

## **New Owners Growing Florida Panhandle TowBoatUS Fleet**

### ***Capt. Robert Smith and Charles Gorrell add third location: TowBoatUS Mexico Beach***

MEXICO BEACH, Fla., Oct. 15, 2019 – Growing up near Mexico Beach, Capt. Robert Smith always had a love for the small coastal town on Florida’s panhandle. It also didn’t take that long for Capt. Charles Gorrell, Smith’s business partner, to get that same feeling.

Following Hurricane Michael’s rampage through the region in 2018, Smith and Gorrell rushed down to assist with the cleanup process. For months after the storm the two lent a hand, salvaging boats and assisting any way they could. Following the cleanup, Smith and Gorrell knew exactly where they wanted to build a business. Said Gorrell, “It was such a great community, we knew we definitely wanted to be a part of it.”

Now the pair will add [TowBoatUS Mexico Beach](#), their company’s third TowBoatUS location after [opening nearby TowBoatUS Destin and TowBoatUS Panama City earlier this summer](#). Providing on-water assistance to recreational boaters 24 hours a day, the home port for the new location is Port St. Joe. However, Gorrell says response vessels can quickly be trailered to surrounding areas to ensure they can reach boaters both on inland waters and Gulf Coast. “We love the area and really care about our customers,” added Gorrell. “We believe adding this port will be great for everyone involved.”

Gorrell and Smith served on separate fire and police dive teams on Georgia’s Lake Lanier before starting their first business venture together in 2014, Marine Techs Unlimited, a successful dive and salvage company. Now the two divers are assisting recreational boaters with routine on-water assistance including battery jumps, soft ungroundings, fuel drop-offs and tows back to launch ramps or marinas. They are part of a nationwide network of more than 300 ports and 600 towing response vessels across the country that responded to over 70,000 requests for on-water assistance last year.

BoatUS offers on-water [Unlimited Towing Memberships for saltwater boaters and anglers for just \\$159 per year](#). Boaters without BoatUS towing services face costs that average \$750 per towing incident, with some paying much more. Included with Unlimited Towing are more than [25 benefits and discounts](#), a subscription to *BoatUS Magazine*, free DSC-VHF radio registration, and more.

The company’s owners are looking to grow their five boat fleet which is easily recognized by their bright red hulls with TowBoatUS logos emblazoned in white letters on each side. “We’re planning to add a 45- to 50- foot tug to assist with longer tows and a smaller twin-engine vessel for fast response,” said Gorrell. All of the company’s locations are staffed by U.S. Coast Guard licensed captains.

The fastest way to summon assistance from TowBoatUS Mexico Beach is to download the free [BoatUS App](#), which connects boaters to the closest local towing captain. Additionally, the company can be reached at 850-865-5672, by hailing on VHF channel 16, or by phoning the BoatUS toll-free 24/7 Dispatch Center at 800-391-4869. More information can be found at [BoatUS.com/Towing](#), or by calling 800-888-4869.

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