved to KDFWR in 1994. Mike has served as the state's BLA since 2004.

- Forging important new relationships with agencies and organizations such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Center for Maritime and Port Security.

Following the reading of the Sentiment, Senator Damon commented on the importance of having law enforcement officials working in the areas of Criminal Justice and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. He commended Major Fetterman, saying, "Today we are honoring a person who has devoted their professional life to protection of people and resources in the state of Maine and, beyond that, has stepped on to the national stage to lend the influence and the leadership that he is so capable of...in trying to develop policies which will save lives before the accident happens, prevent the accident. We are truly fortunate to have men and women of the caliber of Major Fetterman throughout our enforcement communities."

Executive Director Recognized for Advancing Boating Safety

NASBLA Executive Director John Johnson received the National Safe Boating Council's Horizon Award at the NSBC general membership meeting on April 19, 2009. NSBC presents the award to individuals and organizations, professional or volunteer, whose vision for the advancement of safer boating sees beyond the horizon to the next level of boating safety development. The award is a brass mariner's telescope like those used aboard ships by the early mariners to scan the water's horizon.



Staff photo

NASBLA Education Director Visits Safe Boating America

On Jan. 31, 2009, Gail Kulp, education director for NASBLA, attended a one-day Boating Safety and Certification Course in Babylon, N.Y., offered by Safe Boating America.

As a graduate of the National Safe Boating Council's Boating Instructor Certification Course, Captain Richard Werner recognized the need to always find ways to improve upon instructional style. Therefore, Capt. Werner, education director of Safe Boating America, extended an invitation for NASBLA to attend a course and provide feedback on how they might improve the presentation of their NASBLA-approved materials.

Kulp was impressed with the presentation given by Safe Boating America, as well as the level of interaction between the students and instructors throughout the eight-hour course. In addition, she was pleasantly surprised by the number of families taking the class together. "When parents and children are involved in learning safe boating practices together, the lessons they learn will stick with them for years to come," she said.

Safe Boating America offers NASBLA-approved courses in New York as well as Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. For more information about Safe Boating America, visit their website at <http://www.safeboatingamerica.com>. ■

A boat operator with a blood alcohol concentration above .10 is estimated to be more than 10 times as likely to die in a boating accident than an operator with zero blood alcohol concentration.



NASBLA Launches Operation DryWater

Alcohol continues to be a major contributing factor in recreational boating accidents, injuries and deaths. In an effort to raise awareness about the dangers of combining drinking and boating, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) is spearheading Operation Dry Water. This coordinated, national weekend of boating under the influence (BUI) detection and enforcement is being held June 26-28, 2009. The effort is aimed at reducing the number of alcohol-related accidents and fatalities and to foster a stronger and more visible deterrent to alcohol use on the water.

Operation Dry Water will directly address two strategies of the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan:

Strategy 6.2, ...increase the number of BUI checkpoints to collect and report BUI and safety compliance data in the Performance Report Part II, and

Strategy 6.6 Challenge law enforcement officials to test more operators for alcohol/drug use in accident investigations.

Curbing the number of alcohol-related accidents and fatalities is a key to achieving safer and more enjoyable recreational boating. In 2007, Coast Guard statistics indicate that more than one-fifth (21%) of all boating fatalities were a result

of alcohol use. This continues an upward trend in the percentage of fatalities where alcohol was the primary cause of the accident.

Currently 48 states and territories have committed to participating. With this kind of involvement, Operation Dry Water can have a broad impact if we're using the same materials and sending the same messages. Participating agencies are asked to increase BUI enforcement during the targeted weekend. This can be accomplished by :

- focusing on a particular body of water,
- increasing patrols in several locations,
- conducting BUI checkpoints in one or more locations, or
- undertaking a combination of these activities.

The Operation Dry Water website, <http://www.OperationDryWater.org>, offers several tools to help state and local agencies to implement the campaign. Click on the site's "For Law Enforcement" tab to find:

- An Operation Dry Water Checkpoint Plan of Operations that details how to plan and implement checkpoints in your state.
- A Press Kit that can be used to distribute information about Operation Dry Water to the media and partners.
- Public Service Announcements for television, radio and print. All PSAs can be customized with your state's or agency's logo and, in the case of those for TV and radio, a mention. Place them in media outlets and other venues.
- Flyers (in black and white and in color) that can easily be customized. Just download the Microsoft Word file(s) you wish to use, add your organization's name and/or logo, and print. These can be used as handouts wherever boaters congregate.
- Customizable Posters (in both black and white and color) that can be posted at marinas and retail outlets, handed out at boating classes, and provided to police and fire stations for display.
- An Informational Brochure that gives an overview of the dangers and consequences of boating under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Provide one to each boater you encounter that weekend (and beyond).
- Operation Dry Water logos, talking points and a proclamation – all of which can be used to help you promote this important campaign.

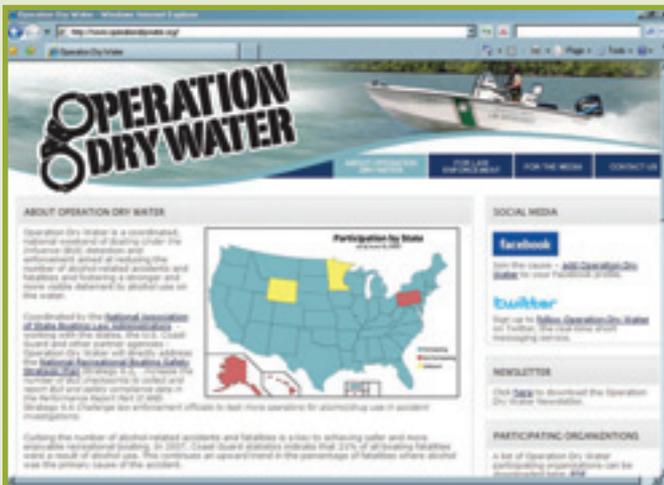
Agencies are also asked to work with their local media to make the public aware of Operation Dry Water as well as the hazards of boating under the influence. Resources for the media, including a press kit, fast facts, public service announcements and graphics, will soon be available on the campaign's website.

For more information, visit <http://www.OperationDryWater.org> or call 859.225.9487. ■



To help states combat boating under the influence on our nation's waterways, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators is spearheading Operation Dry Water. This special campaign encourages boating law enforcement agencies across the country to participate in a weekend of focused boating under the influence detection and enforcement.

