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Brunswick's Boston Whaler and Mercury Marine to Aid MIT Marine Robotics Research

LAKE FOREST, IL – Aug. 9, 2017 – “On road” applications are not the only mode of transportation facing significant change due to autonomous control systems. For the past several years, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), through its Marine Autonomy Bay facility and affiliated programs, has been conducting extensive research into marine robotics and how they may be applied to boating. Now, Brunswick Corporation (NYSE: BC), a global leader in pleasure boats and marine propulsion, is lending a hand to this initiative.

MIT recently received a Boston Whaler 250 Outrage boat, powered by twin, 250hp Mercury Marine Verado outboard engines, which the school will use over the next several years to help further conduct its research. The boat features Mercury's joystick piloting, which allows the boat to maneuver effortlessly in close-quarter conditions.

Research thus far has focused on the Charles River, but the Boston Whaler will allow MIT to do additional work in the nearby Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay, providing a larger, open water environment in which to conduct its research.

“Controls and digital connectivity have been rapidly progressing in pleasure boating in recent years,” explained Brunswick's Chief Technology Officer David Foulkes. “The work that MIT is doing in both autonomous and semi-autonomous systems and capabilities for marine applications is highly intriguing. The potential advances in such areas as navigation, marine controls, sensory capabilities and ultimately improving boating safety and enjoyment are most compelling.”

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The primary focus of MIT's Marine Autonomy Bay's work is on technology applied to commercial marine vessels. The work also includes underwater communication, sensing of the marine environment, detection and sensing of man-made objects and other vessels, as well as navigation and localization capabilities that also will apply to recreational applications.

The program is led by MIT's Department of Mechanical Engineering, and supported by the school's Laboratory for Autonomous Marine Sensing Systems, the Marine Robotics Group in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and the MIT Sea Grant Program, with support from other resources unique to MIT.

"We are thrilled to join with Brunswick to accelerate our work in marine autonomy with this generous support. Our students and researchers will have extended access to waterways not previously accessible from campus, putting many new research topics and projects within reach," said Michael Benjamin, research scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"This generous support by Brunswick Corporation will be of direct and immediate benefit to our research, supporting our projects in autonomous navigation, complex mission execution, and marine science," said Michael Sacarny, research engineer at MIT Sea Grant Program.

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Headquartered in Lake Forest, Ill., Brunswick Corporation's leading consumer brands include Mercury and Mariner outboard engines; Mercury MerCruiser sterndrives and inboard engines; MotorGuide trolling motors; Attwood, Garelick and Whale marine parts and accessories; Land 'N' Sea, Kellogg Marine, Payne's Marine, and BLA parts and accessories distributors; Bayliner, Boston Whaler, Brunswick Commercial and Government Products, Crestliner, Cypress Cay, Harris, Lowe, Lund, Meridian, Princecraft, Quicksilver, Rayglass, Sea Ray, Thunder Jet and Uttern; Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, Cybex, Indoor Cycling Group and SCIFIT fitness equipment; InMovement products and services for productive well-being; and Brunswick billiards tables, accessories and game room furniture. For more information, visit <http://www.brunswick.com>.

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