



The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

Volume II; April 2010

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS:

Gearing Up For Summer-



Boats are painted, engines tuned, towline spliced, light bulbs replaced and batteries charged. Ready/Set/GO! Fortunately the season is nearly upon most of us and not a minute too soon. We have been battered by record weather across the country, shaky economy, and political displays that are threatening to raise our forefathers from the dead (no offense John and Joe), yet there are some silver linings around those clouds and your Board of Directors are working on your behalf to keep the worst of the storms off your shores.

The end of February had us from coast to coast. Terry Hill and Tina Cardone were in California working with our operators in Orange County in an effort to show Harbor Patrol the value added benefit our members can provide, given the chance. Immediately following California was a NASBLA (National Association of Boating Law Administrators) Conference in Washington DC where Terry and I met with the Governmental Affairs Committee, providing input and industry insight into the BOAT (Boat Operations and Training) Program and working in cooperation with developers so that our industry has the opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of a developed ANSI (American National Standards Institute) approved training curriculum. We took the second day in DC to visit Capitol Hill and speak with Florida Senator Bill Nelson's staff about the EPA exemption (set to expire the end of July) and other congressional staff about EPA and our place in the response/towing world.

March 9th - 10th took Joe Frohnhoefer and Tina Cardone to New Orleans for TSAC (Towing Safety Advisory Committee). Capt. Joe's seat on that committee is proving invaluable to our industry and Tina's focus on the issues and attention to detail resulted in the avoidance of another unintended consequence directly affecting our members. Finally Tina and I have just returned from another NASBLA committee meeting, where we are collecting information and making recommendations on non-emergency towing policies. We are hopeful that this will lead to a uniform policy guide provided to all states as a template to model the individual states official policies. This meeting also developed a fast track for the towing module of the BOAT Program that our ACAPT and Standards and Education Committees will be working on over the next few months. Needless to say it has been a very busy 6 weeks.

In closing I would like to again thank the networks and all of our members for their support, efforts and feedback on the many challenges and opportunities we are currently managing. A special thanks to Tina for her many hours and the hard work she has been putting in on our behalf. I for one am looking forward to a busy and rewarding boating season to the benefit of our industry and the hundred thousand or so boaters we have the opportunity to assist this season.

Best,
Chris Shaffner
Chairman