



A PUBLICATION OF THE RHODE ISLAND MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

February 2008

Founded in 1964

A Letter from President Chris Ruhling

Hello all,

I hope everyone's winter is going well. YOUR industry needs your help! We are all in jeopardy of being TAXED in new ways. We have enjoyed the benefits of the repeal of Sales Tax on boats for many years now in our state. There is a possibility of sales tax being instituted on SLIPS, STORAGE, LABOR and BOATS. The ramifications of this proposition will affect everyone of our businesses dramatically. In short order, customers in our slips will leave our state, our service departments revenues will suffer big time and our bottom lines will shrink substantially while your energy costs, real estate taxes, property taxes and regulatory expenses increase at ever alarming rates. These are facts!!!!

Next RIMTA Member Meeting
Monday, March 3, 2008
East Greenwich Yacht Club
Water Street
East Greenwich, RI
6:15 pm

You have to do the following to protect yourselves and our industry, GET INVOLVED! Contact your local state legislator!

You are in this fight both Professionally and Personally!!!!!!

Thank you,

Chris Ruhling

Newport gets \$713,000 U.S. aid for boating center

WASHINGTON – The City of Newport and the R.I. Department of Environmental Management will receive a federal grant of \$713,000 to help construct a central tie-up facility for visiting boaters, with restrooms and other amenities.

The award, announced last night by U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BigP). Another \$250,000 will be provided by the DEM, to meet federal matching-funds requirements, giving the project a budget of at least \$963,000.

“I am pleased that Newport is receiving this federal funding to build a new boating facility,” said Reed, a member of the Appropriations Committee. “The city is vital to Rhode Island’s tourism industry, and this money will ensure that both visitors and local boaters have access to high-quality facilities.”

Rhode Island – a first-time BigP recipient, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior – is one of 15 states awarded funds in the competitive grant program’s latest round.

BigP funds may be used to construct, renovate or maintain tie-up facilities for non-trailerable transient recreational vessels 26 feet and longer. Eligible projects include slips, mooring buoys, day-docks, floating docks and fixed piers; fixed or floating breakwaters, safe harbors, retaining walls and bulkheads; channel markers, buoys and other directional information; and support facilities including restrooms, pump-out stations, water and utility supplies, recycling and trash receptacles.

The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BigP) is funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To learn more about the grant program or the projects it has funded, visit MyFWC.com.

Tough MPG Rule Rattles Industry

By Reagan Haynes

A proposed 40-percent increase in fuel economy standards, contained in a landmark federal energy bill, could have a drastic impact on the boating industry and other businesses that rely on small trucks to tow heavy loads, some industry leaders believe.

The energy bill was passed by the House of Representatives in early December and was stalled in the Senate at midmonth. But the fuel economy standards portion of the measure had bipartisan support and appeared likely to survive if the measure finally is passed in any form.

“I just see a pyramid effect,” said Larry Innis, director of government relations for the Marine Retailers Association of America. “The RV industry, the trailer industry, jobs at dealerships, sales jobs. I’m not an economist but my gut tells me this is going to have a far-reaching effect.”

Innis, chief lobbyist for the industry’s retail side, says the proposed standards would result in lighter trucks and SUVs that don’t have the towing capacities of today’s vehicles, potentially devastating the trailer industry.

Environmental organizations have applauded the bill, which would raise fuel efficiency standards in cars and light trucks to 35 mpg by the year 2020. The current standards are 27.5 miles per gallon for cars and 22.2 miles per gallon for light trucks. It is the first such increase proposed in more than 30 years.

“This is a once-in-three-decades opportunity,” said Pew Campaign for Fuel Efficiency president Phyllis Cuttino, in a statement urging the Senate and President Bush to approve the measure.

The bill passed in the House Dec. 6 by a vote of 235-181. It failed the next day to get the 60 votes needed to advance it in the Senate, which voted 53-42 in favor. In mid-December, with a holiday recess approaching, senators were scrambling to forge a compromise measure that could win approval in both chambers and be signed by President Bush.

“The die is cast”

The contested bill almost certainly would mean higher prices for consumers.

“The die is cast,” said American Recreation Coalition president Derrick Crandall. “We will see an uptick in the fuel efficiency of vehicles ... in the next three to four years, and that will come at a cost. The bill will be tough on those vehicles that are frequently used to tow boats and RVs and horses and such.”

As Innis says, “It’s basic physics. In order to tow a boat, you have to have a certain amount of torque. To meet these requirements, they’re going to have to reduce the horsepower and reduce the torque.”

“People who tow horses, cattle, boats, trailers, landscapers — those people are going to find it more difficult to find a vehicle,” Innis said. “The automakers are probably going to drop models, and we’re going to have less of a selection than we have now. It’s going to be gradual.”

The result will be fewer, but more expensive, options for consumers, Innis said. And if vehicles equipped to tow boats aren’t readily available, customers might flip into a different recreational activity.

Agreement on CAFE

Although the Senate rejected the initial 1,055-page bill, efforts were under way to amend some of its more controversial elements. Those include a proposal diverting billions of dollars in tax breaks for oil companies to alternative and renewable energy sources, and a requirement for energy companies to produce 15 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2020.

But the CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) provisions — the section that most concerns boating interests — were not among the contested portions of the measure.

The consumer side of boating also was weighing in on the issue. Margaret Podlich, vice president of government affairs at BoatU.S., said whatever form an energy bill takes, higher fuel economy standards are inevitable.

“In general, from BoatU.S.’ perspective, we are concerned about making sure that boaters have the ability to buy a tow vehicle — one that’s big and strong enough to tow that boat once you put it on a slippery ramp,” Podlich said. “Of course, we understand the need for a national energy policy that is looking toward the future.”

Podlich also fears that higher mileage will translate to lighter trucks with less towing capacity.

“This could apply to marinas, if they’re moving boats around the yard with pickup trucks,” Podlich said. “It could apply to those that rely on light trucks to have marine business mobile, whether it’s electronics, sailmakers, or any of the people who come to the marina and service your boat.”

Cost to consumers

The technology needed to achieve higher gas mileage will come at a cost to consumers, said Bruce McCahill, a licensed boat master and president of Sport Utility Vehicle Owners of America.

Environmental groups say the total additional cost per vehicle will be around \$1,500, which is more than offset by the \$700 consumers will save at the pump each year, according to the Sierra Club’s Web site. But the auto industry and others say the price tag for each car will be much higher.

McCahill, who worked with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for more than 30 years, thinks the cost will fall more in the vicinity of \$8,500.

“We’re all speculating, but it’s not going to be cheap,” McCahill said. “And those costs will be passed on to the consumers.”

“At the end of the day, the bottom line is for boaters [who own] towable boats, vehicles are going to cost more,” McCahill said, “probably many thousands of dollars more and, most likely, the ones that are able to tow boats will have the highest costs.”

“Our concern and message is real simple: We want the American people to be told up front what this is going to entail, not 10 or 15 years from now,” McCahill said. “We’re concerned that in 2020 when these things kick in fully, the people responsible for it are going to be gone from Congress.”

Nuts and bolts

The bill under debate does not say how automakers should go about meeting proposed goals, but does clarify that not every car and light truck would have to meet that standard. Anything less than 8,500 pounds of towing capacity would count as a light truck.

Light trucks and cars would be averaged separately, and then those two numbers would be averaged together to equal a total fleet average of 35 miles per gallon. That decision was a small victory for organizations like SUVOA. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., had sought to have the two treated the same and averaged into one number.

Because they would be averaged separately before being averaged together, light trucks would have a little more leeway. A simplified example would be a grade school report card. Four Fs and two As would average an F altogether. But if one averaged the Fs and the As separately, and took the average of the two, the result would be a passing C.

Averaging the two separately first would allow automakers to produce several little trucks that get more than 35 miles per gallon and some that produce less, as long as they averaged out to 35 by the end of the year, McCahill said.

Critics who maintain light trucks should be treated like cars call the separation of cars and light trucks the “SUV loophole.”

The Union of Concerned Scientists says that if approved, the 40-percent increase in standards would save 1.1 million barrels of oil a day by 2020.

But McCahill contends people would be inclined to do more driving if they were getting better gas mileage.

