

**WESTERN STATES BOATING ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION (WSBAA)  
45<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT 2006**

**INTRODUCTION AND ABSTRACT**

The annual WSBAA conference was held from May 14 to May 17, 2006 at the Courtyard by Marriott, Kauai, Hawaii.

In attendance from The USCGAUX were Bob Sterzenbach, BC-BSP, and Jesse Harrup, DC-B; representing AUX D14 were Jim Jung, RCO, and Edson Lott, BC-International Directorate.

In attendance from Washington DC was Kitty Higgins, NTSB.

In attendance representing their states were BLAs Ray Tsuneyoshi-CA, Ron Jendro-MT (WSBAA president), Brad Hokanson-Guam, Dave Harris-UT, Fred Messmann-NV, James Horan-WA, Kevin Bergersen-AZ, Jeff Johnson-AK, Mike Choma-WY, Paul Donheffner-OR, Richard Rice-HI, and Parauni Fa'aua'a-American Samoa.

In attendance representing the Coast Guard were RBS Specialists Paul Newman-D11, Dan Shipman-D13, Kent Richards-D14, and Mike Folkerts-D17.

In attendance representing the National Boating Federation was Margot Brown-Executive Director.

Washington and Wyoming will receive new BLAs this year. James Horan-WA and Mike Choma-WY are moving into different state positions.

Attendees identified no problem areas with the USCGAUX. The AUX was commended for helping the states. The efforts of the RCO from D14-HI, who stepped up at the last minute to provide boats and tour guides for the conference attendees to cruise the Waoili River, were especially welcome. The scheduled tour boats were not operating because of recent rain storms that destroyed the boat landing at the Fern Grotto on the river.

WSBAA President, NASBLA Executive Director, NTSB, National Safe Boating Council, State BLAs, CG RBS Specialists, and WSBAA Associates gave reports.

No action items for USCG G-OPB-2 or USCGAUX nor need for personnel to engage in any specific item emerged at this time. The National Safe Boating Council hopes to examine VSC data from the AUX to better focus on safety areas.

The BLAs cited confusion about the institution of the Performance and Outcome Measures required by the Coast Guard.

The special presentation subjects are broken into two areas:

- Subjects that are associated with RBS:
  - Sole State Waters Commercial Vessel Safety (commercial problem)
  - PFD Loaner Program/PFD Contest Results
  - BUI/OUI Wet Lab Demo

- Subjects that support RBS:
  - 17 Character HIN
  - Converting Data From Boater Surveys and Focus Groups into Outputs and Outcomes that Change Behavior
  - Effective use of Major Media to Promote Boating Safety
  - Instituting Performance and Outcome Measurements
  - Pacific Islander Hot Topics and Issues (Commercial issues only)

## **CONFERENCE REPORTS**

### **WSBAA President's Report- Ron Jendro**

Times are changing for the WSBAA, following NASBLA. Organizational and bylaw changes are forthcoming. The WSBAA must make things happen.

### **NTSB Report- Kitty Higgins**

The NTSB has issued its 2006 "Most Wanted" Safety Improvements list. The NTSB wants the U.S. Coast Guard to act to improve drug and alcohol testing of crews after accidents by strengthening and clarifying regulations to require that alcohol and drug testing be conducted quickly after serious marine accidents.

The NTSB needs actions by the states to enhance RBS by:

- Requiring mandatory education of boat operators- 33 states comply. In the West the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming do not.
- Requiring use of life jackets by children- 46 States plus the District of Columbia comply. In the West the states of Iowa and Wyoming do not.
- Requiring safety instruction prior to PWC rental.
- Regulating passenger vessel safety on sole state waters.

### **NASBLA President's Report- President not present**

A BLA Workshop will be held June 6-8, 2006.

### **WSBAA Associates' Reports**

#### **National Boating Federation- Margot Brown**

The federation is still campaigning for kayakers to be alert by assuming that others can't see them, to know what's behind them, and to know that big ships move fast. After receiving a grant, they have made stickers with this message to be attached to kayaks.

