



# The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

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## EDITORIAL:



### *From the Desk of Tina Cardone, Executive Director*

Transition- “a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another” (Merriam-Webster). It has been a busy time juggling administrative changes, developing programs to benefit our members, and maintaining a vigilant watch on the actions of Congress, Coast Guard and state and local agencies. For those of you wondering how your membership dues are spent and what exactly we do in a day, here is a brief look at what has transpired during the first half of this year.

- We began 2010 with a new Executive Director (me) and a new Board of Directors including a new Chairman (Chris Shaffner). The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual C-PORT Conference was held in Washington DC where we were privileged to welcome both the Commandant and Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard as guest speakers.
- A new Memorandum of Understanding Between US Coast Guard and C-PORT Regarding a Marine Assistance Industry Quality Partnership was ratified. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) states, “The purpose of the partnership is to improve effectiveness of maritime safety, security, and response and to promote and strengthen the communication and working relationship between the parties and to support the protection of marine environments.”
- We responded to questions raised about the MSAP (Maritime SAR Assistance Policy). We dissected the language and talked to our partners at Coast Guard to clarify the policy.
- Marine assistance operators of the South Florida area were granted an appeal requesting an exemption for the marine assistance industry from the Master of Towing licensing regulations for routine towing and assistance services they had been providing for decades.
- The Coast Guard posted a notice of proposed rulemaking to bring USCG regulations in line with the international regulations governing STCW (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping). We voiced our concerns to these changes and continue to monitor the proposed regulation changes.
- We acted to receive an exemption from requiring our operators to obtain an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Vessel Discharge. Doubtful that we would be granted such an exemption, we also requested an extension of time for needing the permit. Working closely with our legislative contacts, the moratorium is expected to remain for an additional three (3) years.
- We attended meetings, and provided strategy development and support to assist our Orange County CA operators with their decades-long struggle with their Harbormaster, Sheriff’s Department and Life Guards. This is an ongoing battle.
- An enhanced member benefit was added by entering agreements with two additional merchant services providers bringing more choice and savings to our members.
- Two new regional chapters were formed, the FL Keys Marine Assistance Association and California Marine Assistance Professionals.

We are active participants on TSAC (Towing Safety Advisory Committee) to help develop new licensing that will promote the growth and development of our industry. Recommendations have been made and we are

waiting for action by the Coast Guard.

We are also active participants on NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) committees to develop partnerships at the state and local levels, find opportunities for our members and work to develop non-emergency towing policies at those levels nationwide. We currently have a proposed policy submitted and are awaiting approval and recommendation from the NASBLA Executive Board.

Since January, I sent over 21 eNews Blasts to our members containing updates on regulations and articles of interest, over 8 Press Releases to the media and am producing our 3<sup>rd</sup> eNewsletter for the year.

The last few weeks have consumed us with Limitation of Liability Act, Death on the High Seas Act and Jones Act repeal actions instituted by Congress. These legislative actions are moving very quickly and we are acting to prevent these reactions to the *Deepwater Horizon* accident from affecting your business. I am in daily contact with others in the maritime industry including the tug and barge industry, cruise ship owners, P & I Clubs, passenger vessel operators and so on. In addition, we are maintaining our communication with our Senate contacts. Watch for more information as this develops.

Transition takes time and our journey continues. Through the challenges, I enjoy representing you and our industry to others in the boating community and government and look forward to continuing the mission we began decades ago. As we move to our next stage, I and the Board of Directors appreciate your continued support and welcome your suggestions, comments and questions. You can reach me at 954-261-2012 or by email at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us).

Best Regards,

Tina Cardone  
Executive Director