Minnesota DNR photo/Tim Smalley



WARNING

Increased BUI Enforcement June 26-28, 2009

Boating Under the Influence is dangerous. Over 20% of boating-related fatalities are a result of alcohol use. Sun, wind, noise, vibration and motion intensify the effects of alcohol, drugs and some medications. They can slow reaction times, impair vision and lead to boating accidents.

Also, operating a boat with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher is illegal. Penalties may include fines, jail, impoundment of boats and loss of on-the-road driving privileges.

This weekend, as part of Operation Dry Water, cooperating law enforcement agencies are intensifying efforts to detect and deter boat operators who are operating under the influence of alcohol or dangerous drugs. The vessel's voyage will be terminated, the boat may be impounded and the operator may be arrested.

Never Boat Under the Influence!

**OPERATION
DRY WATER**



Officer Honors MADD Skills

By Kimberly Jenkins

To say that Officer David Erdman is committed to boating safety and preventing boating under the influence would be a gross understatement.

While working in the family business, Erdman joined the Florida Marine Patrol (predecessor to the current Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) as an auxiliary officer. His first day on the job, he saved a surfer's life. From that moment, he was hooked.

Erdman promptly left the family business and joined the Marine Patrol. He completed the training academy in January 1997 and has spent the last twelve years working as an FWC law

which is impressive. Even more impressive is that these arrests brought his career total up to 410 BUI-related arrests, with 355 BUI arrests and 55 BUI/02 arrests. (BUI/02 refers to

arrests of any person under 21 years of age who is found to have a breath-alcohol level of .02 or higher while in control of a vessel.)

Erdman's obvious knack for BUI enforcement has garnered him the MADD Florida award seven out of the last nine years. The MADD BUI Award is open to any FWC law enforcement officer or federal, state or county law enforcement officer who is involved in patrolling Florida's waterways.

“I would like for people to be safer and understand the risks of boating and drinking.”

Officer David Erdman

Officer Erdman averages around 60 BUI cases in what he calls a “good year,” with his lowest number of cases being 29. He explained that the number of BUI arrests an officer makes in a given year varies for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the weather. Erdman cited hurricanes as a main reason for a decrease in BUI cases. For example, 2005 was a low year. That was the year of the most active Atlantic hurricane season in recorded history, with hurricanes Dennis, Katrina and Wilma ripping across various parts of Florida. Obviously, with so much bad weather, boating participation was down that year. With a decrease in number of boaters overall, naturally there would be a decrease in the number of inebriated boaters as well.

Officer Erdman said most of his BUI cases are made through resource checks and safety checks. Under Florida state law, officers have the right to stop vessels for random safety inspections. Other BUI cases develop from responding to complaints about careless or reckless operation.

Officer Erdman is meticulous in his evidence gathering, and it pays off in the end.

When, based on observation, Officer Erdman suspects a boater is inebriated, he will administer a battery of field sobriety tests that have been standardized through the Florida Department of Transportation. These include the palm pat, finger count, finger to nose, alphabet recital, backwards count and horizontal gaze nystagmus.

Next, if warranted, he'll take a breath sample for further evidence. In Florida, the Intoxilyzer® 8000 has been approved for use by officers as a fully mobile evidential breath-testing unit.

He said a blood sample is taken only if the boater has incurred serious bodily injury and is unable to submit to the other tests.

Sometimes a boater will perform the sobriety tests at what seems to be an impairment level of .15, but the breath test will register 0.0. Officer Erdman explained that such a result usually indicates drug use. In that case, he'll take a urine sample to test for evidence.



Officer Erdman takes notes while conducting on-water field sobriety tests with a recreational boater. FWC photos

enforcement officer because, as he says, “I absolutely love it.”

On March 16, 2009, Officer Erdman received the 2008 Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) BUI Award for recording the most boating-under-the-influence arrests in the state of Florida. He made 29 impaired boater arrests last year,

All the notes he takes and evidence he gathers play a pivotal role in making each case.

Further, he encourages officers to keep a log filled with details of each stop.

“Keep running track of your experience,” he added. The recorded information can help establish and prove an officer’s level of expertise.”

Erdman’s main concern in doing his job is boating safety.

“This is all about safety. The way I look at it, we as officers are there to make sure people can go out on the water and not have to worry about someone who is impaired or drunk running into them or causing an accident,” Erdman said during an interview after receiving the MADD Award.

He went on to explain that people don’t seem to realize the affect alcohol has on their bodies and their judgment.

“People associate drinking with boating. But even with just a couple drinks, their judgment is impaired,” he added.

Erdman related an alarming story about one boater’s wakeup call.

One Fourth of July weekend, he was conducting a safety check at night. He was in the process of writing a ticket for a life jacket violation. About 75 feet to the right



of where he was stopped with the recreational boaters, another boat crashed into the seawall.

Fearing the worst, Officer Erdman immediately responded to the crash, making sure to call for assistance. The boat operator had suffered a head injury. Luckily, there had been no passengers on board. Due to the operator’s injury, the officers tested his alcohol concentration with a blood test. The boat operator was three times over the legal limit.

It turns out the boater had just dropped off his passengers and was headed to the dock.

“This was a prime example of someone who was too inebriated to drive a boat, and yet he was planning to get behind the wheel of a vehicle and drive home,” Officer Erdman said.

This accident is the result of drinking and boating. A highly impaired boater drove his boat into a seawall just 75 feet from where Officer Erdman had been conducting a safety check with another boater. FWC photos

Part of Officer Erdman’s motivation for watching out for impaired boaters is the human toll on those involved in accidents.

“These are not victimless crimes,” he said of accidents caused by impaired boaters. “They affect the impaired boater’s family, the victims’ family, friends, the community, everybody. They even affect us officers, who have to investigate the accident and who have the sad task of notifying family members in the event of a death,” he said.

Erdman is especially disappointed when he encounters a drunken boater when there are kids on board the boat.

“Those kids are trapped, they don’t really have a choice in the matter when their parents drink and boat,” he said.

Erdman said that in 88 of his arrest incidents children were on board the vessels.

Despite his excellent record for BUI cases, Officer Erdman wishes he never had to write another boating-under-the-influence ticket.