#### **CGAUX BC – Bob Sterzenbach**

The District SLOs are appointed to help with special programs such as the Tri-State Boating Safety Fair, and the Kids' PFD exchange program. The BLAs are encouraged to use their states' SLO. AUX Safety Patrols and VE observations have added an element to approach kayakers who do not appear to have a PFD and educate them about the safety aspects and legal requirements of PFDs.

#### **CGAUX DC- Jesse Harrup**

To improve the quality of the appointed SLO, new SLOs will take a test based upon the SLO handbook.

### **National Safe Boating Council- Fred Messmann**

The council is working on a strategic plan and performance goals and objectives. They are looking to the CGAUX to provide VSC data to better know the areas of focus. PFD wear for adults is going nowhere. A law similar to the car seat belt law appears to be necessary to prod adults to wear PFDs.

## **CG DISTRICT REPORTS (RBS)**

### **District 11- Paul Newman**

D11 is helping its states with the problem of inspecting commercial vessels in sole state waters. Because of old levies, the Sacramento Delta in CA is at risk of flooding. Inter-state cooperation is good, especially on the Colorado River as evidenced by the Tri-State Boating Safety Fair. A RBS workshop was held in February at CG Sector San Diego.

### **District 13- Dan Shipman**

The local boating area radio broadcasts are working well. They transmit messages on bar conditions, local WX, restrictions, PSB, and RBS safety. The transmitters are remotely programmed, turned on, and solar powered. Signs are being placed at key RBS locations giving restrictions.

### **District 14- Kent Richards**

Hawaii suffered zero recreational fatalities in 2005. Boating education classes and campaigns have been greatly successful thanks to the CGAUX. Regarding recreational boaters, 71% have not a boating training course, 25% have distress signals problems (missing, expired), and 20% have PFD problems.

### **District 17- Mike Folkerts**

Fatalities are still up. RBS word is getting out via: boating education videos, McDonald's free ice cream coupons for kids caught wearing their PFDs, increased enforcement by boardings, and the KIDS DON'T FLOAT PFD loaner program, which is highly successful.

## **STATE REPORTS**

### **Montana- Ron Jendro**

Montana is partnering with boating organizations for programs to finance and produce items such as validation stickers.

### **Guam- Brad Hokanson**

Guam had 2 fatalities in 05. Both were kayakers going out after a storm at the same time. The economy is bad. Tourism and the military drive the economy.

### **Utah- Dave Harris**

All boats with a 50 hp or higher engine must carry insurance. They could not get a bill requiring boater education into the legislature. Nine boating deaths occurred in 2005. A bill to increase boat registration fees did not pass. They are focused on BUI.

If a boater refuses to take an alcohol level test, a zero level is required for the future. A device is installed on the boat. The operator must blow into the device and register zero before the boat can be started.

**Nevada- Fred Messmann**

Nevada has been staging BUI checkpoints. Out of 136 boaters checked, 9 had a level >.08; 30% had some alcohol. Nevada is developing a victim witness list. These victims' advocates testify on boating accidents in court.

**Washington- James Horan**

Fatalities are down. The radio broadcasts at boating areas are working well. Mandatory boater education begins in January 2008. They are working on a "teak surfing" bill similar to California's law.

**Alaska- Jeff Johnson**

Jeff presented a DVD on cold water boating safety. The theme was, "You should be lucky to live long enough to die from hypothermia." Causes of cold water deaths are cold shock response, heart attack, and hypothermia (in that order).

**Arizona- Kevin Bergersen**

They have received money for equipment. The boat registration fees are up but the distribution of the fees is contingent on legislative action. All deaths and accidents are down. They have set up BUI checkpoints. Kawasaki has provided PWCs for enforcement purposes under their loaner program.

**American Samoa- Parauni Fa'aua'a**

They have added one PWC to their 4 boat, 2 vehicle force. They are cross training officers for all duties. The WSBA has contributed greatly to American Samoa's accomplishments.

**Wyoming- Mike Choma**

Mandatory wearing of kids' PFDs is finally on the radar. Officers have been using HIN numbers to inspect for stolen boats. Wyoming will have a new BLA this year.

**Oregon- Paul Donheffner**

Mustang Survival has provided to the states of Oregon and Washington free (10,000) children's life jackets to be given away at boat shows. Stars, such as Rupert from the TV show "Survivor" and other big name people, participated to help fit the kids. This program, along with kids' boating safety awareness, has gone a long way.

