

CHIEF'S MESSAGE SPRING 2011

Greetings D/C Sines the district 32 Bridge and fellow members.

I bring you greetings from our Chief Frank Dvorak.

1. Last fall we said that it was time to turn things around. That it was time to revitalize our squadrons with new members and to encourage our existing members to continue their membership. And we've seen the turn. Things are improving. What we need now is the commitment from us all to accept the challenge and lead our squadrons onward as we strive to increase membership and broaden our reach. Our non-renewals are the best we have seen in some years. We are building new partnerships that should result in member growth – Let's continue to remember that Membership is Job # 1. Speaking of membership congratulations are in order to two squadrons, Vero Beach D/8 that grew by 83 members and Southern Tier of D/6 that expanded by 125%. Both squadrons will each receive three airline tickets to the Greensboro governing board. You too can win next year as again six tickets will be made available to the two squadrons with the best membership growth.

2. We began the new Leadership training program in February 2010 for Squadron and District Administrative Officers and for anyone else who would like to take it. A grant from the Century Fund pays for lunches and classroom materials for current and incoming AO's. This past February we introduced an extension of the current training program to Executive Officers. To take this course you must have taken the Administrative Officer course. Over 150 students took the two leadership courses in Orlando giving us a total of over 500 members that have so far taken this training. For those that have yet to take either of the two courses take advantage when they come to an area near you.

3. Our Internet Membership process has been a great success. This has led to 1216 new members as of late January in our cyber squadron. If someone near you becomes a cyber member – recruit them to join your squadron.

4. The BOD envisions a future where we are the foremost provider of advanced training in boat operation. That means both 'On the Water' and

‘Classroom’ training. We are currently talking with the leadership of the Auxiliary about joining our training program. Until they solve their insurance issue they will have to become members of USPS to become involved. Welcome them as there is a large enough market for both our organizations. The Coast Guard is encouraging the cooperation between our two organizations.

5. Your leadership met with the Auxiliary senior leadership two weeks before the annual meeting and discussed a wide range of areas of possible collaboration. Aside from “On the Water Training”, they are showing an interest in our courses and seminars. In the future they may purchase our courses for presentation to their members. In the mean time should an auxiliarist want to take a squadron course let them do so and charge them as if they were a member of USPS. They just may become one.

6. The Internet course ABC3 has a new website and a new price – There is a three month special price of \$39.95 to help promote the course. Those who take the Internet course get six months of free membership in our cyber squadron. Over 544 have become members since that was instituted. Squadrons need to visit <http://tiny.cc/CyberSearch> to see if there is a new member in their locale. If so, invite them to a squadron function and encourage them to transfer to the squadron. 497 have transferred from the Cyber Squadron to a real squadron as of late January.

7. We have many very professionally done seminars. We encourage squadrons to make use of them. We expect squadrons to provide materials with the seminars and to charge an appropriate fee. We are a business and should act like one.

8. We have expanded our outreach by partnering with Brunswick Corp., the largest boat manufacturer in the US. We have initiated a pilot program with their dealers that started last fall at selected dealers. Dealers will become members. Squadrons in these selected areas will be able to access dealer facilities to teach courses, seminars and on the water training. The dealers will provide the publicity. Dealers may provide boats for on the water training. As part of this partnership dealers will be able to sell on a retail basis our courses and seminars over the counter. Squadrons will manage and collect for the courses, seminars and other programs performed at the dealership. This is a win – win situation for both Brunswick and squadrons.

If you haven't yet contacted a dealer please do so as it will greatly expand your teaching and membership opportunities.

9. The Education Fund has sponsored and paid for the development of USPS University, Boat Operator Certification, On the Water Training, Fire Extinguisher training and our outreach program. **Please support the Education Fund.**

10. We hired the retired Boating Law Administrator from the State of California, Ray Tsuneyoshi as our new National Program Director. With his help and advise we have submitted a number of grant requests to the Coast Guard for funding for several boating safety initiatives. With Ray's help we expect to be much more active in the future in seeking boating safety grants from a variety of sources.

11. Ray is also one of two USPS representatives on the Coast Guards Advisory Panel. He heads a committee that is considering the mandatory wearing of life jackets on all open vessels under 18'. We would like to know your thoughts on such an approach. (Take a straw vote for those for and against the proposed rule making and record the results). Some background – The number of fatalities after flat lining at around 700 the last few years rose last year to 736.

12. We are considering lobbying for federal legislation for mandatory education for all boaters. Currently, not all states have such a law and some that do – do not recognize other state's courses. We would like to know your thoughts on this subject. (Take a straw vote on this issue and record the results).

13. Open up the meeting to any other issues that the membership might have an interest in. Tell them that we are looking for feedback on the actions that we have taken in the last couple of years.

14. You are invited to the governing board meeting to be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Greensboro NC 12 – 17 September.

Thank you and God Bless you, this organization and these United States of America.