



# National Safe Boating Week After Action Report



Eighth Coast Guard District  
Recreational Boating Safety  
06/03/2015

**Note:** Material and information contained in this document was compiled through contribution, media and Internet searches.



Ready-Set-Wear It event conducted at the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation's New Canal Light House in New Orleans, Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> to kick off National Safe Boating Week.

## National Safe Boating Week - Background

National Safe Boating Week began with Steve Sadowski, a Coast Guard Auxiliarist in Amesbury, MA, who persuaded the town to issue a proclamation on Auxiliary Day, in June 1949. Three years later, he helped organize a CME (Courtesy Marine Examination, now termed Vessel Safety Check) weekend which led to the idea of a Safe Boating Week. This then pulled in governors from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Auxiliarists in Hawaii broke new ground in 1956 by enlisting a local entertainer, "Lucky" Luck to promote CME's and Safe Boating Week. Luck appeared on the television show, "Hawaii Five-O", which opened the door for celebrities to give the week a boost. In 1957, Auxiliary leadership launched the first nationwide observance during the week of June 30 – July 6.

The Coast Guard then prepared a formal resolution to establish National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) and convened a committee from industry, yachting groups, the Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons (USPS) to promote the resolution. Representative Charles Chamberlain, MI, sponsored a bill which passed on June 4, 1958. The Senate insisted on dates covering July 4th, and the NSBW was kicked off with a publicity bang by President Eisenhower's White House.

The Federal Safe Boating Act of 1958 became law just months later, and the National Safe Boating Week Committee (later to become the National Safe Boating Council – NSBC) was formed. Since the Coast Guard had no funds for the observance, Guy Hughes, Outboard Club of America, provided kits, posters and rounded up other organizations, such as the Girl & Boy Scouts, American Red Cross, National Safety Council, American Yachtsmen Association, and the National Association of Marine Dealers, which got the Campaign underway.

In the 1960's fiberglass power boats became affordable and water skiing became popular. The American Water Ski Association joined NSBW to buffer the sport's tarnished image, to repair apparent damage and to ward off government regulation. In 1964 the Coast Guard established a Boating Safety Division at their Headquarters and authorized their districts to follow suit. In that year the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) established a Boating Safety Education Committee and signed on to the NSBW.

The Federal Safe Boating Act of 1971 transformed the boating landscape and introduced funding for the states among other notable changes. That Act made arrangements between many organizations possible and organized enforcement activity under the Coast Guard, providing order and energy to this rapidly expanding activity.

The 1971 Act also spurred organizations to join; and due to Federal funding limitations, turned to the non-profit National Safe Boating Week Committee to become the national focus. Meetings in early 1972 with all the major boating organizations reached a unanimous conclusion to turn the Committee into a National Safe Boating Committee, incorporate in Washington, DC, and make the mission year round, rather than linked to a single week. This was accomplished in 1973, and in 1974 it became the NSBC, Inc. Part of its charter was to prepare promotional materials and unite the various organizations. The Bicentennial celebration in 1976 gave NSBC a huge opportunity with the Tall Ships – OPSAIL to kick off radio and television programs, safety exhibits, search and rescue demonstrations, parades, open houses, posters, milk cartons and give-aways promoting boating safety.

NSBC responded and also in 1976 inaugurated the annual Boating Education Seminar, and moved NSBW to early June, in that many boats were already in the water by July 4. The week migrated to early June by 1981. Some urged an earlier date and the National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC) joined the cause persuading the Coast Guard in 1993 to designate the first full week before Memorial Day in May as NSBW. NSBC kept the focus on a year round effort using the NSBW as the kick-off signature event.

The passage of Wallop-Breaux in 1984 provided a steadier source of funding for State recreational boating engagement, as well as a non-profit grant program. 1987 brought Popeye to the Campaign and in 1998 "Coastie", the robotic boat, joined in Auxiliary efforts. NSBC introduced "Sidekicks" in 2000, a series of booklets, CD's and a web site to engage children.

In 1997, NSBC and the National Water Safety Congress (NWSC) combined their respective annual conferences and joined in hosting an annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS), which is held in the spring and introduces the Campaign, among other safety presentations. In 2000, Canada adjusted their campaign to coincide with the U. S. venture, elevating the National Safe Boating Campaign to the North American Campaign, with activities coinciding in Washington, DC and Ottawa.

This has led to a much closer cooperation between the various boating organizations on both sides of the border.