“I would like for people to be safer and understand the risks of boating and drinking,” he said. “I’d be happier if everyone left alcohol or drugs behind, but unfortunately that’s not reality.” ■



Officer David Erdman with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission receives the 2008 MADD award from Lt. Gov. Jeffrey Kottkamp, right, and Don Murray, MADD Florida state executive director. Florida Highway Patrol photo

North Carolina's Formula for OWI

By Kimberly Jenkins

While the state of North Carolina usually ranks eleventh or twelfth in the nation for the number of registered boats, the Tarheel State is typically in the top five for operating while intoxicated (OWI) cases.

"I attribute this to our extensive officer training and aggressive OWI enforcement tactics," said Capt. Chris Huebner, North Carolina's boating law administrator.

"We provide our officers with comprehensive training," added Capt. Huebner. "We had a good BUI/OWI and Standardized Field Sobriety testing training system in the past. However, after leaving the academy, officers don't have many opportunities for training."

In 2008 the N.C. agency began sending officers to the Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement train-the-trainer courses offered by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. This provided the officers with a refresher course as well as a good deal of updated information they have been sharing with their fellow officers.

After the N.C. officers attended the training, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission worked with the Forensics

Test for Alcohol Branch and combined the state's training with what the officers brought back from NASBLA's training.

Housed in the N.C. Division of Public Health, the Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch (FTA) seeks to reduce the incidence of impaired driving by providing comprehensive training programs to law enforcement personnel in the detection and apprehension of the impaired driver. Since 1964, the Branch has provided training to law enforcement officers in breath alcohol testing.

Over the past several years, the Branch has expanded its role by providing additional specialized comprehensive training programs, instrumentation for officers to test impaired drivers. The Branch also provides scientific support for state prosecutors and highway safety/educational equipment to use during safety events in an effort to reach out to the general public and explain the dangers of driving while impaired.

The officers who attended the train-the-trainer course have been holding OWI

"I attribute this to our extensive officer training and aggressive enforcement tactics."

Capt. Chris Huebner

courses for the rest of the Commission's officers. Training of all the districts should be complete this spring.

The training boosts the officers' confidence in detecting boaters who are operating under the influence, thereby increasing the number of OWI arrests. The training also improves the officers' professionalism and credibility, which improves their cases in court.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has roughly two officers in each of the state's 100 counties. In addition to being tasked with water patrol duties, these 210 officers also enforce hunting and fishing regulations, educate the public in boating and hunting safety, serve as first responders during disasters and more.

The FTA designated the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission as the state's only approved BUI/OWI training agency.

"We now train all law enforcement agencies in the state on BUI/OWI detection," said Capt. Huebner. "We are teaching officers with local police departments and sheriff's offices."

Having one agency provide the training has fostered consistency among the various law enforcement agencies.

"Before, all departments were training officers differently," added Capt. Huebner.

In addition to providing OWI detection and enforcement training to other agencies, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission regularly collaborates with state and local agencies to conduct OWI saturation details each boating season.

"During a saturation detail, we will have a mobile breath testing facility brought to one of



An officer administers the horizontal gaze nystagmus test to a boater, looking clues that indicate impairment.
WRC photos/Geoff Cantrell

Success

our access areas and have all the agencies bring their suspects to that access area,” said Capt. Huebner. “This helps the other agencies, and we get assistance from them to transport our suspects to the facility if needed.”

This teamwork between agencies has proven to be a successful formula for OWI enforcement.

Additionally, the Commission works with the media during special events and



Officers patrol a party cove to enforce the state's OWI laws.



A N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission patrol plane and boat coordinate on Lake Norman, the largest manmade body of fresh water located entirely within North Carolina.

holidays to distribute information to advise the public about the dangers of drinking and boating.

“Last year we launched Boat Safe, Boat Sober – a campaign stressing the dangers of inebriation on the water as well as the associated penalties. A boat operator who registers a blood alcohol level of .08 is legally intoxicated and subject to arrest for operating a vessel while impaired,” said Capt. Huebner. “We sent posters to boat registration venues and officers took posters to local businesses. We also issued several news releases and developed a 30-second TV spot.”

This year the agency has taken the Boat Safe, Boat Sober theme and applied it to Operation Dry Water, the national boating under the influence detection and enforcement campaign being led by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. (Editor's note: For more information on Operation Dry Water, see page 6.)

Aside from saturation details and beefed-up patrols during holidays and special events, officers are constantly vigilant about detecting inebriated boaters. In North Carolina, officers have the authority to stop vessels and board them for compliance with state laws or agency regulations. So if an officer stops a boater for a safety check and observes that the boater stumbles, slurs or exhibits other possible indications of intoxication, the officer can conduct further tests to determine whether the boater is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The state's OWI efforts are paying off. In 2006, Commission officers made 291 OWI cases out of 86,937 safety inspections. In 2007, 357 OWI cases emerged from 78,594 checked boats. In 2008, officers made 256 OWI cases from 78,595 checked boats.

It's important to note that the overall number of checked boats and violations varies year to year as boating participation fluctuates from a variety of reasons, including weather, economy, fuel prices, and so on.

The decreased number of OWI cases in 2008 could also be a result of North Carolina's Boat Safe, Boat Sober campaign.

“Last year our numbers were down just a little but I think it was due to our Boat Safe, Boat Sober campaign,” said Capt. Huebner. “We advertised heavily in print and TV about our OWI laws and the legal limit.” ■

Making an Informed Choice

By Kimberly Jenkins

The students' eyes are riveted on the screen. The faces of some are pinched with dread. Others are slowly shaking their heads. As they watch the drama unfold before them, they're all wondering what the conclusion will be. Will the film's conclusion be happy or will it be tragic?

The film they're watching is *Drinking and Boating: It's Your Choice*. Developed two years ago through a partnership between Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and the Yellowstone County Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Task Force, the film depicts a realistic scenario in which a boater chooses to operate a personal watercraft after drinking alcoholic beverages.

The film, shot on a shoestring budget at Cooney Reservoir State Park, 40 minutes south of Billings, Mt., stars real Montanans and actual emergency response and enforcement personnel. The film is part of a program that was developed as a teaching aid for water safety talks.

"The film doesn't have a lot of dialogue. The action takes you along," said Kevin Holland, a game warden with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.



Holland and Keith Montgomery, longtime members of the Yellowstone County DUI Task Force, served as executive producers on the project. They worked together from developing the concept and writing the storyline, to finding the people to portray the characters and overseeing the filming, to editing the final product.