**California- Ray Tsuneyoshi**

California is moving to mandatory boater education. Copper-based anti-fouling hull paints are forbidden but are the only growth inhibitor to invasive species; these species cost CA \$60 to \$90 million each year. CA is funding \$100k to study the actual impact of copper-based paints. Boating accidents and deaths are up in 2005. Vessel registration fees have been doubled (\$20.00 for 2 years), which will increase the boating safety and enforcement budget. Key problems remaining for California are abandoned vessels and the Sacramento River delta levies. Cal Boating is moving away from the "Road signs of the Waterways" advertising to a harder hitting approach:

“If it’s your boat, it’s your responsibility”. This program is a radio campaign that features real stories from accident victims and law enforcement officers.

**Hawaii-** Richard Rice

No RBS issues were presented. A new ferry system is soon to be implemented between islands. The increase in cruise ships visiting the islands has caused Homeland Security concerns. Commercial user conflicts are a problem.

## **RBS PRESENTATIONS**

### **Sole State Waters Commercial Vessel Safety- Kevin Bergersen-AZ**

In light of recent accidents, vessels carrying passengers for hire on sole state waters have become a great concern. These boats are not regulated by the Coast Guard and the states do not have laws and regulations to deal with them. Some states can identify these vessels; some can’t. Americans are getting heavier. These commercial boats are of all ages and some have been modified way beyond safety parameters. Crews are not required to be trained. The Coast Guard has issued guidance but cannot regulate. Controlling this problem is in its infancy. The states can’t get their arms around the problem, but must be proactive. This situation is a big concern with the states.

Currently in the Western states the following steps are being taken:

**ARIZONA-** Two commercial boats fall into this category. One of the boats is of great concern. The lakes upon which these boats operate are controlled by the AZ Bureau of Land Management, which issues the permit to operate. The Bureau now specifies what equipment must be aboard, and how the crew is trained in order to receive the permit. Further, a certified marine surveyor signs off on the hull condition. The remaining problem is determining responsibility for verification that all the requirements have been met.

**MONTANA-** The commercial vessel’s insurance company demands compliance before an insurance policy is issued. The state requires this insurance policy.

**UTAH-** A Commercial Vessel Operations, Boating Laws, And Rules Review Committee has been organized to deal with the problem.

**NEVADA-** The major lakes in NV are joint state lakes and require all commercial vessels to be Coast Guard inspected and comply with Federal regulations.

**CALIFORNIA-** California requires operator certification but does not inspect boats.

**GUAM-** Does not have any commercial boats.

### **Pfd Loaner Program/PFD Contest Results- Jeff Johnson-AK**

The “Kids Don’t Float” PFD loaner program continues to do well in Alaska. This program works best when implemented and maintained on a local basis and in partnership with local agencies such as the CGAUX. It can also be combined with boating education. In Alaska, instructions on a website explain how to make a PFD board that holds 14 PFDs of all sizes, including adult sizes. The PFDs are marked “Kids Don’t Float” and the board is placed at boating ramps and docks. For more info go to: [www.alaskaboatingsafety.org](http://www.alaskaboatingsafety.org).

The Boat/U.S. life jacket design competition results were just published. 182 entries were submitted. The winner was a slender belt worn around the waist. When activated, slender, symmetrically arranged, air bladders inflate, rising up to surround the wearer on all sides. Details of this contest are published in the NASBLA *Small Craft Advisory* (SCA) Mar/Apr 2006 edition.

### **Bui/Oui Wet Lab Demo**

Two subjects, one male and one female, took a controlled field sobriety test. These subjects ingested a measured amount of alcohol (monitored to put the subjects slightly over the .08 limit) over a 2.5 hour period. The test was to the elements of the: Field Sobriety Test Performance Report. A video camera enlarged images of the subjects' eyes and displayed them on a full-sized screen. Of interest to this writer was that the female appeared normal with a slight balance problem that anyone could have had, especially under stress. She had a measured level of .083, and when asked, said that she felt that she was capable of operating a boat. The male with a level of .097 was more obviously impaired and said that he felt that he could not operate a boat.