“It’s intended to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil, but when the initial laws passed in the mid-1970s, our dependence was low, about 30 percent,” McCahill said. “Now today we’re more than 60 percent dependent on foreign oil.”

Hybrids typically have only been able to tow around 3,500 pounds — a fraction of the load traditional cars can haul, McCahill said. The size of the average towed boat is around 7,500 pounds, said Podlich of BoatU.S.

General Motors announced in November it had produced a hybrid that can tow 6,500 pounds on the highway. But, that translates to fewer pounds on a slippery boat ramp, Innis said.

“It would tow a small fishing boat, but a larger water ski boat, that’s probably not safe to tow,” Innis said.

Farmers, landscapers and contract workers will be among those hurt by decreased towing capacity, Innis said. Many of them drive half-ton or three-quarter-ton trucks. Those would not qualify under the exemption that applies to larger trucks, or those weighing more than 8,500 pounds.

“I think the auto industry is going to have to drop models,” Innis said. “It won’t be immediate, but as they face the challenges of incremental increases, the immediate way to do that is to drop models and add more models that get better gas mileage.”

Innis and McCahill both hoped that, short of finding a new clean fuel-injection system that would preserve all the modern traits of light trucks, automakers would begin to install new “clean” diesel engines instead of looking to hybrids.

But even the diesels have their drawbacks, Crandall said.

“It takes anywhere from eight to 10 years to change over any substantial part of the automotive fleet,” Crandall said. “We’re already seeing with the new diesel engines and clean diesel fuels that truckers are holding onto their old trucks for a longer period of time because of the added costs of new trucks.”

Among those opposing the sharp mileage increase are the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, the Marine Retailers Association of America, BoatU.S., the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the National Cattlemen’s Association of America, the National Association of Equipment Dealers and the National Marine Distributors Association.

Some of those groups are also concerned about the possibility of limits on carbon dioxide emissions, which could create a double whammy for certain industries.

“The only solution is to burn less,” Crandall said. “So limitations in CO2 could also pose real significant concerns for us.”

However, demands for cleaner, more fuel-efficient engines are nothing new, and seem inevitable.

CAFE was first introduced in 1975, doubling the fuel economy of cars from 14 to 28 miles per gallon by 1986. But with low oil prices in the 1980s and 1990s, American automakers produced bigger and more powerful vehicles — and the American public continues to buy them.

“This has been an issue and it’s been around for about 18 years,” Innis said. “But this past year it’s gotten serious.”

“I think a lot of people want clean water and clean air,” Innis concluded. “The devil’s in the details of how you get that.”

Outlook 2008

THOMAS J. DAMMRICH

President, National Marine Manufacturers Association

I think we will see a bottoming out and some slight improvement in our industry in 2008. Most experts are predicting slower economic growth and perhaps even a recession. Consumer confidence is very low as 2007 ends. In some respects things may appear so bad there’s really no place to go but up. This is not true, of course, but I think it will be the case.

Inflation has been tamed, and with a slowing economy we will likely see more Fed rate cuts in the coming year. This should help. While unemployment is likely to grow slightly in 2008, it will still remain relatively low. The housing market is predicted to bottom out next year. It will probably be 2009 before we see strong growth again, but in 2008 we should see some mild growth for the industry.

Fall boat show attendance and sales were strong. Is this the beginning of the new uptrend? I think so. Discover Boating is working. More people are interested in the boating lifestyle and taking a look at boating — many for the first time. Baby Boomers and GenXers are spending recreational dollars. And, according to recent research, they would rather spend their money on a boat than any other type of recreational vehicle. Moving forward, we must commit to getting more people out on the water.

As an industry we need to do a better job of delivering a consistent message to the consumer. Fuel prices are high, but new boats and engines are 50 percent more fuel efficient than they were just a decade ago. As a result of these increased efficiencies, operating costs for new boats are lower today — in spite of rising fuel prices.

In 2008 we need to work harder to ensure boating is represented positively in the media. Without these efforts, consumers may feel factors such as rising gas prices — which have been proven to have little or no impact on people’s desire to go boating — are a strike against our industry. We need people to use the NMMA Issues Management Web site, housed on NMMA.org, to learn all the positive talking points about boating and communicate them to the consumer media.

A ‘perfect storm’ is forming on the industry’s labor front

Opinion, by Steven H. Kitchin

Novelist Sebastian Junger coined the phrase “perfect storm” in his 1997 book of the same name recounting the tragedy of the fishing vessel Andrea Gail.

According to Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, the phrase perfect storm “refers to the simultaneous occurrence of events which, taken individually, would be far less powerful than the result of their chance combination.” This scenario is also true for labor supply for the marine industry.

I first heard the expression of a labor supply “perfect storm” used by Robert Knight of the Arbor Workforce Institute at a national workforce conference. He explained that several factors were combining at the same time, which would have a dramatic impact on labor supply and workforce development in the United States.

The three issues aligning at the same time to create this labor supply Nor’easter are demographics, technology and globalization. Dr. Lynn A. Karoly, senior economist at the Rand Corp., confirmed these three factors in her testimony last February before the House Education and Labor Committee. “I briefly outline three key factors that are expected to have important effects on the workforce and workplace in the next 10 to 15 years: demographic shifts, technological advances, and global competition,” she told the panel.

The demographics of the labor force are hard to dispute. According to the United States Department of Labor, in its report entitled “America’s Dynamic Workforce,” our workforce is grayer, more ethnically diverse and has near level labor force participation rates between men and women.

The report states the population of older Americans (age 65 and older) is expected to more than double, compared to current levels, to reach an estimated 86.7 million by 2050. By 2030, nearly one fifth of the population will be 65 years or older, while at the same time the growth in the population of younger Americans will be slower. Dr. Karoly, in her testimony before Congress, also cited another important demographic trend — the slowing growth of the workforce. She stated, “The annual growth rate of the nation’s workforce is expected to slow to 0.6 percent in the 2010s and 0.4 percent in the 2020s. That is a sharp decline from the 1.3 percent annual increases seen in the 1990s and the 2.6 percent average increases experienced during the 1970s.”

What does this mean for you as an employer? The squeeze for workers is on.

The technological advances in the marine world couldn’t be more obvious. Compare the marine product of today to the products of marine technology past. The product technology includes new drive systems, new engine technology, more electronics, new composites used in marine manufacturing, new painting techniques and new environmental requirements on how either the product is made, repaired or stowed. How does this impact workforce? Do you need workers with more skills or less in this environment? And if you believe as I do that you need workers with more, not less, skills, how do your workers get these skills?

If high skill workers are in demand across the economy, how do we make sure that all future workers understand that the potential for learning and growing in the marine industry is just as necessary? The squeeze for knowledgeable, trained workers is on.

The major events of the past two decades best characterize the globalization of our world. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the increased need for global capital in the United States, the creation of the Internet and the immergence of outsourcing have all contributed to the flattening of our world. Tom Friedman, in his book “The World is

Flat,” outlines several truisms including the death of distance and that knowledge and work can be shared in real-time without the constraints of geographic barriers. Globalization will increase competition from outside our borders. According to Fortune magazine, ten of the 10 largest engineering firms, nine of the 10 largest electronics companies, eight of the 10 largest automakers, seven of the 10 largest banks and six of the 10 largest food and drug stores are not based in the United States. Global competition will boost trade, encouraging more mobility amongst the world’s people, and continue to cause the rapid transfer of knowledge and technology. Ask yourself the following question: Is there more or less product available to my customers manufactured from outside the geography of the United States? Clearly, the answer is more. How does globalization impact workforce?

Naturally, potential workers will have more opportunities to interact with global employers. The advent of working at home, Internet communications, e-mail and nearly instant communication will contribute to this fact. The squeeze from global competitors for qualified workers is on.

Adding to these three categories of demographics, technology and globalization is the fact that all employers are demanding a higher level of skill for careers that previously required no post secondary education. Employers seek individuals with better written and oral communication skills, problem solving skills and customer relations skills.

The question one needs to ask is how visible is the marine employment world to potential employees?

The best way to illustrate the lack of visibility of marine careers is in the report America’s Dynamic Workforce where 13 of 20 of the fastest growing occupations are in such medical fields as occupational therapists, physical therapist assistants and dental assistants. The marine industry does not appear in the top 20, the top 40 or anywhere on the fastest-growing occupation list.