In 2003 NSBC, in its capacity as coordinator of the Campaign, boiled down numerous catchy and amusing slogans to a blunt command – WEAR IT. The message was as plain as the statistics connecting life jacket wear to survival in accidents. 2001 fatal accidents showed that 80% of those who died had not been wearing a life jacket, and two thirds of all fatal accidents involved a sudden capsizing or fall overboard, merely having a life jacket on board was little help. This issue has been in the headlines for some time now, with various organizations supporting or opposing mandatory wear. Most states now have laws directed at children of various ages, and a Federal regulation has been enacted.

NSBW will continue to generate interest, provide materials, and energize volunteers and safety personnel to spread the message. All 50 States have adopted the Wear It theme in some capacity, tailoring it to their particular state. NSBC continues to provide leadership and impetus to the Campaign, by hiring a public relations specialist whose full time job is to run the Campaign. Web sites and the Internet have provided new openings, as the transmission of the safety message evolves. The site now posts events anywhere in the country with a simple process of entering the event or seeking one in a particular area. Active participation by volunteer units and people is essential to the success of the Campaign, and all are urged to provide feedback to NSBC regarding their successful event.

NSBC, with over 330 member organizations, continues to lead the Campaign and fulfill its mission of providing information and materials for others to promote their own boating safety event. Visit their website at [www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com](http://www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com) for more information. The book, *"The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety"* is available through the NSBC.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Wear Your Life jacket to Work Day (May 15<sup>th</sup>)**



Eighth Coast Guard District Headquarters staff and Sector leadership Wear It to Work as Rear Admiral Callahan (front row, center) assumes command.

(Photo taken Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> A *Condensed History of National Safe Boating Week*, courtesy of Bill Griswold, CAPT, USCG Ret., CG Auxiliary and former Chair, NSBC. Taken from *The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety*, with permission of the National Safe Boating Council ([www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org))

## Sector Corpus Christi

The Coast Guard Auxiliary (CG AUX) partnered with Texas Parks and Wildlife (TP&W) and the Rockport City Marina for National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) May 16-22 with the theme “Wear It” as a reminder to boaters of the importance of wearing life jackets while on the water.

The AUX focused on life jacket fashion shows, boater classroom education courses and vessel safety checks while TP&W credited more effective law enforcement with increased levels of training as Marine Safety Enforcement Officers for area police and sheriff’s departments.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 7-9 held a Paddlesports America class on Saturday. The course provides information about equipment used in paddling sports such as kayaking and what should be done before getting underway for a trip. The class covers such topics as how to operate safely, what the legal requirements are and how to handle boating emergencies out on the water. Classes are open to the public and are taught at the Rockport City Marina. Future scheduled classes are Paddlesports America on July 18 and About Boating Safely on September 19 and November 14. *(Compiled from Annita West article, May 27, 2015, The Aransas Pass Progress©)*



(L-R) Kara Stevens, Mimi Baugh, Ed Hegen, Philip Hegen and Duke Stevens model various life jackets as Anne Lockwood, Flotilla 7-9 Vice Commander explains their differences.



Rebecca Chambers, a boating accident survivor cuts the ribbon celebrating new Sea Tow life jacket loaner station. She is assisted by City Councilman Rudy Garza (right).

*Sea-Tow story and photo courtesy of www.KIITV.com©*

Sea Tow Life Jacket Loaner Stations were opened Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at Corpus Christi Marina and five other locations across the Corpus Christi area.

## Sector Houston-Galveston

Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 7-5 of Austin conducted Vessel Safety Checks (VSCs) assisting boaters ensure their boats are safe. The event was a primary way to reach boaters during National Safe Boating Week. The events were conducted Saturday May 16th and Sunday May 17th at the Lake Austin, 360 bridge boat ramp from 9:00 a.m. until 5 p.m.



## Sector Lower Mississippi

In Little Rock, Arkansas a proclamation ceremony was conducted and Governor Asa Hutchinson declared May 16 through 22 as Safe Boating Week in Arkansas. The proclamation was supported by the Army Corps of Engineers Little Rock and Vicksburg districts, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 15-08, Little Rock and North Little Rock Fire Departments and the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office. The proclamation stated that it is essential for boating enthusiast to recognize the importance of taking certain safety precautions, including always wearing life jackets and never operating a boat under the influence of alcohol.