## **RBS SUPPORT PRESENTATIONS**

### **17 Character HIN- Fred Messmann-NV**

The current HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (HIN) system uses 12 characters. The original use was to recall boats when defects were found. Today this HIN is also being used to recover stolen boats. The recovery rate for stolen cars using a 17 character VIN is 64%; for boats it is 13% using a HIN. This poor recovery rate is partially due to small or nonexistent databases in states. The state of Nevada has a 50% recovery rate because of its database. To standardize and supply "hidden" code numbers it is proposed to go to a 17 character HIN, the same as a VIN. Europe currently uses 17 characters. A PowerPoint presentation is available on this subject and is available from this writer.

### **Converting Boater Surveys and Focus Groups Into Outputs and Outcomes That Change Behavior- Paul Donheffner-OR**

Oregon law requires surveys every three years and provides a basis for funding. Data are used to support programs and budgets. They show boater use locations. The surveys are a "snap shot" in time. They show what is changing, what is new, and give an opportunity to look ahead.

Key steps to surveys:

- Determine the sample size (typically 3.5% of population), and data collection technique
- Maintain continuity with past surveys
- Mail surveys with postage paid return envelopes
- Use professional survey help. The cost is typically \$35K.

Oregon's return response rate is 55%. Surveys are well worth it and help in future planning.

### **Effective Use Of Major Media To Promote Boating Safety- Paul McClure, Advertising firm representative**

Advertising is a numbers game: success demands the right vehicle, the right message, the right place, and the right time.

Criteria for selecting the right vehicle:

- Lead time flexibility
- Media usage- habits
- Cost analysis
- Ability to convey message
- Reach quickly
- Geographic area

Strategies:

- Market segments
- Get message into accident areas
- Know the season to advertise
- Use a media mix- Radio, TV, billboards, gasoline pump toppers, wall graphics, barrel wraps
- Have "ride alongs" with press to get free press
- Use Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Be at boating events and expos
- Make on-air appearances

Message (most difficult area):

- Convey what will interest people
- Know how people make sense of things
- Give the boater a sense of ownership
- Bring in human interest
- Make it real
- Do not do too much or mix messages. Leave the boater with one thing to remember
- Integrate facts or law

The added value to advertising is the building of partnerships and sponsorships.

Summary- Have the right message at the right time. Plan in advance. Seek out partnerships. Involve the audience.

### **INSTITUTING PERFORMANCE and OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS- James Horan- WA**

In order to comply with Coast Guard requirements to establish a strategic plan for a boating safety program, the states are working through the National Boating Safety Advisory Council. A draft plan was shown. This plan was confusing; the goals

presented were really target goals because no baseline data have been established. The goal statement mentioned environmental impact, which was not addressed in any goal. Confusion results from defining goals that are really strategies. There is a tendency to confuse goals with strategies and put the strategy first. It should be lined up: Goal-Objective-Strategy.

At a workshop between the Coast Guard and the states later this year, better definition of this program is hoped to be presented. Currently there is no real understanding within the states as to what the Coast Guard wants and how they want it reported.

States' reports are inconsistent. The states need to know the Coast Guard's expectations. The Coast Guard and the states should align strategically.

After this workshop it is hoped that a strategic plan for a boating safety program can be established by the National Boating Safety Advisory Council. This plan will be used as a model for all states. It is recognized that baseline data have to be established. The states are looking to the CGAUX to provide VSC data.

### **PACIFIC ISLANDER HOT TOPICS and ISSUES- Richard Rice-HI**

This presentation did not deal with any RBS issues; only commercial issues were presented. Hawaii is experiencing big growth. They will soon have a commercial ferry service between islands; cruise ships are on the increase, which present Homeland Security issues. Commercial user groups, which are permit controlled, want flexibility to change between services. This flexibility generates money for their living and money for Hawaii (tourism). Commercial users and recreational boaters are in conflict over available boat slips. Hawaii needs to control the environment (rental kayakers are disturbing the dolphins, coral), much of which is considered sacred and burial grounds.

This report is prepared by,

Robert Sterzenbach  
Branch Chief, Boating-States-Pacific  
US Coast Guard Auxiliary

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