With minimal dialogue, the film can be played anywhere – it's not limited to Montana audiences.

Drinking and Boating received this year's Alcohol Awareness Impact Award from the National Safe Boating Council. The award recognizes a program each year that demonstrates an effective prevention and awareness strategy to address the misuse of alcohol when boating. MillerCoors, a member of NSBC, sponsors the award.

The 17-minute film was designed for educating boaters of all ages about the dangers of drinking and boating. It is accompanied by a curriculum guide to use in leading discussion after watching the film. Discussion points focus on the hazards of drinking and boating. Participants are encouraged to discuss what went wrong in the film's boating scenario, as well as what went right and what should have been done differently.

To further emphasize the points covered in the film and discussion, the curriculum guide includes activities for the participants. The activities illustrate to boaters how alcohol impairs thought processes, reaction time, vision and dexterity. One example is to have a student perform a simple task, such as putting on a life jacket while being timed. Next, impairment goggles and large mittens are placed on the student. The goggles illustrate alcohol's effect on a person's vision and the gloves portray the loss of dexterity. The student is then timed again while putting on the same life jacket.

The Montana agency offers the film, along with the curriculum guide, free of charge to libraries, schools, youth groups, business and other organizations. To view the video, visit the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks website at <http://fwp.mt.gov> and click on Videos under the Education tab. For more information and to request a copy of the DVD, contact Game Warden Kevin Holland, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, at 406.247.2947. ■

Alcohol Awareness Impact Award

The National Safety Boating Council created the Alcohol Awareness Impact Award to provide the opportunity to recognize a program each year that demonstrates an effective prevention and awareness strategy to address the misuse of alcohol when boating. MillerCoors, an NSBC member, sponsors the award.

The goal of this award is to promote activities which educate the community about the dangers of consuming alcohol when boating. For a program to qualify, it must provide a preventative strategy towards eliminating the consumption of alcohol while boating. A primary factor in granting the award is the uniqueness of the program and its emphasis on increasing boating safety. Other factors include an evaluation of the organization's related services and programs. Award applications are evaluated by the NSBC based on program description, budget proposal and availability of the program to be duplicated by others.

The award includes a \$2,500 cash prize to be used by the winning organization or agency to advance the program. In addition to the cash prize, the recipient receives a trophy and a trip to the International Boating and Water Safety Summit to present the program to other boating and water safety professionals.

Application submission deadline is December 31. For more information, visit <http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org>.

RBFF Names New Board Chairman

Ken Hammond has been selected as the board chairman for the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF). Hammond, who currently serves as chairman and CEO for independent sporting goods and outdoor product sales company The Hammond Group, will work closely with RBFF leadership to increase participation in recreational angling and boating.

Hammond has been on RBFF's board of directors since 2003 and has more than 30 years' sales and marketing experience in the fishing and marine products industry.

"His proven leadership in sales and marketing, together with his deep understanding of the boating and fishing industries and RBFF's mission and goals make him an ideal chairman," said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson.

"I am delighted to be elected chairman of RBFF's board of directors and I'm looking forward to helping the organization continue its momentum," said Hammond. "Now more than ever we need to make sure people are aware of the benefits of boating and fishing and the resources available to them through RBFF's programs and products. Participation is critical to the success of the boating and fishing industries and the aquatic resources they rely on."

Hammond has served on several industry boards including the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA), the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) and the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI). Hammond attended Baylor University in Texas.

Officially elected at RBFF's January 2009 board meeting, Hammond succeeds National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) President Thom Dammrich.

A full list of RBFF board members is available on <http://www.rbff.org>.

SKSA Founder Recognized for Leadership in Safety

Elizabeth O'Connor, founder and head instructor for Sea Kayaking Skills and Adventures, Ltd., was recently recognized for her leadership in promoting kayaking safety on Long Island. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation presented O'Connor with a plaque in appreciation for her efforts in founding the Long Island Kayak Safety Symposium.

Following the tragic deaths of two young women, one of whom was a Long Island native who perished in a kayaking accident off the coast of Massachusetts, O'Connor founded the symposium in 2003 to educate novice paddlers. The symposium is co-sponsored by NYS Parks, Coast Guard District I, and various local paddling and boating organizations and presented free to the public. The annual event draws more than 500 participants for workshops, lectures and on-the-water demonstrations.



Elizabeth O'Connor (left), from Sea Kayaking Skills and Adventures, Ltd., received an appreciation plaque from Ro Woodard (right), education specialist, on behalf the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in recognition of her leadership in promoting kayaking safety on Long Island.
NYS Parks photo

Alladio Receives Award of Merit

Shawn Alladio, founder and owner of K-38 Water Safety, received the National Water Safety Congress (NWSC) Award of Merit for her work in promoting and advancing water recreation safety. The NWSC presents this annual award to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to water safety during the previous year.

In announcing Alladio's award, NWSC Regional Vice President Ed Huntsman said, "This award recognizes your continuing efforts to train first responders of boating- and water-related accidents involving recreational boaters and other users of the nation's waterways." The NWSC award recognizes Alladio's devotion to safety in developing and sharing the evolving emergency rescue techniques and training practices that use personal watercraft.

Alladio's company, K38 Water Safety, has been involved in the practice of water rescue service and the training of water rescue specialists in the use of personal watercraft for nearly two decades. For the past several years, K38 has used Kawasaki JET SKI® watercraft as part of a sponsorship arrangement with Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. With these JET SKI watercraft, Alladio and K38 have conducted dozens of hands-on safety training programs for a variety of public safety agencies. Alladio has also led a number of boating safety seminars for the general boating public and organized a national professional association for boating rescue and enforcement personnel called H2O Responders, now a part of the American Watercraft Association. ■

National Boating Day Resolution Introduced

House Resolution 410, introduced into Congress on May 6, would designate July 1, 2009 as National Boating Day in recognition of the important role recreational boating and the boating industry play in the lives and health of the nation's 83 million boaters and the U.S. economy.

The resolution was introduced by Congressmen Ron Klein (D-Fla.) and Henry Brown (R-S.C.), along with Congressional Boating Caucus co-chairs Candice Miller (R-Mich.) and Gene Taylor (D-Miss.)