Mercury Marine posted a special boating safety message on the Arkansas B.A.S.S. Internet web site encouraging Mercury Pro Team Members to make safety their number one concern and to make sure the members are wearing their life jackets and posting photos to social media encouraging others to do so as well. There is also a link to the National Safe Boating Council's Internet web site for access to additional boating safety information.

In addition to numerous proclamations from the states and several cities, boating safety events and safe boating tips were promoted on numerous electronic media sites across the Sector.

## Sector Mobile

LTJG Tomas Tapia, Sector Mobile, provided the following information and photos:

Active duty, reserve and members of Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotillas 1-4, 1-7 and 3-9 were busy beginning Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at Battleship Park for the Blue Star Salute. At the Ready-Set-Wear It event, a public affairs booth was staffed during the day along side a static boat display. The recently released Coast Guard Boating Safety iPhone application was featured and explained to passing boaters. Information on boating safety education courses, vessel safety checks and other general boating safety information were handed out and questions answered.



CG Auxiliaries (L-R) Bill Lauber, Ron Murphy and David Sandy staff an outreach booth offering information on the Coast Guard's new iPhone application.

Auxiliarist Ron Murphy completed an interview with *FOX 10TV News* that was aired at 0640, 0740, 0840, 1700 and 2200.

<http://www.fox10tv.com/clip/11498073/boating-safety-reminders-with-holiday-weekend-ahead>

In addition to the interview, Auxiliary Flotilla

1-4 conducted a boating education course in Destin, Florida. Flotilla 3-9 provided five boating safety information sessions to a total of 157 second graders at Hutchens Elementary School in Mobile, AL. on May 19th. Each session was approximately 25 minutes long throughout the day.

Flotilla 3-9 provided six boating safety information sessions to a total of 276 students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades at Semmes Middle School in Semmes, AL. on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Each session in this series was approximately 45-50 minutes in duration.



CG Auxiliary Flotilla 081-03-09 classroom presentation at Semmes Middle School.



CG STA Dauphin Island RB-S with SK1 Berman, BM3 Wynn, CWO Don Vincent, USCG Ret., and GMC Scott Barrera (USCG Ret.) during Blue Star Salute.



Wear It To Work Day at Sector Mobile.



CGC Barbara Mabrity In-Port Watch.



CGC Bonito & Cobia In-Port Watch.



Fox TV-10 Internet link to NSBW interview.



Station Gulfport Wear It To Work Day.

### Station Panama City

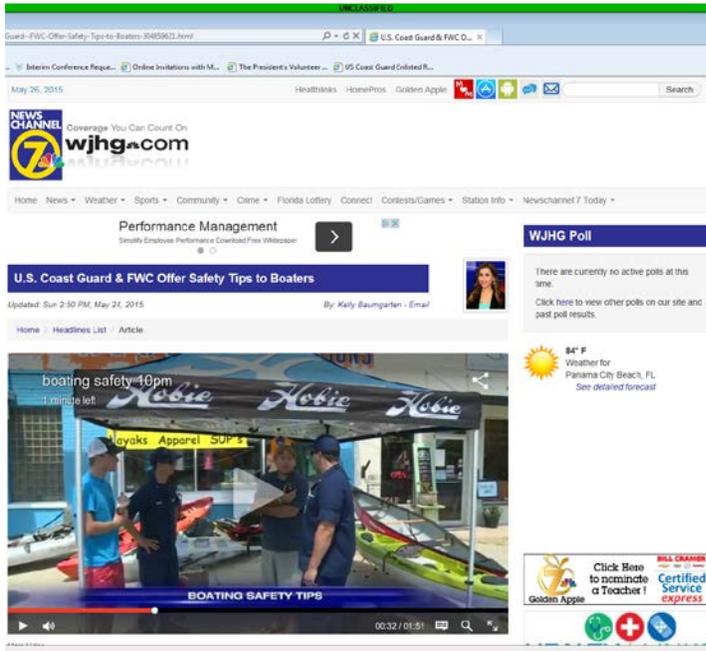


Station Panama City Wear It To Work Day.

Flotilla 1-7 conducted a boating education course in Pensacola, FL. May 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Stuart Smith, CG Auxiliary Flotilla Vice-Commander and other members took a specially built trailer to a variety of different locations in the area, providing safe boating information to the public.

Active duty CG and volunteer CG Auxiliary members were on-hand at each location to answer questions, sign boaters up for a free vessel safety check and enroll students for classroom boating safety courses. The team also shared details about the challenging currents in East Pass and Crab Island.

