



Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

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MRAA Annual Conference & Expo to rebrand, relocate in 2019

Event transformation has been designed to engage, energize and empower the marine dealer community to new heights.

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept. 9, 2018 — The MRAA Annual Conference & Expo will embark on an exciting transformation in 2019, introducing a new name, relocating to a new location and delivering an all-new immersive event experience, the likes of which the marine industry has never participated in before.

The 2019 MRAA Annual Conference & Expo will relocate to Tampa, Fla., where it will call the Tampa Convention Center its home, December 8-11, 2019. The new location is expected to deliver invigorating energy and offerings to MRAA's 43rd Annual Conference, and it will also feature an on-water element for MRAA's exhibitor and sponsor partners to display and demo product.

"We are incredibly excited about moving our annual conference to Tampa, where we expect to attract new dealers and new exhibitors," says MRAA President Matt Gruhn. "But we are most excited about evolving the event experience into something far more rewarding and impactful for our dealers and the industry at large. Dealers can expect the same high-quality educational programming that MRAA has always delivered, with a focus on stronger tools and resources for successful implementation and results. Our team here at MRAA envisions a brighter future for marine retail, and we expect this reimaged event to engage, energize and empower our dealer community to lead us there."

Over the last two years, MRAA has invested significantly into the research and study of the latest trends and developments with annual conferences. Attending several event-focused programs, retaining the services of an event consultant, and adding to its internal education and events staff, MRAA has laid the foundation for an all-new event experience that will take shape in 2019. The MRAA staff has also worked closely with a marketing agency to develop a conference name and a branding campaign that will speak to the opportunities this event will offer the marine industry. Although that logo and brand are finalized, MRAA has held off on introducing it so as not to distract from the 2018 conference.

Additionally, next month, MRAA will convene an industry strategy session with leading dealers and suppliers in an effort to fine-tune and maximize the impact the 2019 MRAA Annual Conference & Expo will have on the success of marine dealers and the recreational marine business community.

"The next evolution of MRAA's Annual Conference & Expo will be the most significant to date," says Liz Walz, MRAA Vice President and Director of Education. "We're combining our expertise for building world

class educational programs with deeper relationships and insights from our dealer and supplier partners, and proven, real-world advice from an event experience authority. This formula is already providing exceptional new opportunities for our conference and everyone that participates in it.”

The MRAA Annual Conference & Expo originated in 1977. It has evolved several times over the years, leading up to 2008 when it was rebranded as the Marine Dealer Conference & Expo. The MDCE has been co-produced with *Boating Industry* magazine since 2008. For 2019 and beyond, MRAA’s Annual Conference & Expo will take on a new name and will be brought back in house to be produced entirely by the MRAA.

“Over the years and through several iterations, the MRAA Annual Conference & Expo has generated success by maintaining its focus on dealers,” Gruhn adds. “As a non-profit trade association, MRAA exists to deliver tools, resources and educational programs to our dealers so they can maximize their success and enable consumers to enjoy a world class boating lifestyle. When we do that in collaboration with industry manufacturers and suppliers, as with this reimagined annual conference, together, we can inspire our dealers to accomplish great things.”

About the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

At the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas, we believe that for our industry to thrive, the retail organizations on the front lines of our industry must thrive. So MRAA works to create a strong and healthy boating industry by uniting those retailers, providing them with tools, resources and educational programs, offering them opportunities for improvement and growth, and by representing them with a powerful voice. For more information, visit MRAA.com or contact us at 763-315-8043.