While we know that the squeeze is on for qualified marine workers, the marketplace of new workers does not have the empirical evidence needed to reinforce a positive decision to pursue a career in this industry.

The workforce opinion leaders who might guide young people, career changers and the like also do not have access to such information (e.g., secondary educators, guidance counselors, workforce development specialists).

The marine industry cannot stand by and watch these events without taking action. Some states and organizations are attempting to lead the way.

From a regional perspective Maine, Massachusetts and Florida come to mind. From a national perspective, the Marine Industry Technical Education Council (MITEC) and all the volunteers and organizations supporting its mission also stand out.

However, the truth is that much more needs to be done. As caretakers of the marine industry, the time to act has come.

When the baton is passed, we need to be certain we have done the best we could to protect and grow the marine industry. We have an obligation to perpetuate the industry and I encourage each and every individual working in the boating industry to spread the good word about our industry to anyone who can guide young people, career changers, etc. in our direction.

This is not a time for the industry to be shy about its needs. Without a clear, present, articulate voice to the opinion leaders of the “workforce development system,” the perfect storm of demographics, technology and globalization will continue to cause a disruption in the flow of qualified workers that this industry can ill afford.

Steven H. Kitchin is vice president for corporate education and training at New England Institute of Technology in Warwick, R.I. New England Tech is a private, technical college offering more than 30 associate in science and bachelor of science degree programs, including an associate in science in marine technology. He is also chairman of the Marine Industry Technical Education Council.

Training costs: ‘worth every penny’

By Melanie Winters / Associate Editor

m.winters@tradeonlytoday.com

Boatbuilding’s acute shortage of skilled labor is under attack on two fronts. While industry leaders focus on recruiting and training future marine technicians, individual manufacturers and trade organizations are working equally hard to retain existing workers.

In most cases they’re using the programs offered by the American Boat & Yacht Council, which in recent years has been taking its training on the road to make it more cost effective for individual companies. ABYC instructors go to the plant and give courses on a variety of marine systems, from basic to more advanced levels for certification.

Boatbuilders and engine makers agree that more training for marine technicians — whether at the manufacturing or dealer level — will improve customer satisfaction. A highly skilled workforce, they say, will lead to better products and better service for those products. This will encourage more people to get into boating, and stay in.

“The whole purpose is to build a better boat,” says Jay Check, electrical systems manager for Fort Pierce, Fla.-based Pursuit Boats, a division of S2 Yachts in Holland, Mich.

He says the hassles and the costs associated with hauling in and repairing a boat — whether because of mechanical, electrical or other failures — often drive consumers out of boating.

Also, the company has been spending less on warranties, according to Check.

It costs Pursuit nearly \$10,000 to have an ABYC instructor come to the plant to conduct a training course, but with warranties down 22 percent in the last year he says the course has more than paid for itself.

“It was worth every penny,” says Check.

Pursuit builds its own electrical harnessing and subsystems for its boats. Check says the company started on an endeavor two years ago to have all its electrical technicians work toward ABYC electrical certification.

“It’s one thing to make a harness; it’s another thing for them to have an understanding of how it works,” he says. “Understanding the why — we did not have that before.”

Pursuit offers its employees a three-step program toward ABYC certification. Step one was an ABYC basic electrical course held last year. Since Pursuit practices lean manufacturing, employees had to change their regular routine of just-in-time production and make some products in advance so they could then devote a few days to the training.

“There was some resistance at first to working overtime [in preparation for the class], but once we explained what [we were] doing and why, everybody got on board pretty quick,” says Check.

Step two will be an intermediate class for those who aren’t quite ready for the three-day certification course.

“Some people did very well on the basic, and some need more work,” Check explains. “You can’t take a beginner and make them an expert overnight.”

Pursuit worked with ABYC to create an intermediate course, which the boatbuilder hopes to conduct after the New Year. This will be followed by a certification course.

At Sea Ray’s Product Development & Engineering plant in Merritt Island, Fla., it was the employees who requested more ABYC training. The standards organization recently conducted a four-day certification program covering mechanical, electrical, plumbing, propulsion, and heating and air conditioning.

In November, Sea Ray trained 90 laminators and key management people in Tennessee on the ABYC laminator program. It also plans to train an additional 200, using that same program and a composite boatbuilders’ certification program.

“This training has provided a common language, which has promoted unity between engineers and assembly line workers,” said Brenna Peisser, director of human resources.

“Our investment in technical training benefits the company in many ways,” she said. First, she said, the technical training has a positive impact on the quality of the product, “which is a cornerstone of the Sea Ray brand.” Second, she said, the company strongly believes its employees want to do a good job. “When they have the knowledge and skill to perform, their morale is higher,” which she said, fosters retention.

Thunderbird Products, maker of Formula powerboats, also enlisted ABYC’s help to conduct a basic electrical course for its employees.

“They need to know NMMA certification standards, which are based on ABYC standards,” says Randy Everett, head of systems for the company’s engineering group.

ABYC sent one of its instructors to the boatbuilder’s Decatur, Ind., plant to give a one-hour presentation on basic wire handling to more than half the employees.

“A large segment of employees in production do deal with some type of wiring,” says Everett.

The basic course was followed by a four-hour class for a select group who do more advanced electrical work, and then another four-hour class specifically on DC circuitry.

“In this quickly changing world of boatbuilding, where electrical systems are almost overwhelming, it’s almost a mandate that we provide electrical training,” says Everett. “Even with something as simple as connecting two plugs together, they need to know how delicate the pins are connecting the wires. There are myriad rules and connections of computerized circuitry.”

With many boats today containing AC high voltage, DC low voltage, radars, antennas, fly-by-wire, and other complicated systems, Everett says, “It’s become absolutely necessary that we do these things right the first time.”

And if something does happen to go wrong on a boat, it’s important to provide top-quality service, says Andy Prietz, customer support manager for Yanmar.

The inboard engine maker has for years offered training to its employees, distributors and dealers. Most of these classes have focused on installation and repair of Yanmar engines, and technical and sales support to familiarize everyone with Yanmar’s products as well as any new technology.

The company now partners with ABYC to offer certification classes at the company’s American headquarters in Adairsville, Ga., for employees and distributors. These will focus on marine corrosion, diesel engines, marine systems and marine electrical.

“We’re looking to hold the first class, on corrosion, at the end of March or early April,” says Prietz.

Yanmar trains trainers at a distributor’s location so that distributor can then offer training to the dealers.

“We’re doing this so we can support our product and our customers in the field,” he adds. “We’re going to make sure our products are properly serviced.”

Two of the industry’s largest outboard engine manufacturers — Yamaha and Mercury — offer their own internal technical training for their dealers.

With Yamaha’s Five Star Certification program, technicians work through 10 self-paced video programs covering service theory and diagnostics, with three more specialized programs for service managers. At the end of each program the technician or service manager takes an online test to become Yamaha certified.

Those who earn Five Star Certification can then go on to become a Yamaha Outboard Master Technician. This program includes six training modules at Yamaha’s own training locations. Each module is an intensive week-long class with both classroom and hands-on training in advanced troubleshooting and repair techniques.

Mercury Marine offers a similar training program for its dealers. The engine maker provides several “e-skills” distance learning courses that allow technicians to learn at their own pace by compact disc and, soon, online. The company also offers hands-on training courses at several locations through the United States and Canada.

The courses range from outboard engines to MerCruiser sterndrives to related engine systems such as Smart Craft and Digital Throttle and Shift. Like Yamaha, technicians can work toward Mercury certification in any of these product areas, and then advance on to Master Technician.

The whole program is set up to help dealers improve customer satisfaction, and ultimately their own bottom line, says Brad Weber, director of field service development and operations for Mercury.

“If the dealers and their technicians are well-informed and competent in the product we’re going to improve the overall experience by the customer,” says Weber. “Ultimately that adds to the dealer’s bottom line, which is profitability and market share.”

Some industry leaders say dealer technicians need more than what the manufacturers offer, however. The Lake Erie Marine Trades Association is working with ABYC to bring more advanced training — beyond just the engine — to its dealers.