For those that were unable to sign up for a specific boating education course, information on boating safety classes that are offered in the coming months was distributed.



MST3 Brian Hanson organized and set up and followed through with a National Safe Boating Week event at Sun Jammers, a local fishing/kayaking store. Station staff coordinated with store personnel, Florida Wildlife Commission staff and the Auxiliary in order to have a larger array of knowledge to pass on to the public. Participants passed out numerous pamphlets, gave demos on how to select, properly wear and fit a life jacket. Also on hand was a static display of a Coast Guard 29' RB-S, a flare demonstration as well as questions and answers regarding general boating knowledge on to the locals.

A story was written by Savannah Vasquez of *The Destin Log* and also posted on the *Log's* website featuring details of the activity occurring for National Safe Boating Week at Station Destin noting daily events.



Station Pascagoula Wear It To Work Day.

Auxiliary Division 4 NSBW Chairman, Pete Scamardo, advised that Division flotillas staffed numerous different area chandleries and launch ramps around Lake Pontchartrain, Lafayette, and Baton Rouge performing Vessel Safety Checks (VSCs) and distributing boating safety information to local boaters.

Two public service announcements were distributed for release in early May for radio and television. The *Times Picayune*, *NOLA.com*, and several radio stations aired the PSA's with regularity.

Two radio interviews were conducted during NSBW. The first was with WWL reporting the Auxiliary's presence on boat ramps May 17. The second was with *The Lake 94.7* on Lake Pontchartrain's north shore, and was played several times during the week.

Auxiliary flotilla 4-5 received a *Safe Boating Week Proclamation* from Kenner Mayor Mike Yenni and Jefferson Parish President John Young. Alexandria flotilla 4-6 staffed events at Buhlow and Red River distributing boating safety information. Flotillas 4-11, 4-2 and 4-5 staffed PA events at Academy Sporting Goods stores in Hammond on May 17th, and Covington May 24th. Auxiliarists distributed literature, fitted customers for life jackets and discussed safety items needed for safe boating.



Louisiana Boating Law Administrator LTC Sammy Martin (L) and Wildlife and Fisheries Law Enforcement Chief Colonel Joseph Broussard (R) display NSBW Proclamation.



## Station New Orleans

The New Orleans Power Squadron worked with Coast Guard Station New Orleans, Air Station New Orleans, Lake Pontchartrain Women's Sailing Association, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, New Orleans Community Sailing Association, New Orleans Fire Department, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Gretna Police Department and NOLA Paddleboards to produce a four hour Boating Safety Fair at the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation's New Canal Light House on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Coordinated by the Power Squadron, the education event included a *Ready-Set-Wear It* event with 35 people, a search and rescue demonstration on Lake Pontchartrain nearby, as well as other demonstrations by the fire department and law enforcement staff. Information on boating safety

education courses, Vessel Safety Checks and how to volunteer for the Squadron / Auxiliary were also available to the public.

The women’s Sailing Association provided information on how to learn to sail their refurbished 19’ Flying Scot sailboat, with an opportunity for the public to sail in the harbor near-by. Station New Orleans provided a 29’ RB-S for the search and rescue event. The Station also conducted a flare and law enforcement tactics demonstration.



CAPT Wayne Arguin, Sector New Orleans Deputy Commander with CDR Craig Neubecker, Director of 8<sup>th</sup> Coastal Region Auxiliary at New Canal Light House.



New Orleans Power Squadron Education Officer Charlie Heinz being interviewed by FOX TV8 reporter at NSBW event conducted at the Lake Pontchartrain Foundation’s New Canal Light House.

The Power Squadron provided soft drinks, hot dogs and water refreshments for the public and those participating in the day’s events.

In addition to participating in the U.S. Power Squadron’s New Orleans event described above, Station New Orleans hosted a television news crew on a patrol and did on-camera interviews for TV-4, the CBS affiliate on Memorial Day, May 26<sup>th</sup>.



Boaters stop by the Lake Pontchartrain Women’s Sailing Association booth to learn about inflatable life jacket technology from U.S. Sailing instructor Debbie Huntsman.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 04-08 conducted a boating safety education course, as well as two Vessel Safety Checkpoints at Heritage Park, both in Slidell. Members also participated in a radio rendezvous at Heritage Park. The flotilla provided an outreach event at Dicks Sporting Goods, located in Slidell on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>.

