



The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

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CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS:



If you have time to read this, it is probably a rainy Tuesday morning otherwise you would be out towing, selling, fixing, or administrating in an effort to maximize the summer season. I know it has taken more than one reminder from Tina for me to *make* the time necessary to write this. For those of us with kids, we have them to manage and keep busy also. Needless to say it is a busy time of year. My polls from around the country have been generally encouraging. It is safe to say that when the weather is good, the boaters are out and the number of tows is up. The boating public is still a-bit cautious and on the edge of weather, fuel prices and general costs of boating. Overall there is a good feeling about the improvements in our industry and rest assured C-PORT is watching your back for changes in regulations that may have an impact on your

business.

The C-PORT Board of Directors was tasked by the membership with a number of items that are of great importance to the industry. The priority list has changed a few times since our conference in January, but the work is getting done and we will have much to share over the next few months. Currently TSAC (Towing Safety Advisory Committee) is the focus of our Legislative Committee as the new regulations, licensing, and inspection rules are due for release over the summer. C-PORT has been working in the circles that influence these changes mandated by Congress and are confident that our work to show the value of our industry and deter changes that would negatively impact our businesses will pay off. Some of you have likely received letters from the USCG about a Phase I voluntary examination of your vessels. This is a sign of things to come. Our best course of action in Phase I is to have these examinations done as they will help to determine the final inspection guidelines that we will be bound by. If we do not cooperate, the process will move along without your input and these regulations may be ones we cannot comply with making our transition much more painful. Joe Frohnhoefer and Tina Cardone are working closely with TSAC to address the concerns that have already been raised and the meetings they are attending are addressing these issues as they arise. Please notify the C-PORT office when you receive these letters and Tina can give you the information you need to help this process in a positive way for the industry.

All press is good press, so they say, however I have yet to be convinced. There seems to be a noticeable increase in press this year and 99% of it has been for the positive. The explosion of social media has made what would have previously been a blurb in the back of the local section of a newspaper into dramatic pictures with ongoing reader commentary and unfortunately sometimes the promotion of very poor information as truths. It seems there are cameras everywhere and too easily trained on us while we are doing our jobs. An example of this is a video that someone posted on YouTube showing a case we had pulling a sailboat out from under a bridge at night. It was then reposted by another person on to our FaceBook page. I strongly encourage everyone to take a hard look at their risk management policies and adjust them with the expectation that you are being watched at all times. This is not at all bad news if you manage it properly, but consider the bar of professionalism to be raised by Captain Cocktail upon days end at your local watering hole. Historically our press has been of extraordinary efforts reported by a life saved to a newspaper reporter, followed by a certificate from the Mayor, USCG, Marine Patrol etc. It was a long slow burn that we could manage. It seems that we have moved into what I call 7/4 press (July 4th) with Black Cats going off all around and the occasional M-80 to make sure everyone is paying attention. This is the new format and not likely to regress anytime soon, so I would encourage everyone to learn it and use it to the advantage of the industry when able. Do not engage in forum arguments, you will not win; and be sure of your statements as they will be checked and questioned.

I am happy to report that the USCG is saving more lives as a result of more people using EPIRBs and PLB's on a regular basis. The cost of these items has dropped significantly and is well worth the investment should you find yourself overcome. One of the most significant decisions to come out of the NTSB recently was the ruling on the Duck Boat accident that occurred in Philadelphia in 2010. The mate at the helm was texting and determined to be at fault for the deaths of 2 people. This is a growing concern and the use of cell phones while on duty should be closely monitored and policy written into your company manuals addressing the issue. This being said, it is a dynamic time, we are doing our jobs better and gaining value as a critical part of the local waterfront by the public and government alike. I believe this is a result of our growing professionalism and leadership in our local areas. Keep up the efforts and always be moving forward.

Best,

Chris Shaffner
Chairman