LEMTA is surveying its members to find out where the greatest interest lies, and then will have an ABYC instructor come to a central dealership location and give a class for all the members.

“We want to make sure we have a viable, progressive, dynamic workforce,” says Ken Alvey, executive vice president of LEMTA.

“So often people think of the MarineMaxes as being the center of boating ... but smaller dealers still need to keep up with training,” he says.


LEMTA’s efforts were encouraged by one of its members, John Sima, who also sits on the ABYC board of directors.

Sima says the courses offered by ABYC go beyond any on-the-job training dealer technicians may get on systems, as well as any technical training offered by manufacturers for specific engines.

“ABYC offers a somewhat different type of training [than manufacturers],” he says. “It’s not only the motor, but also electrical, mechanical systems, air conditioning and refrigeration. A lot of these things are not taught by the boat and engine manufacturers. There are so many things in a boat that a technician needs to know.”

Mandatory Training for Members of the RIMTA Safety Group

We are pleased to present the following safety training seminars as part of the criteria to be a member of The Beacon Mutual Insurance Company RIMTA Safety Group. Members must attend three of the four training sessions to comply with the safety group requirements.



The Beacon and **RIMTA**
Mutual Insurance Co. Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

Present a

Mandatory Training for Members of the RIMTA Safety Group

We are pleased to present the following safety training seminars as part of the criteria to be a member of The Beacon Mutual Insurance Company RIMTA Safety Group.

Members must attend three of the four training sessions to comply with the safety group requirements. The schedule is as follows:

East Bay (Middletown Marriott Courtyard)	West Bay (Beacon Mutual Insurance Bldg.)
1/23/08 Workers' Compensation Overview	3/5/08 Workers' Compensation Overview
1/30/08 Blood Borne Pathogens - Young Employee Safety	3/12/08 Scaffolding - OSHA Update Maryann Medeiros, OSHA
2/6/08 Scaffolding - OSHA Update Maryann Medeiros, OSHA	3/19/08 Blood Borne Pathogens - Young Employee Safety

* A fourth training option is an ergonomics program with Kurt Bodziony

**These are the only seminars available for your RIMTA safety program credit.
No other Beacon seminars will be accepted.**

Classes are from 8:00 am - 11:00 am. Refreshments will be served.

Please call Donna Finan at 825-2731 or
Beverly Meenagh at 825-2732 to reserve your seat.

Marine_Trade_Assoc_Invite08

OSHA Launches Voluntary Outreach Training Programs for the Maritime Trades!

5400 OSHA Trainer Course for the Maritime Industry

4 days \$855

The course has been designed for individuals working in the maritime industry who either want to learn more about workplace safety and health-hazard recognition or who want to become OSHA authorized trainers for the 10- and 30-hour maritime courses. Special emphasis has been placed on those areas in the maritime industry that are the most hazardous, using the OSHA 29 CFR 1915, 1917, and 1918 standards as a resource. Course participants who successfully complete the course and pass a final exam will become OSHA-authorized maritime outreach trainers, authorized to conduct both the 10- and 30-hour maritime outreach courses for shipyard employment, marine terminals, and longshoring.

Trainers may document the training and issue cards to participants verifying course completion.

Course Section Date(s) Day(s) Location

NCOS-5400-N2C May 12-15, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Manchester, NH

NCOS-5400-N3C Sept. 22-25, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Manchester, NH

Prerequisites: Two years industry experience in ship repairing, shipbuilding, shipbreaking, marine terminals, or longshoring

And at least one of the following:

- two years of occupational safety and health experience (with a broad focus) in any industry
- a degree in occupational safety and health from an accredited college or university
- certification as an Associate Safety Professional (ASP), Certified Safety Professional (CSP), Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH), or Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM)
- submission of a résumé and completion of a Verification of Prerequisites Form required upon registration.

Student Courses. The 10- and 30-hour student courses are numbered and named as follows:

10-Hour

- Course #7615, Shipyard Employment, including ship repairing, shipbuilding, shipbreaking
- Course #7617, Marine Terminals
- Course #7618, Longshoring

30-Hour

- Course #7635, Shipyard Employment, including ship repairing, shipbuilding, shipbreaking
- Course #7637, Marine Terminals
- Course #7638, Longshoring

7635 30-Hour Occupational Safety and Health Maritime Standards for Shipyard Employment

4 days \$800

This 30-hour workplace safety and health course (29 CFR 1915) augments the introductory 10-hour outreach training by adding designated topics and hours germane to shipyard employment, including ship repairing, shipbuilding, and shipbreaking. Applicable OSHA maritime safety standards and subparts are covered. This 30-hour shipyard employment outreach training program functions as a standards course for individuals with safety responsibilities at shipyards. For a complete description of topics, go to www.keene.edu/conted/osha.cfm.

Course Section Date(s) Day(s) Location

NCOS-7635-N1C Apr. 7-10, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Warwick, RI

NCOS-7635-N2C July 7-10, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Warwick, RI

7617 10-Hour Maritime Outreach Course for Marine Terminal Employees

2 days \$295

The new 10-hour Maritime Outreach Course for Marine Terminal Employees is intended to provide entry-level safety and health training tailored specifically to marine terminal employees. The course focuses on hazard identification, avoidance, control, and prevention methods.

Course Section Date(s) Day(s) Location

NCOS-7617-N1C May 12-13, 2008 Mon.-Tues. Manchester, NH

NCOS-7617-N2C Aug. 11-12, 2008 Mon.-Tues. Warwick, RI

7637 30-Hour Occupational Safety and Health Maritime Standards for Marine Terminals

4 days \$800

This new OSHA 30-hour maritime outreach course specific to marine terminal operations builds upon the new OSHA 10-hour Outreach Training Program by adding additional topics relevant to marine terminal operation (and all related equipment). This course includes topics like specialized marine terminal operations “roll on/roll off”, railroad facilities/operations at the marine terminal, safe slinging (using land-based cargo handling gear), proper stacking; and includes advanced PIT/forklift training (including various forklift attachments unique to marine terminals). Also covered in this course are a variety of required and elective outreach topics that include OSHA’s maritime standards specific to marine terminals (29 CFR 1917).

For a complete listing of all outreach topics, please go to www.keene.edu/conted/osha.cfm.

Course Section Date(s) Day(s) Location

NCOS-7637-N1C May 12-15, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Manchester, NH

NCOS-7637-N2C Aug. 11-14, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Warwick, RI

7618 10-Hour Maritime Outreach Course for Longshoring Operations

2 days \$295

This new OSHA 10-hour course is intended to provide entry-level safety and health-hazard information tailored specific to longshoring industry workers. The course focuses on specific hazard identification, avoidance, control, and prevention methods (not just OSHA’s longshoring standards).

Course Section Date(s) Day(s) Location

NCOS-7618-N1C Apr. 14-15, 2008 Mon.-Tues. Warwick, RI

NCOS-7618-N2C June 9-10, 2008 Mon.-Tues. Manchester, NH

7638 30-Hour Occupational Safety and Health

Maritime Standards for Longshoring Operations

4 days \$800

This new course is designed for individuals working specifically in the maritime industry who have some safety responsibility relative to longshoring operations (29 CFR 1918). This course builds on the entry-level 10-hour 7618 course and includes both required and elective outreach topics, which include OSHA’s maritime standards specific to the longshoring industry. Supplementary compliance and safety requirements are covered for gangways and hatch coverings, working surfaces, vessel cargo handling gear, and the safe handling of cargo. Topics covered under 29 CFR 1919 (gear certification requirements) are covered. For a full listing of the course topics and other regulatory references, please go to www.keene.edu/conted/osha.cfm.

Course Section Date(s) Day(s) Location

NCOS-7638-N1C Apr. 14-17, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Warwick, RI

NCOS-7638-N2C June 9-12, 2008 Mon.-Thurs. Manchester, NH

IYRS to Host Third Annual Marine Industry Career Day on March 1

Marine Industry Career Day runs from 11 am to 2 pm, at the IYRS campus at 449 Thames Street in Newport. Admission is free. The event is made possible with support from the United Way of Rhode Island. Companies from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island are expected to attend Career Day. These exhibitors include builders of both classic and modern boats, boat yards, marine equipment manufacturers, and sailmakers. Many of these exhibiting companies employ a full set of trades, such as boat builders, carpenters, electricians, laminators, mechanics, metal fabricators, painters, welders, and yard crew. Attendees can talk with employers, learn about job opportunities and the skills required, gather information on training programs, and watch hands-on demonstrations.