The following day, Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, Vessel Safety Checks were again offered at Heritage Park in Slidell and another boating safety course was presented during the week at the Tammany Yacht Club.

The weekend of May 23<sup>rd</sup> Auxiliary Flotilla 4-8 provided a safety patrol on Lake Pontchartrain as well as another vessel safety checkpoint at Heritage Park in Slidell.

**Sector Ohio Valley**



Jim Durrett, County Mayor of Montgomery County, Tennessee, and Kim McMillian, Mayor of the City of Clarksville, Tennessee both signed a *National Safe Boating Week Proclamation* as Diane Gilman, USCG Auxiliary Flotilla Commander 11-7, Clarksville-Fort Campbell.



Paducah, Kentucky WPSD-TV boating safety related news reports featuring CG staff offering boating safety information and tips.



MSU Pittsburgh – Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day.

MSU Pittsburgh distributed numerous press releases targeting safe boating best practices and the importance of wearing your life jacket. In addition to providing general awareness through such press releases, the unit hosted its first ever Safe Boating Day at their new facility in Bridgeville, PA. The event ran from 10am to 2pm. Participants included MSU Pittsburgh, CG Auxiliary, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pittsburgh River Rescue, Beaver Valley River Task Force, and Army Corps of Engineers.

Boating safety educational stations were set throughout the unit's boat bay that included proper life jacket fitting and giveaways, lock and dam safety procedures, line heaving, damage control, and knot tying.

The station's 25' RB-S was available as a static display and for tours. The Coast Guard Auxiliary conducted vessel safety examinations in the parking lot.



CG Auxiliarist and Power Squadron member Bob Brandenstein provides a free vessel safety check.



Sammy the Otter and Chuck E Cheese don their life jackets to show support for the campaign and to spread the *Wear It* message.

Local news media was also on site and took video of the event and interviewed Ensign Victoria Ferraro, which was later aired on the evening news.



MSU Pittsburgh crew helps youngsters learn how to plug/patch a hole at the Damage Control Station.

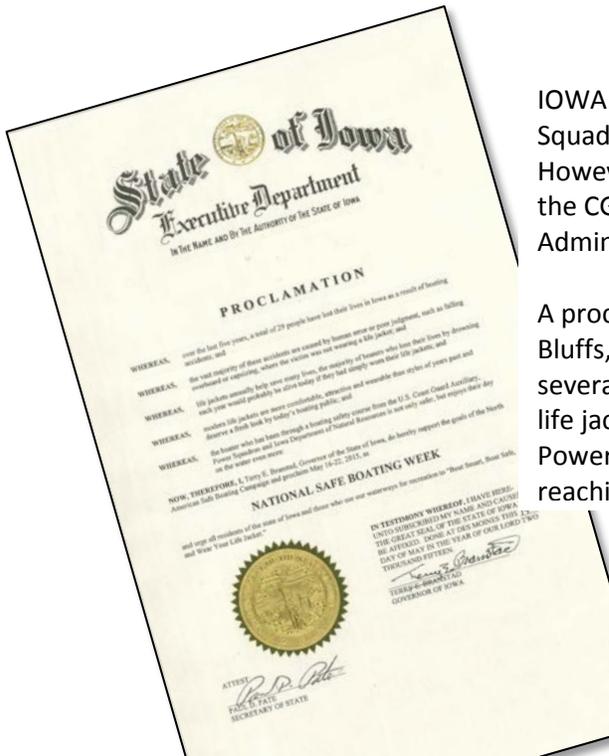


Pennsylvania Waterways Conservation Officer Michael Johnson and MK1 Matt Whisenhunt demonstrate to a child and his parents how to properly fit a life jacket.



(L-R) Sammy the Otter, Chuck E. Cheese and MSU Pittsburgh Commanding Officer CDR Lindsay Weaver providing boating safety information and answering questions at the RB-S boat.