In designating July 1 as National Boating Day, the U.S. House of Representatives seeks to commend the recreational boating industry and community for their responsible stewardship of the environment and marine resources. The resolution also highlights the importance of the recreational boating industry in the U.S. economy by providing a strong manufacturing base and services industry.

"A healthy, vibrant U.S. economy needs a healthy, vibrant U.S. marine industry," said Congressman Klein. "The marine industry is responsible for over \$2.8 billion in direct sales and 30,000 jobs statewide. Clearly, boating is not just a coastal pastime, it's an American pastime."

"This resolution shows the importance of boating for the U.S. economy, and affirms the contributions boating and boaters make to the environment, outdoor recreation, and American families," said Congressman Brown.

At press time, the resolution was waiting to move through Congress before the President could issue a national proclamation in observance of the day.

NFL Legend Helps Promote Recreational Boating Safety

Dan Marino, National Football League Hall of Fame Quarterback, media personality, and philanthropist, has teamed up with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary to help raise national awareness of the need for recreational boating safety.

Marino, who played quarterback for the Miami Dolphins for 17 consecutive



COMO Don Frasch, USCG Auxiliary District 7 Commodore, reads the inscription on a presentation oar being given to NFL legend Dan Marino. Looking on are RADM Steve Branham, Commander of USCG District 7, and Congresswoman Ilena Ros-lehtinen.
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo

"Taking a boating safety class will help boaters of all ages better handle emergencies."

Recreational boating public service announcements recorded by Dan Marino can be found at <http://www.video.auxpa.org/audio.shtml>.

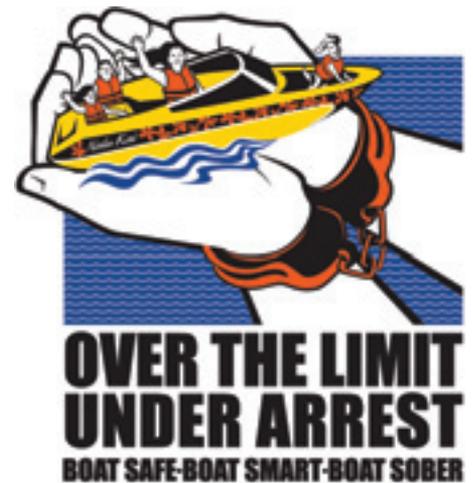
Hawaiian Power Squadron Launches Alcohol Awareness Campaign

Even in a tropical paradise such as Hawaii, folks need to be reminded to be safe on the water. Because the state rests among thousands of miles of navigable waters, fosters a billion-dollar-per-annum ocean recreation industry, and is home to a thriving fishing community, the potential for OVUII (operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant) accidents has always been high. However, Hawaii has yet to prosecute its first OVUII case and, therefore, does not have a precedent in court to refer to as a deterrent.

The Honolulu Sail & Power Squadron (HSPS) is spearheading an education and outreach effort to raise awareness in the boating community about the dangers of operating a vessel while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Organized in 1961, the HSPS is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to making boating safer and more enjoyable by teaching classes in seamanship, navigation and related subjects. HSPS is the only organization for safe boating education serving the Hawaiian Islands. The organization's 100+ members are boating families who contribute to their communities by promoting safe boating through education. They enjoy participating with fellow members on the water and in the classroom. The organization has won for three consecutive years in its district (out of 20 squadrons in California, Nevada, Japan and Utah): Excellence in Education Award, Prince Henry Ward, Advanced Grade Award, Elective Class award.

The HSPS's campaign reminds the public about the dangers of operating a vessel under the influence of an intoxicant as well as the fact that in Hawaii an OVUII conviction automatically triggers the suspension of a driver's license. The HSPS has developed a strong graphic and slogan to utilize in its campaign and launch distribution of these important messages through a variety of mediums.



Fish & Wildlife Service Awards Millions in Boating Grants

More than \$12.5 million in competitive grants has been awarded to 11 states ranging from California to Maine for 14 boating infrastructure projects. The grants, which will help fund construction of docks, boat slips and other facilities to support recreational boating, are made available through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program.

"Boating is one of our country's favorite pastimes, and the Boating Infrastructure Grant program greatly enhances recreational opportunities while conserving America's aquatic natural resources," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "Spending by boaters provides significant revenues for business owners and employees in every state. This program, funded by boaters, is a prime example of the direct economic benefits boating can bring to local economies."

Funding for the BIG program comes from the Sport Fishing and Boating Trust Fund, formerly known as the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, which is supported by excise taxes on certain fishing and boating equipment and boat fuels. The Service will also release approximately \$3 million to 40 states willing to match a smaller, non-competitive grant program known as BIG Tier One funding.

Boating Infrastructure Grant funds are used to construct, renovate and maintain tie-up facilities with features for transient boats (those staying 10 days or less) that are 26 feet or more in length and cannot be transported by trailer. The funds are also used to produce and distribute information and educational materials about the program.

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Boating Infrastructure Grant program, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.

Brunswick Commercial and Government Products Announces New RIB Product Line

Brunswick Commercial and Government Products (BCGP), the leading manufacturer of commercial and government watercraft, is expanding its product line and offer professional grade rigid inflatable boats (RIB).

The new Impact RIB product line ranges in size from 14 to 39 feet in length, with center console and cabin models and various propulsion options including inboard, diesel, waterjet or outboard configurations up to triples. The hull is made of fiberglass with a beefed up commercial laminate schedule for durability, and the RIB tube is made from SOLAS certified AKRON™ TPE fabric. The AKRON™ TPE fabric has extremely high abrasion resistance – five times greater than neoprene/hypalon. It also features resistance to pollution, deterioration caused by UV Rays, and superior puncture resistance.

"Expanding our product offering is in direct response to customer demand," explained Jeremy Davis, BCGP sales manager. "A high-quality, professional grade RIB is essential to some agencies. Those same agencies understand the economic challenges in the marine industry today, and want to deal with a company that has a solid history. Brunswick Commercial & Government Products has been providing crafts to commercial and government customers for over 40 years."

Visit <http://www.BrunswickCGP.com> for more information regarding Brunswick Commercial and Government Products or contact Betsi Dmitrenko at 386.423.2900.



Take Me Fishing Debuts New Online Boating Content

New boating content has debuted on the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) Take Me Fishing™ campaign website. New features including an interactive 'Boat Explorer' tool, glossary, navigation and trip planning resources are now available on <http://www.TakeMeFishing.org>, the most comprehensive boating and fishing website available nationwide.