For more information on Career Day and IYRS programs, visit the school's website at www.iyrs.org or call 401-848-5777, ext. 220.

RIMTA presents the 2008 Boater of the Year Award at the Providence Boat Show



This year, the Boater of the Year Award was presented in memory, to the family of Mr. Jim Long. Jim passed away in August, 2004. Jim owned and operated the Watch Hill Boat Yard since 1970. He was a Board member of RIMTA for many years and a great friend to the industry and the environment in RI. Jim was committed to building a strong Industry for our State. He was truly passionate about the importance of politics and achieving change in what he believed in. He was known for his campaigning work with Senators Claiborne Pell and Jack Reed and was Chair of the Westerly Democratic Town Committee for many years, as well as a member of the Rhode Island Coastal Management Association.

RIEDC Aids Goetz Custom Boats with Workforce Development, Financing

Bristol's Goetz Custom Boats was recently awarded a Governor's Workforce Board grant of \$68,000 to train 20 new employees as well as financing that helped the company build a 43,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Bristol. The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation assisted Goetz in obtaining both the workforce grant and financing for their new facility.

The workforce grant, approved by the Governor's Workforce Board, is currently being used to train boat builders at Goetz. "There is a learning curve that requires specific training for these carbon fiber boats," says Sara Watson, Marketing and Public Relations Director for Goetz Custom Boats. "We've developed a training program that takes the builder through the step-by-step process of building a boat, from the composite structure to plumbing and electrical work. We are looking for great generalists who can work on any part of the boat."

Goetz boats aren't just your run-of-the-mill boats. The company needs specifically-trained boat builders for a reason — Goetz is known throughout the world for composite construction on boats that compete in the America's Cup, Admiral's Cup and Maxi Worlds as well as boats for the military, and sail and power yachts for leisure. "We strive to produce the lightest, strongest boats," Watson says.

The RIEDC assisted Goetz in obtaining both the workforce grant and financing. “Paul Harden [RIEDC Marine Trades Sector Lead] helped us through the process,” Watson says. “He reviewed our ideas, offered suggestions and connected us with the right people. He was very accessible and helpful.”

RIEDC helped Goetz obtain a \$4.3 million bond from the Rhode Island Industrial Facilities Corporation to build a 43,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Bristol (twice the size of their original building). The bond and the workforce grant allowed the company to hire 20 new employees trained to build Goetz boats in their new facility. Goetz received the bond in December 2006 and immediately began work on the facility, which was completed in September 2007.

Eric Goetz, founder and CEO of Goetz Custom Boats, said Rhode Island was a natural place to begin his business 30 years ago and to expand it here in 2007. “We like Bristol and Rhode Island,” he says. “There is knowledge and an appreciation of what we do here. If there is a [marine] industry concern, we are listened to. Of course, no sales tax on boats in Rhode Island is a plus. This is the kind of support we need for our industry.”

2008 RI ECONOMIC SUMMIT: THE FUTURE OF SMALL BUSINESS

The Second Annual Small Business Summit, co-hosted by The US Small Business Administration and Johnson and Wales University was held on January 11, 2008 at the University Harborside Campus where over 150 small business owners attended.

Attendees were asked to participate in one of five committees, Taxes and Budget, Regulations, Health care, Education and Workforce, and Energy. After a 2 hour work session members reassembled to be greeted by Governor Donald Carcieri, Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, House Majority Leader Gordon Fox, and Senator William Walaska, followed by a brisk question and answer session.

After a gourmet lunch, Committee Chairmen presented a summary report of each of the five groups; some of the highlighted conclusions to surface were as follows:

Small business owners must stay informed and involved in preliminary regulatory proposals; this is best accomplished by establishing a rapport with agencies involved and be proactive in the development of regulations.

Business entities must present a united front to insure a healthy climate in political and regulatory circles.

Business partnering with educational organization is the most effective method of insuring a better trained work force.

Health Care issues must be addressed by changes involving creative solutions such as universal premium rates assigned to a wider range of people and increased accountability to the public from insurers.

Upon reviewing these above conclusions, Members of RIMTA are very fortunate to have the leadership of this organization who have already implemented virtually all of the above to create as friendlier business climate as possible.

Julie A. Gill: 'Providence Tomorrow' plan vs. our energy security

JULIE A. GILL

THE SUPPLY of petroleum products in Rhode Island should be of great concern to state officials and other area citizenry.

Since 1980, storage capacity in Rhode Island has been nearly cut in half. This has created a dangerous situation where one adverse-weather or other disruptive event could cause Rhode Island to run out of fuel. Storage capacity in Rhode Island during the 1980s for all petroleum products (gasoline, heating oil, diesel, jet fuel, etc.) was 383.4 million gallons. Even with the recent addition of a new terminal in the Port of Providence, the storage capacity in mid-2008 will only be at 201.4 million gallons. This means that we have 47 percent less storage than we had 28 years ago despite the fact that our population has grown 10.6 percent and our fuel needs have grown.

With all that the additional traffic and petroleum needs imply, even a short-term loss of any petroleum product is unacceptable. A diesel shortage would prevent products from getting to market. A shutdown of power plants, hospitals and other institutions could take place because they must turn to diesel or residual fuel for backup when natural-gas utilities cannot keep up with demand. A gasoline shortage could prevent citizens from getting to work, and a heating-oil shortage could cause homes to run low on oil.

It can happen. Rhode Island has been precipitously close to it in the recent past.

Environmental advances and federal regulations require additional tanks for the various types of fuels being marketed. A few years ago, there were only two types of diesel fuel; now there are four. Gasoline is now being mixed with ethanol that requires separate storage. We are on the threshold of bio-fuels — so-called boutique fuels that will require their own specialized storage tanks. If anything, Rhode Island could use an increase, not a decrease, in tank farms, especially if we want to make Rhode Island a “green” state.

Competition, supply and demand in the marketplace are important factors in the regulation of local prices. The loss of a major supplier can result in an increase in the cost that consumers pay not only for petroleum products but for everything involved with transportation. We need a number of suppliers for healthy competition.

Because of the city’s “Providence Tomorrow” plan, we are in danger of losing Sprague Energy, a company that has been a dependable supplier of energy and other products in the state for more than 100 years. We stand to lose more than 20 million gallons of storage capacity — storage we cannot afford to lose. The petroleum industry comprehends the seriousness of this situation.

Why is it that, in Providence, some elected officials want to forge ahead with the “Providence Tomorrow” plan without weighing the consequences? Who will bear responsibility if our storage supply — the lifeblood of our state and indeed of all of southeastern New England — isn’t adequate?

Mayor Cicilline and some members of the Providence City Council believe that luxury condos, marinas, expensive restaurants and shops can peacefully co-exist with the industrial waterfront along Allens Avenue — right next to Sprague Energy.

Under the current water-use formula, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council would not let a marina exist in the location proposed by Patrick Conley between Sprague Energy and Promet Marine. Captain E. Howard McVay, Jr., president of the Northeast Marine Pilots Association, confirmed that “a large ship’s propeller would demolish that proposed marina the first time they back a ship out of the Wilkes-Barre Pier (Capitol Terminal) across the harbor.”

The Journal recently published an article (“The downside of downtown revival,” Commentary, Nov. 29) about a woman who purchased a condo in Providence above a restaurant and the conflict that has resulted. Here you have conflict over mixed-use development with commercial property. What will happen with mixed-used in the

midst of industrial property? Many of these businesses are round-the-clock operations. Do we tell the Coast Guard that it cannot escort tankers into the Port of Providence during the night? Will Sprague Energy end up in costly litigation against dissatisfied neighbors to the point that this longstanding company is forced to just move away?

Some have said that the tank farms should move to Quonset, but that is not possible. Tankers need a dredged channel to get into port. Several years ago, a 40-foot-deep, 14.4-mile-long channel was dredged into the Port of Providence at a cost of \$65 million with federal and state funds, creating a super-highway for commercial shipping.

