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THE BUSINESS OF BOATING BEGINS AT THE HARTFORD BOAT SHOW FEBRUARY 8-11

Boating in Connecticut Workforce, Scholarships, Training Schools, and Connecticut Based Companies Illustrate the Impact of Marine Trades, and Why Work on the Water is Better

ESSEX, CT - JANUARY 11, 2018 -The economic impact and workforce opportunities of the business of recreational boating in Connecticut will be highlighted throughout the Hartford Boat Show (HBS2018) running February 8-11 at the Connecticut Convention Center. Featuring 125 exhibitors and over 400 watercraft, HBS2018 is produced by the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA).

Over 95% of HBS2018 exhibitors are Connecticut based companies, showcasing boats, jet skis, personal watercraft, paddle sports, kayaks, marinas, motors, slip rentals, servicing, fishing gear and tackle, educational programs and materials, insurance, trailers, electronics, sanitation, air conditioning, real estate, attire, nautical home décor, decking, dock building, winter storage, financing, shoreside activities, destinations and attractions and boating food and beverage.

According to the CMTA, Connecticut's recreational boating industry has an annual impact of more than \$1.3 billion. Annual retail sales of new boats, engines, accessories and services account for \$157.7 million, and support 537 businesses across the state, most classified as small business, with many being generational or family owned. There are nearly 100,000 recreational boats registered in the Nutmeg State, with 87% being powerboats, 9% personal watercraft and 4% being sailboats. The state's marine industry supports a workforce of over 7,300 people whose lives depend upon people buying, storing, servicing and caring for boats throughout the year.

"Our membership of over 330 companies is reflective of the types of small businesses servicing recreational boaters on our lakes, rivers and shoreline. We represent a vast array of marine trades employers, including marinas, boatyards, boat dealers, yacht brokers, service technicians, electronics experts, welders, canvas creators, financial and insurance companies," according to Kathleen Burns, CMTA Executive Director.

HBS2018 will feature an expanded Boating in Connecticut Workforce program throughout the show, including an interactive job opportunities display, educational presentations, and scholarship awarding. Job seekers may see what career opportunities are available at the interactive job center, many from HBS2018 exhibitors. Candidates will be able to apply for jobs on the display, with their information being forwarded directly to the potential employer in real time.

Now in its seventh year, the CMTA Scholarship Program annually awards scholarships to qualified member employees and their family member to further their educational pursuits related to the marine trades industry. Having received a matching scholarship from the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas foundation earlier this year, a larger scholarship for technical development will be awarded this year to a CMTA member, member's family member or a veteran interested in working within the industry.

According to Burns, "There are a number of misconceptions about working in boating, ranging from the impression that the business is just seasonal or that working in boating isn't a 'real' job, or that one must be a boater to be in this business." But to those notions, she points out that working in boating can provide year round employment because service is needed year-round, with preventative maintenance and additional work taking place during the winter. Working in marine trades offers a real and viable career path from companies that invest in training, teamwork development and offer solid living wages, benefits, retirement and more. While Burns affirms that "work on the water is better," she reminds job seekers that boating experience isn't necessarily a requirement, but that "The most important qualities are desire to work, to provide customer service, to learn, and to want to be a team player. And a little bit of passion to perform doesn't hurt either."

Exhibitors hailing from every county in Connecticut will represent all facets and regions of the business of boating in the state. Connecticut companies range from Nautical Circuits in Avon, Shore Side Docks of Manchester and Boat Works of South Windsor to Port Clinton Marina in Clinton, Sea Tow Eastern in Noank and Maritime Insurance International in West Mystic; shoreline dealers and facilities will be represented from Cos Cob to Guilford to Groton and dealers/marinas from Candlewood Lake such as Brookfield Bay, Candlewood East, Gerard's Waters Edge, and Echo Bay.

Representing another aspect of working on the water, Captain Andrew Tucci, Sector Commander and Captain of the Port at U.S. Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound, is scheduled to participate in the show's ribbon cutting and flame lighting ceremony, February 8 at 2:00 pm.

Sponsored by Renewal by Andersen, the new Windows to the Future section will showcase marine trades training programs from throughout the state. Students from Thompson Public School District's boat building program will be constructing a small wood boat within the area, and The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), New England Science and Sailing, and Cedar Island Marine Research Lab will also be featured. To support growth in the boat building trades in Connecticut, both the CMTA and Renewal by Andersen are donating to the Thompson program and its scholarship fund. Students from The Sound School of New Haven will be participating, and several of the state's technical school automotive departments have been invited as well.

Tickets for The Hartford Boat Show are available at www.hartfordboatshow.com. Pre-show online tickets are \$10 and a multi-day pass is available at \$18 which allows access to the show any two days. The Senior Skip's pass for February 9 is \$8. Admission on-site at the Show will be \$12. Children under 12 accompanied by an adult are free. Group sales for groups over 15 people may be arranged by contacting CMTA Show Staff at 860-767-2645.

The Hartford Boat Show will be open Thursday, February 8 from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm.; Friday, February 9 from 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm; Saturday, February 10 from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm; and Sunday, February 11 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. For schedule details and a full list of exhibitors, visit www.hartfordboatshow.com. Follow new developments on Facebook at @CMTAboating, Twitter at @HartfordBoatSho and Instagram at ctmarinetrades.



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About The Hartford Boat Show: Now in its 49th year, the Hartford Boat Show features the newest boats on the market including center consoles, fishing boats, luxury cruisers, sport and ski boats, sailboats, personal watercraft, paddle boats and boards in addition to fishing gear and tackle, marinas and boatyards, other marine services and boating accessories. Produced by the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) the show is open to the public February 8-11, 2018 at the Connecticut Convention Center, and will feature over 125 exhibitors, 400 boats and watercraft, as well as educational seminars, boating personality appearances, and demonstration areas. www.hartfordboatshow.com

About Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA): The CMTA is a not-for-profit trade association representing boating and related marine industries throughout Connecticut, from the Long Island Sound to the state's rivers and lakes. Founded in 1954, the CMTA has over 330 member businesses and is dedicated to the well-being of the industry by promoting the interests of recreational boating, improving

industry condition, monitoring legislative and regulatory issues, and advancing boating education throughout the state. www.ctmarinetrades.org

(Editor's Note: Past Hartford Boat Show photos and background materials are available upon request. CMTA Executive Director Kathleen Burns is available for interview. For additional information, contact Diane Greco at 914-666-4150 or tactixdq@verizon.net)

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