### Sector Upper Mississippi



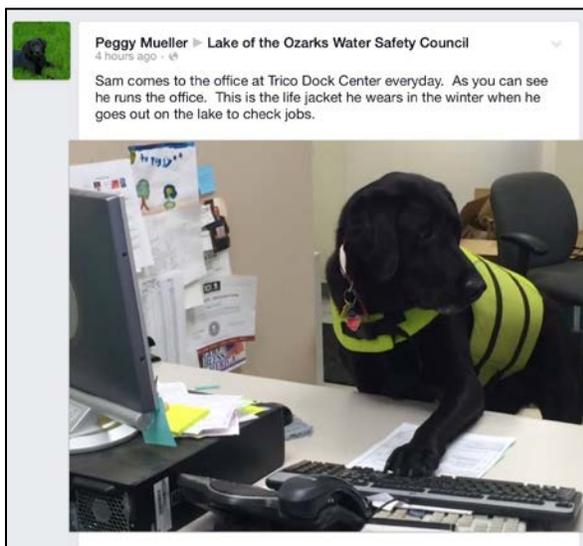
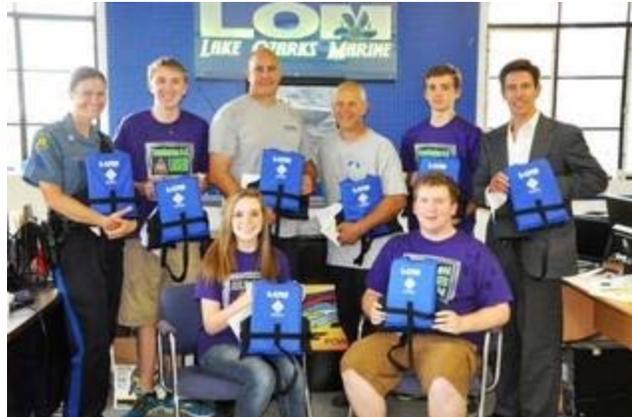
IOWA: Weather inhibited much of the Auxiliary, Squadron and state planned outdoors activity in Iowa. However, Governor Branstad signed a proclamation with the CG Auxiliary, Power Squadron and Boating Law Administrator looking on.

A proclamation was also signed by the Mayor of Council Bluffs, Iowa. *Wear it to Work Day* was a success with several agencies encouraging employees to wear their life jackets. Despite many events being rained out, Iowa's Power Squadron and Auxiliary were successful in reaching many of the State's boaters promoting water

Following story posted May 26, 2015 at 6:00 AM by Lake News Online © 2015.

The Camdenton 4-H FIRST® LASER robotics teams partnered with the Lake of the Ozarks Water Safety Council, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, Performance Boat Center, and Lake Ozarks Marine to bring a special water safety program to Camdenton R-III kindergarten students.

The LASER team yearly competes for the prestigious FIRST® Underwriters Laboratory Safety Award. As part of the criteria to be considered for the award a team must demonstrate beyond safety fundamentals by using innovative ways to eliminate or protect against hazards while competing at competitions and also at home within the team's community. Each year the team picks a specific goal and works throughout the season to promote safety. The LASER team has been honored with 6 consecutive UL Safety Awards and was a top three safety team at the 2015 World Championship.



This season the LASER team worked in partnership with the Lake of the Ozarks Water Safety Council, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and two local marinas, Performance Boat Center and Lake Ozarks Marine, to provide all Camdenton R-III Kindergarteners with water safety tips and life jackets, if needed. During the water safety class the LASER robotics team members shared the Underwriters Laboratory water safety movie featuring Disney's Timon and Pumba from the Lion King. Through the video kindergarten students learn the importance of always wearing a life vest and other safe water practices.

Lake of the Ozarks. Of the four drownings last year on Lake of the Ozarks, three could have been prevented by wearing a personal flotation device. The Highway Patrol also worked 75 injury boating accidents in 2014, of which five were fatal. Children learn by example. The LASER team and the Lake of the Ozarks Water Safety Council have worked to provide life jackets for our children. Together they encourage all adults to do their part by wearing a lifejacket and making sure all children have on a vest while around the water.

While one group taught a boating safety class, others on the Water Safety Council were at the capitol. Corporal Mosher, along with Andrew

The lessons of water safety are critical to the young children who are growing up around the



Following an all-night filibuster, Missouri Legislators remaining pose for Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day at the State Capitol.

Lyskowski, and the LASER robotics team conducted class. This is the same group that is working on a long term project of building a robotic boat for the Lake of The Ozarks Water Safety Council.



According to Linda Vogel, Lake of the Ozarks Water Safety Council and USCG AUX 8W member, "They are an amazing group of young people to work with!"



Lake of The Ozarks Boating Safety Council members Debra Stoner, Officer Stacey Mosher and Bill Mueller.



In Minnesota, Neil McMillin, CG AUX District 8W Division 11 Commander provided a group photo taken on the banks of the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Minnesota of the NSBW Proclamation signed by Governor Mark Dayton. Partners for NSBW include U.S. Coast Guard MSD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Power Squadron, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, CG AUX Divisions 2 and 11. Auxiliarists Mick Joneja and Steve Jones coordinated the event.