The significance of the dredging by the federal government was due to its understanding of the importance of the port and the businesses that operate there. Quonset is not a federal channel and is not eligible for federal funding. Who would shoulder the cost to dredge it? Do the Rhode Island taxpayers have millions of dollars lying around to dredge another channel when we already have one?

The considered changes in the Port of Providence will not only affect the citizens of Providence but will have a detrimental impact on all Rhode Island residents. Providence's working waterfront is a valuable asset to the city, to Rhode Island, and to eastern Connecticut and southeastern Massachusetts. The petroleum that flows into the port heats homes, powers businesses and fuels the state and regional economy. We must protect and increase this capacity to continue to meet these critical needs.

Julie A. Gill is executive director of the Oil Heat Institute of Rhode Island.

DHS may target small boats for RFID

By Alice Lipowicz

The nation's 18 million recreational boaters may need to register their crafts in a national database and place radio frequency identification tags on their vessels under plans put forth by a stakeholders group convened by the Homeland Security Department.

The new identification and security possibilities are outlined in the report from the DHS National Small Vessel Security Summit, published by the department and recently posted on its Web site. The report was written for DHS by Charles Brownstein, task force leader of the Homeland Security Institute, a nonprofit research group.

The department invited 260 people from the private and commercial boating community and government agencies to the first small vessel summit in June to identify and develop recommendations for recreational-boat security. Terrorism experts have identified a threat to U.S. coastlines and security from possible smuggling of materials and terrorists in such vessels.

The summit report indicates disagreement among recreational boaters on whether and how to use technologies for identification and registration. Recreational boaters participating in the summit objected to expanding the Automatic Identification System run by the Coast Guard to include small craft because it would be costly and impractical. The system currently applies to commercial boats over 65 feet in length.

But the boaters left the door open for limited use of the identification system, for RFID tags on vessels and for the Coast Guard's Vessel Identification System national boat registration system.

"Some stakeholders did see limited application for the Automated Identification System or similar technology in the vicinity of high-value/high-risk assets within limited geographic bounds in a port or waterway. The Vessel Identification System, RFID technologies and other systems were also mentioned as potential low-cost solutions that might be an acceptable alternative to vessel tracking," the report said.

Similarly controversial were expanding requirements for operator identification and vessel registration. The boaters were worried about inappropriate requirements that infringe on their civil liberties, cost too much and are too inconvenient, the report said.

Boaters were opposed to new identification requirements as well, but government executives participating in the summit seemed to favor that solution, the report said.

“Several government attendees advocated the development of a nationwide database of U.S. numbered and documented vessels to be used by federal, state and local law enforcement authorities to access boat registration information across the country. They also expressed a need to have uniform boating registration standards shared by all states,” the report said.

The stakeholders also made recommendations for fusion centers to share maritime intelligence, improved situational awareness for boaters, more mechanisms to report suspicious activity and expanded use of technologies to identify radiological and nuclear threats.

If the plans move forward, many of the ideas outlined by the stakeholders group present opportunities for contractors involved in database management, identification management, identity cards, information sharing and RFID. There also may be opportunities for biometrics, systems integrators and other information technology solutions providers.

The Coast Guard hosted a Great Lakes Small Vessel Security Summit in Cleveland on Jan. 15.

Maine’s boat builders try to keep art afloat

By Rick Hampson, USA TODAY

EAST BOOTHBAY, Maine — For four centuries Mainers have turned trees into boats, creating an industry that epitomizes the state’s hard-working, sea-faring sense of itself. But now Maine has a problem with boats: Not enough people want to build them. Boat builders, accordingly, have resorted to the once-unthinkable: They’re trying to educate Maine’s youth about a craft that’s supposedly synonymous with their Pine Tree State — and they’re hiring workers “from away.” In coastal boatyards — that’s boatyahds— the Down East accent increasingly competes with the intonations of the Gulf Coast, the Pacific Northwest and the border states. Larkin Hall, a Louisville native who worked in South Florida for 20 years, always dreamed of living in Maine. Last month, the boat builder got his wish, joining Washburn & Doughty Associates, a yard that could make more tugboats if it could find more workers. “There’s fewer people going into this,” Hall says of boat building. “It’s tough for the industry, but it’s worked out well for me.” Skilled boatyard and shipyard workers are in short supply across the nation. But nowhere is the demand more acute than Maine, whose boatyards market themselves as repositories of skills and attitudes handed down from worker to worker since Colonial times. A survey this year for Maine Built Boats, an industry group established in 2005 to strengthen Maine’s boat building industry, found that almost every boatyard needed workers, including carpenters, welders and joiners. Some have had to use agencies to bring in contract workers from places such as Louisiana and Florida. “With the history of our industry, you’d think our kids’d be saying, ‘Gee, I want to build boats.’ But you don’t hear that,” complains John Kashmar of Wilbur Yachts in Southwest Harbor. Matt Maddox, Washburn & Doughty’s human resources director, also wishes he could hire more Mainers. “We haven’t had much luck recruiting, even in the vocational schools,” he says. “The skilled people we need are not in this area.”

Disappearing acts

Why don’t more Mainers want to build boats? Builders and industry experts cite these factors:

- An aging workforce. Maine is one of the oldest states in the nation. The average age of boatyard workers is in the mid-40s; at Washburn & Doughty, the average welder is 55.
- An ignorance about boat building. Many boatyards are located on coastal peninsulas, far from the cities and suburbs of southern Maine. Stacey Palmer, a staffer with the Maine Marine Trades Association, attended a high school trade fair in the city of Lewiston last month. She says none of the 100 students she encountered had ever been to a boatyard. “We’re like the place you drive past every day on your way to work, but don’t notice,” says Susan Swanton, Palmer’s boss. And what Mainers think they do know about boat building often isn’t positive, she says. However romantic or picturesque a boatyard might seem to tourists, many Mainers regard the work as dirty, dangerous and seasonal.
- A disdain for blue-collar work. Boat builders say efforts to broaden Maine high school students’ educational horizons have hurt the skilled trades.

High schools tend to steer clever students to college; State Education Commissioner Susan Gendron has even proposed requiring every senior to apply to college to be eligible for a diploma. “There’s been a generational shift,” says Maddox of Washburn & Doughty. “The emphasis is on white-collar desk jobs, not blue-collar jobs. There’s an embarrassment with getting your hands dirty.” Joel Pelletier, a shop teacher at Bucksport High School, says graduates would rather go into logging, which he describes as more dangerous than boat building, or take clerical jobs “with not a lot of skill involved.” Many school districts have de-emphasized industrial arts programs, which develop the skills boat builders need. “People have this mentality that everyone has to go to a four-year college, and it’s killing the trades,” Pelletier says. “I literally have an industry knocking at my door. ... We’ve got to fight the guidance counselors over this.”

Revising perceptions

In the popular imagination, Maine is one vast boatyard, where everyone has built, is building or could build his or her own craft. So telling Maine about boats might seem like telling Newcastle about coal.

Maine’s boat builders try to keep art afloat

But to keep their industry growing, boat builders say they must let young people know that boatyards offer a chance to earn decent wages (\$12 to \$24 an hour) and benefits in a beautiful area while doing challenging work under decent conditions. The state has received a \$15 million federal economic development grant to bolster the industry, some of which will be spent to train workers in the latest ways to use fiberglass and composite materials. Maine manufacturing in general is slumping. But fueled by a strong demand for custom-built sailing yachts and powerboats, the state’s boat builders have added several hundreds of jobs and about \$19 million in annual wages since 2000. To spread the word, boat builders say they must go into schools and bring schools into the yard. Maggie Zieg, human resources manager at Hodgdon Yachts here, talks about hosting elementary school field trips. There’d be some wide eyes: The yard is working on a 96-foot sailing yacht; the pilot house for a tugboat; and a prototype vessel designed for use by Navy commandos. “This is no longer a cottage industry. This is not about building old-fashioned boats your grandfather would have built,” says Tim Hodgdon, whose family’s business dates to 1816. “It requires sophisticated, high-tech talents. With computers and advanced composite construction, it’s more like aerospace construction.” Meanwhile, workers from away continue to arrive. Next month, Mike Clark starts at Hodgdon’s as a draftsman. His last job was in an architectural firm; he’s never worked in a boatyard before; and he’s from Colorado. He’ll join outsiders like Jeff Carmichael, who came from Seattle. “The production work out there wasn’t as interesting to me,” he says. “I was attracted to custom work they do here. I didn’t want to build the same thing over and over.”