"In an effort to continually improve the content on the site and keep it relevant and engaging for visitors, we added some new interactive fea-

tures," said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson. "Take Me Fishing is about capturing the excitement and the memories associated with boating and fishing and we want to inspire visitors to take action and help preserve the legacy of the sport for future generations."

"Working with our boating stakeholders, we were able to make some valuable additions to the boating content that already existed on the site," said RBFF Online Strategies Manager Maria Knight.

Enhanced boating content on the site includes:

- Boat Explorer – learn about all types of fishing boats and see what they look like
- Boating Glossary – brush up on boat-speak and find out what's what
- Boat Navigation – download charts and use the trip planner to set a course
- Boat Responsibly – find out how to be safe out on the water and how to protect waterways with proper boat maintenance
- Interactive Visuals – interact and learn about types of hulls and engines, different parts of a boat and trailering and launching a boat

TakeMeFishing.org received 2.4 million unique visitors in the last year – up 129 percent from the same time last year and 243 percent from 2007. A new social network, Fishington – *The Fishing & Boating Capital of the Internet*, was incorporated in

October 2008. The online community, which allows boaters and anglers to share tips, join groups and swap stories, currently hosts more than 6,100 members.

Maryland Acknowledged for Assistance with Boating Safety

The Maryland Natural Resources Police has been recognized for its help in improving boating and water safety practices within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

In January 2009 the state agency received a Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for their services and expertise in the preparation of Wildlife Services Program Safety Review: Evaluation of Current Safety Program and Identification of Survey Improvements.

The review, conducted by subject-matter experts external to APHIS, looked at nine targeted areas within the agency's Wildlife Services program. The Maryland Natural Resources Police was tasked with reviewing watercraft. The Maryland Natural Resources Police was chosen to work on the review because of their premiere boating safety programs and boating safety training



Kevin J. Sullivan (left), state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Anne Rogers, NRP Safety Education Division; Corporal Rick Kaufmann, NRP Training Academy; and Colonel George F. Johnson IV, superintendent of the Maryland Natural Resources Police, in recognition of the agency's assistance in improving boating and water safety practices for U.S.D.A employees. Maryland Natural Resources Police photo

designed for the general public and for the training curriculum developed and taught by the NRP Training Academy to federal, state and local law enforcement and emergency personnel.

Corporal Richard Kaufmann of the NRP Training Academy and Anne Rogers of the NRP Safety Education Division conducted an on-site review of Wildlife Service boating operations across the nation, with emphasis on operational hazards, safety policies and procedures, initial and recurring training, accountability of crews, safety equipment, boat handling, operator certification and compliance with federal, state and industry standards. ■

from the HELM continued from page 2

Dubbed Operation Dry Water, the national campaign is intended to raise the awareness of the dangers of drinking and boating and to facilitate a coordinated, multi-state crackdown on impaired boat operators. With more than 40 states and territories signed on to participate in this inaugural event, which is timed to occur just before the big Fourth of July weekend, we are hopeful that boaters will heed the warning both during the weekend event and throughout the boating season this summer.

Thanks to financial and in-kind support from our partners at the U.S Coast Guard and willing engagement from three-quarters of the states, we believe Operation Dry Water will become the focal point of our national BUI interdiction efforts moving forward. If your state has not already pledged to become part of this significant nationwide event or if you are interested in more details regarding the campaign, we encourage you to contact NASBLA right away to find out how to get involved. Our association will showcase the results of Operation Dry Water later this fall at the annual conference in Corpus Christi, Texas, both to demonstrate the effectiveness of the initiative and to gain broader support for the measure as we plan for next year's event.

For more information on Operation Dry Water and how to participate, we encourage you to read the related article appearing on page 6 in this issue of *Small Craft Advisory*, visit the project website directly at www.operationdrywater.org, or link to the site through NASBLA's website at www.nasbla.org.

Boat Safe, Boat Sober and enjoy your time on the water! ■

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Keep Boating Sober, Safe and Enjoyable



Jeff Hoedt
Chief, Boating Safety Division
Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
U.S. Coast Guard

While in the past many people in our country were lenient toward drinking while driving a car, that has changed dramatically. We now understand the impacts that alcohol and illegal drugs have on us. We know how this behavior reduces our ability to think and respond clearly. We know that this irresponsible behavior has led to tens of thousands of accidents, injuries and deaths. And, our society has responded appropriately by strengthening our laws, the enforcement of those laws, and the campaigns to make us all aware of the need to not be under the influence when operating a vehicle. The result of these enhanced efforts is that, while we have not stopped all driving under the influence, it has been greatly reduced. Far fewer people drive while under the influence, and far fewer accidents are occurring.

This same scenario is happening on the water. Over the years, the boating community has become aware of the irresponsibility of boating under the influence. We know that this activity has led to thousands of accidents, injuries and deaths; and we know that we too must alter our behavior to keep boating sober, safe and enjoyable.

For many people, this lesson on the water has not been learned as quickly as it was on the road. The public outrage concerning drunk driving grew exponentially in the last half of the 1900s. However, many people still considered the waterways to be the last bastion of freedom, where anything goes, regardless of the impacts that irresponsible behavior had on others – even if it meant their death.

Over the past 15 to 20 years, however, we've witnessed a great change in that outlook concerning boating. The public has reached a point where it is recognized that responsible

behavior is needed on the land, on the sea, and in the air. Being under the influence is not appropriate when operating a craft in any of these environments.

Not only that, but we've also recognized that boaters have a unique concern – even passengers are at a high level of risk when boating. A passenger can fall off a smaller boat, and often do. If they're under the influence, they may not be mentally or physically capable of saving themselves. Thus, we often learn of situations where an intoxicated passenger fell off a properly operated vessel and drowned.

To strive to enhance safety and the enjoyment of boating, our community has gone to great strides. Similar to driving under the influence, boating under the influence laws have been strengthened, often mirroring the driving laws. The enforcement efforts, equipment and techniques have been greatly enhanced. The education and awareness campaigns have been improved and are more effective. And, the results have been positive.

