



UPDATE

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UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

Recently, NACO Tucker presented an UPDATE at the Coast Guard Flag Conference of Auxiliary activities. Based upon 1998 constant dollars, Auxiliary program funding has been reduced by 30% from 1992 through 1998. During this same period, membership has declined from 35,000 members to 32,780.

From 1993 through 1998, the number of persons taking an Auxiliary Boating Safety Course has declined 39% from 356,810 to 216,738. At the same time, the number of Instructors and Member Training Officers has declined from 11,109 to 9,555, a decline of 14%.

The number of CMEs declined 46% from 1993 through 1998 accompanied with a 23% decline in the number of vessel examiners.

Another disturbing figure was the decline in operational facilities. From 1993 through 1998, the number of operational facilities declined from 10,146 to 5,178, a 49% reduction. During this same period, safety/regatta patrols fell by 26%.

Some may attempt to make excuses to justify the declines in activity and the results. **Others may look at these declines as a challenge and an opportunity to demonstrate the capability of the Auxiliary to revitalize itself.**

The change on the focus of the Public Affairs Department and its name change to the **Department of Marketing and Public Affairs** is no accident. It was made in recognition of this and other data and to demonstrate to the members and others the dedication of the Auxiliary Leadership to restore the Auxiliary as a viable and valuable full partner to the United States Coast Guard.

The responsibilities of the Department have been redefined to include the *task of marketing our services to the public, the boating industry, our members and the Coast Guard, all our "customers"*.

As a Public Affairs Officer, you will be receiving important information regarding the new **Department of Marketing and Public Affairs**.

Those of you planning to attend NACON in Orlando, Florida may want to also plan to attend a workshop to be conducted by our new Department Chief, Jack E. Banister. This workshop will explain our new focus and responsibilities and role to help revitalize the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Until then, we ask that each Public Affairs Officer use their time to reflect upon the ways they can improve their skills in communicating to our members and our customers the availability and the advantages of Auxiliary programs in promoting boating safety.

The good public affairs officer, in reviewing the data in the NACO's report at the Flag Conference will readily perceive **unlimited opportunities** to assist the other Auxiliary Departments and the Coast Guard in enhancing their skills in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

As good citizens, we all have an interest in and right to communicate as individuals with our governmental leaders to assure there is predictable and adequate funding of the Coast Guard.

As members of the Auxiliary, we also have an obligation to aid and support our leadership in improving member satisfaction. We must work to enhance our role in promoting recreational boating safety to the best of our ability and within the limits of our capability.

It's time to take off the blinders, roll up our sleeves and work to achieve those skills that enhance our development and operational activities, to promote boating safety education and to foster fellowship among the members while promoting an esprit-de-corps that also fosters a spirit of competitiveness between units of the Auxiliary.

Each of us has a responsibility to give serious thought to the tasks we are asked to perform. We have an obligation to give serious thought about the manner in which we perform those tasks. Is there a better, more effective way?

We have all heard the phrase, "we are volunteers" when tasked with some responsibilities. Let's perform our duties satisfactorily and perform to expectations.

What Do You Think?

In the 1998 Member Survey, the **lack of effective communications** was often cited as one of the major causes of member Dissatisfaction. Closely related to this is a breakdown in communications. A breakdown in communications may be experienced when an elected or appointed officer **fails** to carry out their duties by passing on important news and publications to those who require them to do their volunteer work effectively.

We do not have unlimited funds. We can not purchase all the services we might like to have. That is why we are volunteers.

While money helps and makes some problems disappear, it is no substitute for enthusiastic, creative skills applied to achieve our goals.

Because you care and have responded to the survey, let us also hear from you on this important issue.

What's The Worth of The Auxiliary?

The Coast Guard has approximately 34,000 full time members not including the Reserves and the Auxiliary. According to the NACOs 1999 Update presented at the Flag Conference, the cost of the Auxiliary was stated as \$11,000,000. This includes National Board and Coast Guard funding resources.

Using a very conservative evaluation of the value of the Auxiliary contribution to the Coast Guard and the recreational boaters of America, The Auxiliary volunteered 2,058,988 hours of services and returned the equivalent of \$31.5million to the public.

This cost was estimated using the hourly rate of a G-9, step 1 at a rate of \$15.28 per hour. Many observers believe that given the training and tenure of service of the average Auxiliarist and their contribution of surface, air and communication facilities, this hourly rate is grossly understated.