**St. Louis Sail and Power Squadron**

St Louis Power Squadron Commander Terry Elia reports they planned a very ambitious NSBW; however they were rained out on the weekend of the 16<sup>th</sup>. A planned event with vessel safety checks, a flare demonstration, how to properly fir and wear a life jacket and practice with fire extinguishers to put out a fire quickly, it was postponed until Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. In a modified program, vessel safety checks were provided along with a life jacket display for questions and answers to help boaters select the correct life jacket based on the intended use.

The marina’s harbor master, Pete Tully, strongly encourages boating safety and has asked the Squadron to the harbor every weekend they are available to provide vessel safety checks. For any vessels that pass the exam, a one-time 20 cents per gallon off on their fuel fill-up with the exam certificate. During NSBW, Mr. Tully offered a \$50.00 gift card to the largest group wearing their life jackets.



Pete Tully, Harbor Master, in blue shirt. L-R Squadron members Bill Casey, Bill Morris, Doug Warden, and Chuck Kraeger.



St. Louis Power Squadron member Bill Casey performing a vessel safety check.



This report was compiled from selected submissions of participants and Internet based searches of numerous events, activities and boating safety fairs conducted across the Eighth Coast Guard District from May 16<sup>th</sup> through May 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is representative of numerous such activities that featured boating safety information for the general public from a number of different organizations.

Coast Guard sectors, subordinate units and Auxiliarists, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Power Squadrons, Red Cross groups, local water and boating safety councils, state and municipal boating safety enforcement and education staffs, fire and police departments, Boy and Girl Scouts, boat dealers, marinas, chandleries and boating industry representatives and others throughout the Heartland came together in joint efforts during National Safe Boating Week to advance the cause of boating safety.

And the topic is serious. Although the last three years represent, statistically, the safest period of time for recreational boating since the Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety began compiling boating accident information some 20 years ago, many boating safety professionals believe that despite a variety of efforts to capture reportable boating accident information, we are documenting significantly fewer crashes than those that actually occur.

According to the most recent information available<sup>2</sup> nationally:

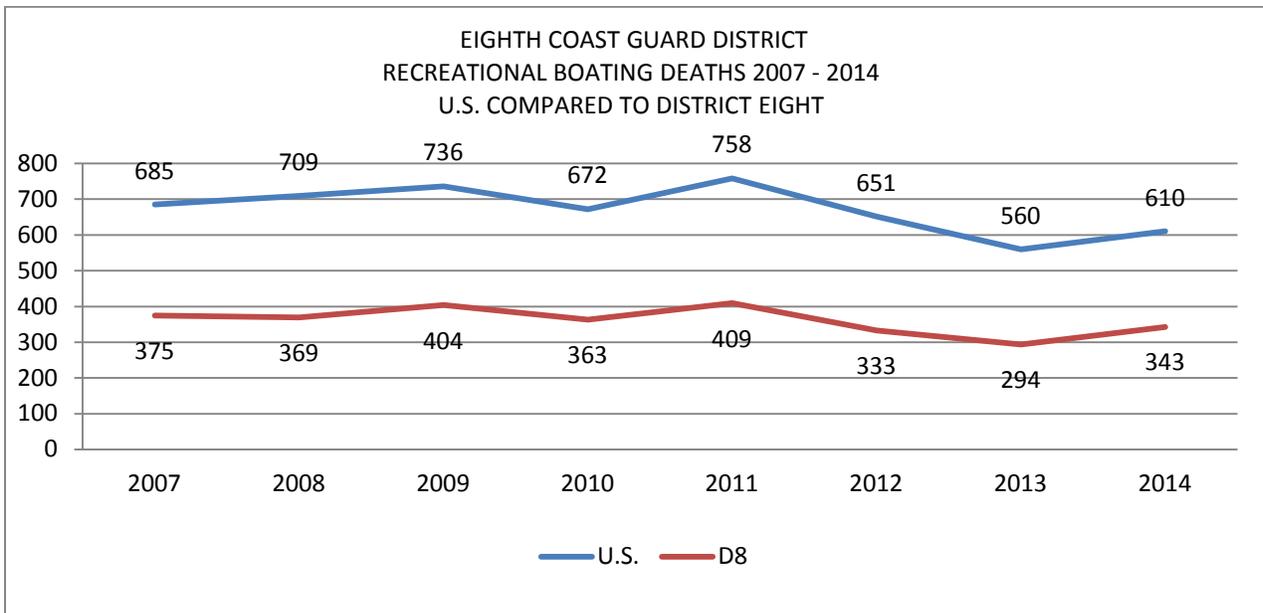
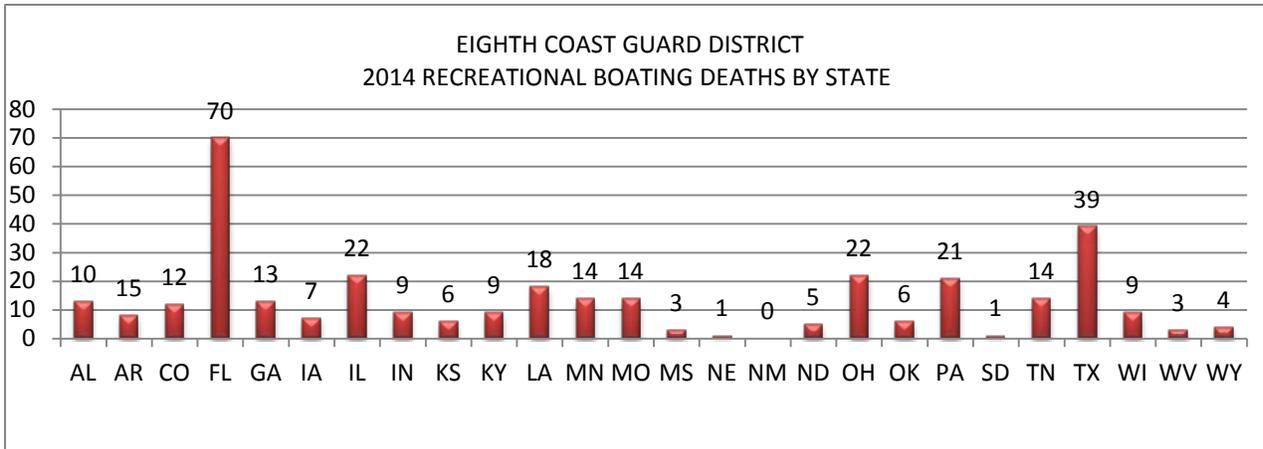
- Of the total 610 reported fatalities during 2014, 418 (68%) of the victims drowned, and of those that drowned, 80% wear not wearing a life jacket.
- Of the total 4064 reported accidents, 2830 vessels (or 53%) were operated by people over 36 years of age, resulting in 393 (64%) of the total fatalities and 1489 (56%) of the injuries.
- 282 deaths (57%) were on an open motorboat.
- 135 deaths (22%) were on paddle craft (canoes, kayaks or SUP).
- 418 (69%) of all fatal accident victims drowned. 352 drowning deaths (58%) were on vessels less than 26' in length. Of those that drown, 80% were reported as not wearing a life jacket.
- Alcohol was the primary factor in 277 accidents resulting in 108 deaths (18% of total) and 248 injuries (9% of total).
- Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, excessive speed, and machinery failure remain as the top five primary contributing factors in reported casualties.

Eighth District Recreational Boating Facts:

- Of the 11,804,002 state registered watercraft nationally 7,028,413 (59%) are in states the comprise all, or part of the Eighth Coast Guard District.
- There was over \$19,000,000.00 in property damage to recreational boats reported.
- Of the 345 total reported recreational boating crashes involving alcohol as a primary contributing factor nationally, 218 (63%) were in states the comprise all, or part of the Eighth Coast Guard District in 2014.
- 343 (56%) of the total 610 deaths reported in 2014 occurred in states the comprise all, or part of the Eighth Coast Guard District.

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<sup>2</sup> 2014 Recreational Boating Statistics, COMDTPUB P16754.28, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety May 8, 2015.



The district’s boating safety staff will continue efforts to continue expanding, and improving participation and support of National Safe Boating Week and *Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day*. All in an effort to reduce the still too frequent boating related crashes that, most recently in 2014, resulted in the loss of more than nineteen million dollars in property damage, more than two thousand injuries and 343 fatalities within the 26 states that make up the Eighth Coast Guard District. The effort will continue year round.

Respectfully submitted.

Edward L. Huntsman  
Recreational Boating Safety Program Manager  
Eighth Coast Guard District