National fishing group looking at R.I.

01:00 AM EST on Sunday, February 17, 2008

Tom Meade, Projo

The Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA), a political powerhouse, is establishing a branch in Rhode Island. James A. Donofrio, executive director of the group, recently drove from the RFA's headquarters in New Jersey to meet with local organizers in East Greenwich.

"What Rhode Island needs is leadership on federal [fishing] issues," he said. "There's been a void there."

The RFA has about 5,000 members, Donofrio said. Though affiliated fishing groups, the RFA represents about 120,000 anglers.

Locally, the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association has taken stands on state and some federal fishing issues. Last year, the local group allied with Save The Bay in an attempt to stop purse seining, a method of fishing for menhaden in the Bay. For several years, Ark Bait, a purse seiner based in Fall River, has been catching menhaden to sell as bait for lobstermen and recreational fishermen. The attempted ban foundered during a summer when an overwhelming number of menhaden entered the Bay.

Donofrio disagrees with the stand taken by the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association. He prefers regulations similar to the rules in New Jersey, where Ark Bait also purse-seines for menhaden.

Essentially, a purse-seiner encircles a school of fish in a net that is drawn up like a pouch or a purse. In Rhode Island, the fish are then pumped from the net through a tube, into the boat. In New Jersey, the trapped fish must be lifted in baskets, by hand, to the boat. The manual method takes more time, but the bait boats — including Ark — abide by the rules. "The bait boats can't do any damage to the stocks that way," Donofrio said.

When an outright ban failed in Rhode Island, Internet chat rooms erupted with anglers' anger.

"There are political realities that anglers have to deal with," Donofrio said. "They can't always have exactly what they want."

This year, the national organization is focused on getting Congress to rewrite some of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the principal federal law that governs all marine fishing. The current version is too rigid, Donofrio said, especially when it comes to rules governing fishing for populations that once were depleted, but are now thriving. He cited summer flounder, or fluke, as an example. "There's not an ounce of flexibility," he said.

To lure new members in Rhode Island, the RFA is planning to raffle a fishing trip to Costa Rica, said Mike Laptew, an RFA representative from North Kingstown. Free tickets will go to anglers who join the RFA or renew their RFA memberships during the New England Saltwater Fishing Show in April, he said.

Roger Marshall: Is R.I. missing the yacht?

01:00 AM EST on Monday, February 18, 2008

ROGER MARSHALL

RHODE ISLAND may be known as the Ocean State because it has so many miles of coastline for its small size. It is therefore not surprising that much of the state's income is based on marine businesses.

Unfortunately, in times of recession, the recreational boat market usually turns down at least six months in advance of the general market. For a state with a large part of its economy based on this market, this is not good news.

What can be done about this problem? How can Rhode Island preserve jobs in its marine sector and help expand its marine businesses? First, we need to look at the areas in the marine marketplace that are making money and then figure out how to bring these businesses to Rhode Island.

The large-yacht market — yachts over 30 meters (or 100 feet) — is booming. The large-yacht market is growing so strongly that 253 new yachts over 100 feet long were launched worldwide in 2007. In addition, according to The Yacht Report magazine, 445 new yachts over 100 feet are under construction worldwide. The vast majority of the buyers of these yachts are Americans, yet American-built yachts represent just 24 percent of the worldwide market.

Rhode Island doesn't have a significant share of this super-yacht new-build market. Hall Spars and GMT in Bristol build the towering carbon-fiber masts and rigging for very large yachts — they are two of the four or five companies worldwide that do so — but only about 50 of the new super-yachts are sailing yachts in need of spars.

How can Rhode Island become part of this almost recession-proof market? The fleet, which currently stands at around 4,500 yachts, is in dire need of dockage, refit yards and equipment suppliers. These are all opportunities for Rhode Island.

Dockage: For yachts over 200 feet, there are very few places where the vessel can actually lie alongside, allowing the owner, guests and crew to walk ashore. In most cases, the vessel has to anchor and send guests and crew ashore by launch. In a recent survey, commissioned by the Marine Industries Association of South Florida, it was estimated that the economic impact of large yachts in South Florida was almost \$220 million a year, with 46 percent of that from foreign yachts. Each yacht is estimated to have supported five shoreside jobs during its visit. The average expenditure of each vessel on its visit to Florida was estimated at almost \$170,000, with about a third going to boatyards working on the yacht.

Refit: If a large yacht can be hauled out for refit work, this job alone brings about \$50,000 to \$100,000 to the boatyard. However, there are currently only two places in Narragansett Bay where work can be done on a yacht up to 150 feet — Newport Shipyard and the Hinkley Yard, in Portsmouth. Expansion of large-yacht refit services in the Bay could bring much-needed jobs and money to the state's waterfront.

The painting of large yachts is a particularly remunerative business. A large yacht is usually repainted about every three to five years. For a 150-footer, a paint job costs \$250,000 to \$400,000, with the work taking six to ten weeks. Thus, a yard with a paint shop capable of handling two yachts up to 250 feet at a time could generate several million dollars a year just from painting. The paint shop would need to be heated in winter, which gives it a competitive disadvantage compared with Florida. However, Rhode Island's advantage is that Florida's yards are currently working at 100 percent capacity.

The large-yacht-refit market offers the most explosive potential of all for growth and earnings. The time to launch a refit program is now, while other states are still mulling over the opportunity and the U.S. dollar is weak against the euro and pound.

What will it take to establish a major refit center in Rhode Island? Vision, foresight and lots of cash — and, of course, space. Aside from deep-water access (a minimum of about 20 feet), waterfront acreage is most important. In addition to space, a refit yard needs workers. For a yard capable of handling 10 or more large yachts, about 200 people will find work year-round. This figure might increase to 400 during the May-to-October summer season.

While yachts are being worked on, the crew members generally stay ashore, so crew accommodations are essential, too. Many yards upgrading themselves for the large-yacht refit business are making sure to include crew facilities. After a day's work on the boat, crews like to get away and have fun, and they have money to

spend. That's why crews love to go to Newport Shipyard. They can walk to the major restaurants, bars and other entertainments.

Roger Marshall, a naval architect and author, lives in Jamestown and is the U.S. editor of The Yacht Report (roger@theyachtreport.com). More information on super-yachts can be found on www.theyachtreport.com or www.synfo.com.

NEWPORT SPRING BOAT SHOW LAUNCHES THE BOATING SEASON WITH MORE OF EVERYTHING!

Newport, RI, 2008...This year, the 34rd Annual Newport Spring Boat Show will be presenting its most complete selection of boats and boating products when it runs for three days, May 16 – 18th, at the Newport Yachting Center in Newport, Rhode Island. Included will be brokerage boats and new boat specials, boating products, equipment and accessories and, new this year, a “Marine Consignment Tent” filled with used items from boaters and boat dealers alike. The show, now in its seventh year of association with the Yacht Brokers Association of America (YBAA), is one of the largest in-water Spring shows in the region and one of only two shows in the country officially sanctioned by YBAA.

Nancy Piffard, Show Director stated, “We will be trying something new with the addition of a Consignment Tent. We'd like our exhibitors as well as the general public to have a chance to sell marine related items that would otherwise go unused. With the Show dates back to our traditional May time frame, the Tent should draw crowds of true boating people not only looking for bargains but who'll also be tempted by the new boat specials and enticing brokerage offering that will be lying-to close at hand. This year promises to be a boating family event that truly offers everything you need to launch the boating season.”

Over 50 YBAA members and a similar number of boat dealers are expected to exhibit nearly 200 boats, with a total of 300 exhibits in the water, on land and under tents. All kinds of boats – from kayaks to express cruising yachts – plus equipment, services and accessories are shown. More importantly, boats are sold...especially brokerage boats in the 35 – 65 ft. category! Experience suggests that the lure of Newport attracts buyers from all over southern New England who are eager to wrap up their boat buying decision and get on the water!

