

STORY BY KELLY TOWNSEND,
North Carolina Western Foothills Flotilla 26-5,
Hickory, North Carolina



TICKET-A-KID

With an ice cream treat

John Gray, Flotilla 26-5 commander, tickets a shy Alex Maines, while mom Kisha looks on.

A uxiliarists sometimes wish they had the enforcement power to ticket parents when they see kids on the water without life jackets, bow riding on a cuddy cabin, holding onto the rails with their feet and dangling over the gunwales, or on an overloaded PWC or pontoon. John Gray, commander, North Carolina Western Foothills Flotilla 26-5, thought of a different approach. He enlisted the manager of his local Dairy Queen who agreed to provide ice cream treats to kids doing the right thing—wearing their life jackets.

The flotilla paid for the printing of the tickets which vessel examiners and patrols carry with them. Gray eventually expanded the program to include North Carolina Wildlife Officers. “Our program increases awareness of recreational boating safety,” Gray said. “It gives the kids a treat and gets the whole family into Dairy Queen to redeem their tickets. It’s a win-win for all involved.”