No, we haven't eliminated boating under the influence. There's still more to do. However, together, we have made a difference. Irresponsible behavior has been reduced, and fewer related accidents, injuries and deaths are occurring. So, keep it up. This effort is not only making boating safer, it's making it more enjoyable. Boaters can go out for a fun day on the water more relaxed, knowing that the waters are becoming even safer.

To learn more about what is being done to reduce boating under the influence, read Joe Carro's article below. His insight, and the information that he offers, will undoubtedly be of help. Then, we can all strive together to make boating even more sober, safe and enjoyable.

Boating Under the Influence – a Two-Pronged Attack

Boating under the influence of alcohol or dangerous drugs continues to plague the recreational boating community. With 145 alcohol-related boating fatalities, over 340 alcohol-related injuries and nearly 400 alcohol-related boating accidents in 2007, boating under the influence (BUI) contributes to over 20 percent of all boating fatalities. We must continue to increase our efforts to reduce these numbers by our 5-percent per-annum goal as outlined in the Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program.

By Joseph Carro
Boating Safety Division Office
of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
U.S. Coast Guard

These statistics represent much more than random numbers or irrelevant factoids. Each one represents some event of human tragedy. Whether it was the loss of a loved one, a friend, or your boat, the result is the same, another preventable loss.

So, what can we do to reduce these numbers? How can we help to prevent these losses? Aren't we already doing all we can? These are all good questions; and yes, we are all doing great work to reduce accidents, casualties and fatalities resulting from boating under the influence. However, we can and must do more. It is not only our duty and responsibility, the recreational boating community expects us to do everything we can to keep them safe. It is unacceptable for an intoxicated vehicle operator to drive down the road, and it should be equally unacceptable on the water.

Many in the law enforcement community believe increased enforcement efforts are the answer. Others in the education community believe better education is the answer. They are both right. A renewed, strengthened, two-pronged approach consisting of education and enforcement will help reduce these casualties.

First, concerning education, this should consist of a stronger "Never Boat Under the Influence" message. This refers not only to the traditional forums we all are aware of and comfortable with – the boater education courses, the outreach posters and messages on radio, television, and the latest venue, the Internet. It also refers to the unexplored. When was the last time you spoke about the dangers of boating and drinking at a local high school, yacht club or marina? How about a message delivered at the local liquor store? No, you don't have to stand out front fright-



In addition to talking to boaters at safety fairs, posting information on the Internet and handing out flyers at marinas, it's helpful to tap into innovative ways to get your message across, such as the highway sign used by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. AGFD photo

ening customers. Perhaps a poster or some of the other existing handout materials made available to the patrons will work. When was the last time you went to the movies? Have you noticed how many advertisements, commercials and public service announcements are shown prior to the movie beginning? A "Never Boat Under the Influence" message would be an excellent addition to the previews and the "please don't use your cell phone" announcements.

Second, concerning stronger enforcement, I am not just talking about more enforcement or heavier handed enforcement. The Strategic Plan calls for initiating a stronger enforcement strategy and providing marine law enforcement officers with the resources they need for better enforcement. We all struggle with enforcement challenges. Our officers need more training; we need more boats and officers to run them; and when we do get a BUI case to court, the results are not always what we had expected or hoped for. So, what can we do about it? I think a consistent message and consistent enforcement procedures are a start. The message is simple – Don't boat under the influence. The consistency lies in keeping it in line with the message we are delivering through our education and enforcement efforts. There are few things as frustrating for us and or a boater than to receive conflicting or misinformation. We should do our part. Make sure you know and understand all aspects of BUI enforcement. This must not only include laws

and regulations but your agency's policy and procedures as well. It is equally important to know when not to arrest someone as it is to know when to arrest him or her. Work with your local district attorneys, prosecutors, and anyone else involved in the enforcement process. Find out ahead of time what is going to be needed for successful case prosecution and provide all that is needed.

Another key to better BUI enforcement is officer training. There are many opportunities for this training. Consider the Marine Patrol Officer Course offered at the U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Law Enforcement Academy in Charleston, S.C. Students now receive the complete National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) training program and are trained to NHTSA standards. The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) offers five BUI Detection and Enforcement courses each year, including a train-the-trainer course. There are also opportunities for interagency training with many local Coast Guard units. Contact your state's boating law administrator, NASBLA or your Coast Guard District Recreational Boating Safety Specialist. Or, you can contact me directly at the Program Operations Branch, Boating Safety Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

You are the experts. Many of you already do all of these things and more. My hat is off to you. Now, let the rest of us know what has worked and what hasn't been as successful. We are all on the same Boating Safety Team and are all working for the same outcome: safer, more enjoyable boating for all. Have a Safe Boating Day. ■

Making a Difference Now and Down the Road



Robin Freeman
National Directorate Commodore
for Recreational Boating Safety
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

At the time I'm writing this, summer is beating down fast on us; Memorial Day is just around the corner and with it the kick-off of the boating season.

I've been thinking about the boating season in the context of the theme of this issue of Small Craft Advisory – Boating Under the Influence – and two things stood out in my mind: how the Auxiliary being on the water or at the docks is a presence for good, and, what people are exposed to in boating safety today may bear fruit in their lives at some tomorrow.

My first up-close and personal experience with boaters who were under the influence occurred several years ago at a local inland lake over Memorial Day Weekend. Our Auxiliary flotilla, at the request of the county's rangers, has patrolled this lake for seasons, helping with the inevitable run-out-of-gas scenarios and other minor distress events. Our assistance frees up the rangers to concentrate on law enforcement (read: BUI patrols). I was on the water and got a call of a boat taking on water. My crew and I headed in that direction. When we arrived on scene, we discovered that the "taking on water" was past tense – the boat's gunwales were awash and the boat was in danger of sinking.

The boat's operator was bailing water with a scoop as fast as he could, but his passengers on board were more concerned with the ice chest that was floating away. Other boats crowded the scene to watch the fiasco, beer bottles floated freely around the boat, and I wasn't sure how to even make an approach to pass off the dewatering device with all that traffic. We cleared some boats off one side and we coming alongside to hand off the dewaterer when my crewman started yelling and telling me to NOT BACK DOWN, one of the passengers on board the barely floating ski boat had jumped into the water right behind my transom and was swimming for the ice chest.

The scenario went from that level of mayhem to five times that level in the next few minutes. Everyone on the boat and in the water was under the influence. We eventually got the boat dewatered and all the "swimmers" rounded up

and back aboard, then we got everyone towed safely back to the marina. It was a scary half hour and I saw firsthand how dangerous boating and drinking is.