Two years ago, upgraded in-water facilities—part of the Newport Yachting Center Marina and the famous Newport International Boat Show – made the site more complimentary to the yachts exhibited. A beautified land area around the in-water basins makes the Show even more enjoyable for the thousands who attend.

While the Newport Spring Boat Show attracts hundreds of 35 – 65 ft. power yachts and sailboats to its in-water display area, a similar number of 16 – 35 ft. boats are shown on land...all ready to be launched for an exciting boating season. Many are previously owned boats and yachts offered













by brokers, some are new “season specials” that manufacturers are looking to move as the season begins. Plus, personal watercraft are seen all over the show, together with all kinds of boating equipment, services and accessories. The variety of boats shown – this year with some of the land-displayed boats being right in the same tents as the product booths—tends to bring the boat owner who's looking to trade up to the bigger boats for which the show is known.

Special activities during the Show include a fundraiser for the Show's charitable partner, an Exhibitor Party on Friday night, plus seminars offered every day of the Show.

According to Nancy Piffard, Show Director, “The Spring Show offers a unique opportunity for brokers, manufacturers and dealers since it's an in-water show at the very start of the boating season. The buying process that started at the indoor Winter shows culminates for many buyers at this time and we deliver them

right here in Newport, on the water, and that makes the sale. In addition, those who already have their boat in the water come to Newport to outfit themselves for the season. And, we provide a family-friendly atmosphere that attracts a lot of people who dream of owning a boat and use this as an opportunity to change those dreams into reality.”

Exhibit space contracts are due now, to learn more, contact Newport Exhibition Group at 401-846-1115 or visit the web site at www.newportspringboatshow.com.

 <p>Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association Presents</p>  <p>New England SALTWATER FISHING Show™</p>  <p>April 4-6, 2008 Rhode Island Convention Center 500 Exhibitor booths!</p>  <p>Sponsored by</p>       <p>www.nesaltwatershow.com</p> <p>LARGEST SALTWATER FISHING SHOW IN THE NORTHEAST!</p> <p><i>Featuring:</i> Tackle, Rods, Reels, Boats, Electronics, Charters, Guides and Continuous Seminars Presented by New England's Top Fishing Experts</p> <p><i>"Sunday is Family Day"</i> All women and children (12 & under) FREE!</p>		
 <p>Capt Mike Neto with 63lb Striper caught aboard the Adrianna</p>	<p>Free Stuff !</p> <p>Register to win a FREE BLOCK ISLAND FISHING CHARTER with Capt. Mike Neto of Adrianna Charters! OR</p>	

<p>Free Getaway</p>  <p>Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation</p>	<p>a Getaway Weekend for Two at Foxwoods Resort Casino OR a 13 foot Duke Canoe</p>	<p>Free Duke Canoe</p> 
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The first 100 attendees each day will receive a **FREE** a package of Vision Hooks OR a Z-Man Fishing Product OR a Chatterbait Fluke Teaser
AND
All attendees receive a **FREE** special issue of On The Water magazine printed just for the show.
AND
FLW Outdoors is offering **FREE** Ranger boat simulator test drives.

SEMINARS! SEMINARS! SEMINARS!

There will be dozens of seminars with an all-star lineup of regional talent that will keep any fishing enthusiast busy for many hours.

"Anglers can easily spend a whole day at the show," said Mike Warner, one of the show committee members. "They should plan to arrive early, attend a couple of seminars, visit the tackle dealers, take a break by attending another seminar, then head back into the show."



FLW Outdoors offering FREE Ranger boat simulator test drives.

The innovative Ranger Boat Simulators mimics the exact action and feel of being out on the water. Simultaneously, fans will get to experience the excitement of tournament fishing as well as the exhilaration that comes from piloting a Ranger Boat across open waters at high speeds. Imagine the thrills and excitement of an amusement park ride combined with the non-stop action of a state-of-the-art computer video game – and you'll start to understand what the Ranger Boat Simulators are all about.



Try your skill on the **Virtual Fishing Simulator!** The life-like fishing action accurately simulates the heart-pounding feel and excitement of catching "the big one!"

The show has drawn exhibitors from all over New England, and nearly every major manufacturer is sending their reps. "Last year the show was a sellout, and we had a waiting list of dealers who wanted to get in," said RISAA President Steve Medeiros. "It looks like the 2008 show will be the same."

In Defense of Yachts

There's yachting. And there's yacht design, construction, repair, operation, and maintenance.

by Dudley Dawson

Yachts are easy targets. Self-righteous individuals, agenda-driven groups, and tax-hungry governments all over the world focus unwelcome attention on them. Liberals and conservatives alike join in the abuse. Yachts, it seems, are one of the few things that can unite politicians and activists of every stripe in hissy fits of indignation.

Because yachting has for so long been seen as a genteel sport, many of us feel constrained to behave as ladies and gentlemen regardless of the provocation. It's time to forget that nonsense and to confront those who would target yachts and yachting. This epiphany came to me at the Miami International Boat Show several years ago, when a recently appointed editor at a mainstream boating magazine decried the money spent on a new superyacht we'd just visited.

"What a waste!" she whined. "Do you have any idea how many poor people that much money could feed?"

In the back of the taxi we were sharing, I exploded: "Yeah, I *do* know how many poor people that could feed—and in fact, *is feeding, has fed, and will continue to feed.* Let's start with the 150 people that have spent the last 18 to 24 months building her, and the 200 employed by the yard's subcontractors, and the hundreds more who depend on the spending of those boatbuilders and contractors to keep the stores and restaurants and car dealerships in their hometowns open for business.

"Let's not forget their kids, who just might be able to get a better education and enjoy a better life because of the money spent building that boat, and hopefully other boats that will continue to come from the shipyard because of the good reputation built on their craftsmanship.

"Now that the yacht's delivered, there

is the crew of 20 or so, plus the personnel at the marina where the boat docks, not to mention the local butcher, baker, and candlestick maker who provision the boat, and again, don't forget the pass-along effect of those directly earned dollars recycling back into the local economy."

The editor, her eyes wide with fear of the crazed guy ranting next to her, looked poised to make a dive for safety out the door of the moving taxi, but I restrained her. "Remember: this goes on for years and years. Not only the normal operating expenses, but big chunks of cash at frequent intervals for routine maintenance. The best is when the circle closes, and the yacht goes back to her birthplace, or to another yard, for a makeover or major refit. By that time, the workers who gave part of their lives to build her in the first place might have seen their children graduate from college; and, the income from this one last big job before their well-deserved retirement will make all the difference to them and their families.

"So, yes. I guess I *do* know how many people that much money could feed, and now you do, too. I hope you won't ever forget it."

She didn't. In the years since our taxi ride, she's gone on to other assignments, but she's still active in the boating industry and has become as staunch a supporter of yachts and yachting as you'll find.

Some of the boating magazines and boating groups are doing their part to disseminate the facts, but most of the information is aimed toward those already in the industry. We need to get the word out to local government bodies, to state and national politicians, and to the general public whenever possible—about yachts.

Soundings Trade Only ran a cover story recently on the \$19 billion impact of Great Lakes boating; the South Florida Marine Trades Association regularly issues impressive reports on the impact of boating to the local and state economy.

In addition, there's a free online tool you can use to calculate the dollar value of all the boating activity in your area. Developed by the Recreational Marine Research Center at Michigan State University, and sponsored by the Association of Marina Industries, the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the U.S. Coast Guard, and others, it can be found at www.MarinaEconomics.com. Take a look at some of this information, figure out what it means to you and your business, and be ready to present a convincing case whenever and wherever the opportunity arises.

The next time someone mouths off about yachts and "the waste," "the conspicuous consumption," and "the money that could go to the poor," give 'em a well-informed piece of your mind—backed up by hard facts about just what each yacht means to the economy, and more precisely, what it means to you and your family and your local community.

You have every right to be proud of the work you're doing, and you should not hesitate to let others know that those magnificent floating palaces you build are not just expensive toys for an elite few. They're an important part of your life and theirs, too.

About the Author: Dudley Dawson, president of Roxboro, North Carolina-based Dawson Marine Group, is a contributing editor of *Professional BoatBuilder* and technical editor of *Yachting magazine*.



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