What does the Auxiliary do? Counting the contribution of time to perform the duties of elected and appointed office-holders, attendance at meetings and conferences, preparation and travel time, classroom instructor time, member training and special projects and assignments, tally some 2,058,988 hours volunteered in support of Auxiliary and Coast Guard programs.

The members of the Auxiliary conducted 139,806 Courtesy Marine Examinations on conventional boats with an additional 10,514 examinations of personal watercraft and 1,164 examinations of commercial fishing boats. In addition, there were 9,273 Auxiliary facility inspections and 30,293 visits to marine dealers.

Auxiliarists volunteered 189,188 hours of safety/regatta patrols and an additional 285,586 other mission hours, 244,437 operational support hours and 719,211 operational hours.

There were 36,406 boating safety classes attended by 216,269 persons.

Auxiliary volunteer facilities and crew performed 28,724 safety/regatta patrol hours. They assisted 4,675 vessels and 12,760 persons in difficulty and saved 445 lives. The estimated value of recreational boating property saved exceeded \$400 million.

The foregoing, if anything, is reasonable proof that the value of the Auxiliary contribution stated at the outset is significantly understated.

This is valuable information we, as Public Affairs Officers, can all use to market the Services of the Auxiliary to all of our customers.

CADET CRUISE

The 1999 summer cruise for Cadets aboard the Coast Guard Cutter, *The Eagle*, got underway 3 May. The Cruise, originating in New London, is scheduled to terminate on 25 September 1999. The itinerary includes transiting the Panama Canal en route to San Diego.

For information about *Life Aboard the Eagle* consult the May and June 1998 editions of the *Reservist*.

CME Fall-OFF

As reported elsewhere in this issue, the number of CMEs performed between 1993 and 1998 have declined 46%. This reduction in performance is difficult to understand considering the increase in boat registrations throughout the country.

Not taking into consideration the number of new boats registered each year; our data shows that about 129,000 fewer CMEs were performed in 1998 than in 1993. In a five-year period we have lost contact with 129,000 important boaters.

Our intent is not to criticize in reporting this information. Our intention is to foster some commentary as to why pleasure boats are not being examined at the rate they should be examined given the number of new boating registrations. If you have some thoughts on what can be done to improve the number, let us know.

NSBW

Atlantic City, NJ

The *Atlantic City Press*, Sunday, 8 June 1999 reported that the Atlantic City Coast Guard Station in conjunction with local Auxiliary Units sponsored several events to observe National Safe Boating Week.

Featured was Regional Section front-page color photo close-up of the CME decal being affixed to a boat windshield. It was not clearly stated who performed the CME. The caption read, "A boater receives a safety sticker for passing an inspection Saturday at the Atlantic City Coast Guard's open house."

The headline was "**Coast Guard Show urges Safe Boating**"

The highlight of the story was about a 17-year-old junior from a suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania high school who is thinking about joining the Coast Guard after high school.

The student, his parents, his grandmother and his aunt left their home in King of Prussia, PA at 7:30 and traveled some 85 miles to take advantage of the Atlantic City Open House. The student was also reported as planning to attend a one-week training session at the Coast Guard Academy in July. The Coast Guard Auxiliary wasn't mentioned until the sixth paragraph on the third page wherein it was acknowledged the event was sponsored by the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary to promote boating safety.

It is not our purpose to criticize the Coast Guard or the Auxiliary Public Affairs Officers who may have been on the scene. Our only purpose is to suggest to Auxiliary Public Affairs Officers how they might work more effectively with the Coast Guard PA Officers to get better reporting of the event.

We believe the Auxiliary PA Officer could have been more effective with a little advance planning. The young man who was the focus of the story was not identified as an AIM candidate. The fact he will be spending a week at the Academy strongly suggests he probably was.

When participating with the Coast Guard in a Public Affairs media event, it would be appropriate for the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary Public Affairs Officers to work closely together and collaborate in the handling of important information about the Coast Guard and The Auxiliary and the opportunities each offer.

It is appropriate to **anticipate** the issues that might come up and to be prepared with handouts for distribution to the guests and especially the media. In fact, it would be most appropriate to hold a joint briefing for the media just before the event got underway.

Not all reporters are good at taking notes, recalling discussions in detail or fully reporting. Sometimes editors impose limits on how much they can say. Prepared handouts can be used effectively by reporters in assuring greater success in reporting accurately the event.

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