

Sea Tow Foundation Announces Inaugural Winners of “National Boating Industry Safety Awards”

Southold, NY, December 2, 2019 – The Sea Tow Foundation recently announced winners of its inaugural **National Boating Industry Safety Awards** at the Elevate Summit in Orlando. The awards were sponsored and judged by the newly established National Sober Skipper Advisory Council and funded through a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund which is administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. They were established to recognize the best boating safety work in the for-profit sector of the recreational marine marketplace occurring within the United States.

The **Top Marine Manufacturer Award for Boating Safety** was presented to **Sea Ray Boats**.

Sea Tow Foundation Executive Director Gail R. Kulp said, “Sea Ray Boats launched an effective and highly targeted email and social media marketing campaign over the summer boating holiday weekends and promoted several boating safety initiatives including the importance of boaters wearing life jackets at all times; practicing responsible drinking and having a designated captain; and staying alert and being aware of surroundings.”

Taking the **Top Marine Retailer Award for Boating Safety** was **MarineMax**, a company which has long championed boating safety among boating consumers.

Kulp noted, “From the development of hands-on boating safety classes to the production of safety-focused videos, MarineMax is providing outstanding educational opportunities for new boaters as well as those in need of a refresher. In addition, the MarineMax social media posts consistently promoted additional awareness about boating safety through ongoing messages via multiple platforms.”

The Sober Skipper National Advisory Council also created a category to recognize the best work of marine media in promoting boating safety. This year’s winner of the **Top Marine Media Award for Boating Safety** was **Bonnier Corporation** whose broad boating safety initiatives and editorial content were reflected in multiple boating consumer titles that reach thousands of readers and recreational boating enthusiasts.

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“Bonnier Corporation is awarded the top marine media award because they did a great job developing and publishing exceptional safe boating editorial and video content; demonstrated evidence of outreach via extensive data collection; plus hosted a multi-faceted boating safety campaign that crossed print, email and social media channels with entire editions of publications focused on boating safety,” said Kulp.

The **Top Marine Marketing and Boating Safety Outreach Award** was won by **Yamaha Outboards**.

Said Kulp, “Yamaha tapped Hunter Bland, a respected professional angler and influencer, to deliver spot-on boating safety messages that reached a targeted group of youth and young anglers. The grassroots campaign featured live special events coupled with branded campaign video and social media components.”

In addition, a newly established **Sober Skipper Award** was presented by the Sea Tow Foundation to **Freedom Boat Club** in recognition of its outstanding adoption and promotion of the Sober Skipper program.

The largest and oldest boat club in North America with more than 185 locations, Freedom Boat Club advocates for boating safety by asking each member at every dock to identify a designated Sober Skipper before departure. While this initiative has reportedly saved Freedom Boat Club thousands of dollars in boat damage and liability costs, it has no doubt saved the lives of members and their friends, while allowing them to maximize and enjoy their time on the water.

“We have worked closely with Freedom Boat Club over the past three years and the company has demonstrated just how easy and effective it is to incorporate the Sober Skipper message into its business model,” said Kulp. “We are pleased to establish this new award to recognize the outstanding work of our partners like Freedom Boat Club who actively and successfully promote boating safety and specifically, the Sober Skipper message.”

Added Kulp, “The National Sober Skipper Advisory Council and the Sea Tow Foundation are very pleased by the caliber of candidates and the submissions received for our first awards recognition. We are all delighted to see the great work being done by recreational boating industry organizations and look forward to continuing to support and bring well deserved recognition to outstanding achievers and safe boating champions throughout the recreational marine industry.”

For more information about the National Sober Skipper Advisory Council and the National Boating Industry Safety Awards, please visit the Sober Skipper website at www.soberskipper.com

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Members of the Sea Tow Foundation's North American Sober Skipper Advisory Council include David Connolly, Thomas H. Connolly and Sons; David Dickerson, NMMA; Jim Emmons, Water Sports Foundation; Kevin Falvey, Bonnier/Boating Magazine; Mike Hankins, Crevalle Boats; John Jost, Ken Cook Company; Captain Keith Lake, MarineMax; Dave Marlow, Brunswick Corporation; Captain Frank Stoeber, Regal Boats; Nic Thomas, Freedom Boat Club; Stephanie Vatalaro, RBFF; Annamarie Worrell, Emerald Coast Marine Group. The council's executive committee includes Kristen Frohnhofer, Sea Tow Services International; Gail R. Kulp and Michael Wesolowski, Sea Tow Foundation; and Wanda Kenton Smith, Kenton Smith Marketing.

Sea Tow Foundation

With a focus on safe boating practices that result in fun on the water, the Sea Tow Foundation – a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – was established in 2007 by Sea Tow Founder Capt. Joe Frohnhofer. After his passing in 2015, Captain Joe's legacy continues as the Foundation brings attention to the number of preventable boating-related accidents, injuries, and deaths, and directly addresses prevention methods through education and awareness. More than 600 life jacket loaner stands are now available across the United States and the Foundation's Sober Skipper program continues to grow. For more information on the Sea Tow Foundation, please visit BoatingSafety.com.

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Four winners have been announced for the inaugural Sober Skipper National Boating Industry Safety Awards from Sea Tow Foundation including Sea Ray Boats, MarineMax, Bonnier Corporation and Yamaha Outboards. Freedom Boat Club received the Sober Skipper Award. Info: www.soberskipper.com

Boating Safety Awards Logo/JPEG Attached
Winner Images Attached

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