While not providing any form of law enforcement, the Auxiliary can be a force for good on or near the water during the boating season, and on busy weekends or any time, for that matter. By having Vessel Safety Check (VSC) stations or safety booths at the marinas and launch ramps, our presence in uniform reminds boaters (whether they take advantage of a free VSC or not) of safety. Having Auxiliary boats and crews out on the water accomplishes the same thing. We're "force multipliers" for local law enforcement; we're a visible reminder of safety!

With the start of boating season, it's the perfect time to remind ourselves that what we all do – whether we're law enforcement officers, education specialists, industry representatives or boating safety organizations – **does** matter. The boating safety classes, vessel checks, boardings, safety fairs, booths all make a difference in recreational boating safety. We may not see an immediate change in boater attitude this day, but at some time that boater may remember what we did or said.

Again, I have to tell a personal story. When we were kids, my cousin and I spent countless summer hours riding our bikes all over town. We always stopped at a small dairy and would get ice cream. To this day I don't remember thinking about it consciously at the time, but some 30 years later when my husband and I bought our boat, I vividly remembered the poster "Take a Boating Class" in that dairy, and we looked up the local Auxiliary to take a class. I've had many people tell me similar things.

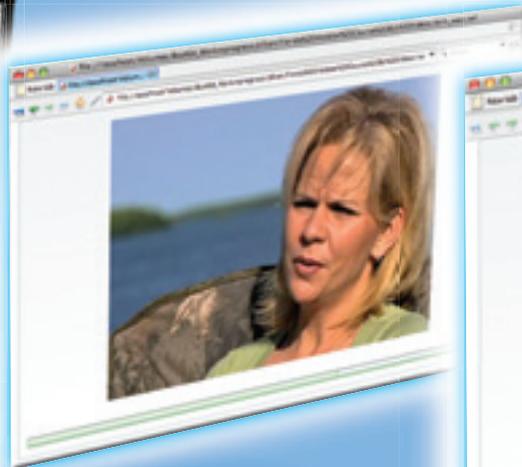
Summer is upon us, and so is another boating season. Let's be a presence in every way we can – dockside, on the water, in the classroom. We'll be a deterrent now as well as planting a seed of safety for a boater tomorrow. ■

The company never content to just drift along ...

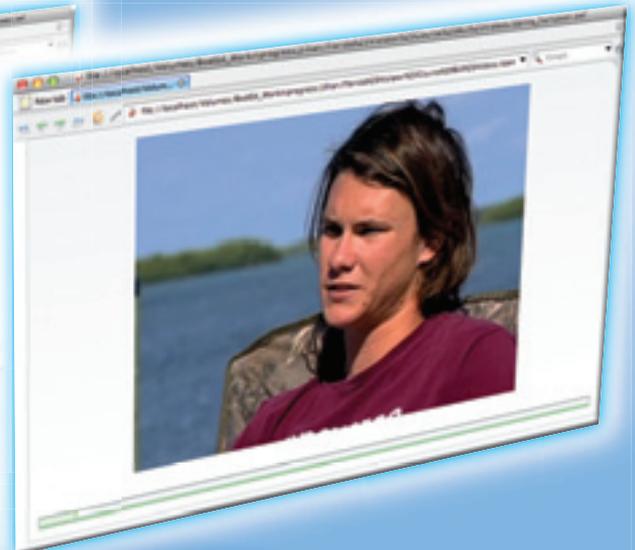
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Florida officer talks about the most dangerous things that he sees on a daily basis with the boating public.



Peggy West reveals a tragic account of her son becoming a victim of a boating accident which involved an intoxicated driver.



Danny Hampson, a professional wake skater, recounts his story of how he was almost paralyzed due to a boating accident. He stresses the importance of making safe and smart decisions while boating.



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Administrators Association
Annual Conference
Boise, Idaho
info@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

26-28 NASBLA
Operation Dry Water Campaign
<http://operationdrywater.org>
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

JULY 2009

7-9 NASBLA
Boating Under the Influence
Train-the-Trainer Course
Richmond, Virginia
www.nasbla.org
chris@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

14-16 NASBLA
Executive Board Meeting
Colorado Springs, Colorado
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

AUGUST 2009

8 Association of Marina Industries
National Marina Day
www.marinaassociation.org/nmd

22-30 U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
NACON
Chicago, Illinois
www.cgauxa.org/nacon

SEPTEMBER 2009

8-13 United States Power Squadrons
Governing Board Meeting
Kansas City, Missouri
www.usps.org

13-16 Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Annual Meeting
Austin, Texas
www.fishwildlife.org
cindy@delaneymeetingevent.com
802.865.5202

19-22 Canadian Safe Boating Council
Annual Meeting
Annual Symposium
Whistler, British Columbia
www.csbc.ca

21-25 US Sailing
Annual General Meeting
League City, Texas
www.ussailing.org
401.683.0800

26-30 NASBLA
Annual Conference
Corpus Christi, Texas
www.nasbla.org
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

28-Oct. 1 States Organization for Boating Access
Annual Conference
Corpus Christi, Texas
www.sobaus.org
312.946.6283

OCTOBER 2009

9 National Boating Federation
Fall Executive Committee Meeting
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.n-b-f.org
DavidKutz@aol.com

21-25 U.S. Sailing
Fall Meeting
Houston, Texas
www.ussailing.org
KatieOuellette@ussailing.org
401.683.0800

27-29 NASBLA
Executive Board Meeting
Lexington, Kentucky
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

NOVEMBER 2009

10-12 Paddlesports Industry Association
Annual Convention
Jamestown, Kentucky
www.paddlesportsindustry.org
502.395.1513

JANUARY 2010

10-13 International Association of
Marine Investigators
Galveston, Texas
www.iamimarine.org/iam
iamimarine@aol.com
541.776.8601

FEBRUARY 2010

1-6 United States Power Squadrons
Annual Meeting
Orlando, Florida
www.usps.org
888.367.8777

MARCH 2010

27-31 National Safe Boating Council &
National Water Safety Congress
International Boating &
Water Safety Summit
Daytona Beach, Florida
www.safeboatingcouncil.org
www.watersafetycongress.org

APRIL 2010

13-14 NASBLA
Spring BLA Workshop
Arlington, Virginia
info@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

