

FEBRUARY 2009

Boating

INDUSTRY CANADA

Byron Bolton
and Harbercraft

- *New Plant*
- *New Models*
- *New Dealers*

HARBERCRAFT

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

– New Revenue:

Docks and Lifts
Bottom Painting
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BY ANDY ADAMS

Welcome to the *Boating Industry Canada* **Economic Stimulus** issue!

WHY DO WE NEED Economic Stimulus? Because the sub-prime mortgage crisis that began in the US, has triggered mortgage defaults, foreclosures and declining home prices.

Americans can deduct their mortgage interest from their income taxes. That encouraged people to mortgage their homes to re-invest their equity as well as to use it for high-living.

But when things slowed down, house values fell, resulting in declines in real personal net worth as well as declines in people's feelings of wealth. Americans have largely stopped spending, especially on vehicles plus, the sub-prime crisis has dried up credit anyway.

In early January, the Toronto Star ran a report on the state of the Canadian real estate market comparing 2008 to 2007. They asked a panel of experts to comment.

In Canada, the average price of homes sold via the MLS in November 2008 fell 9.8 per cent from the same month in 2007. Different markets suffered differently. St. John's was up +30.8%, Halifax-Dartmouth was up +12.6%, Ottawa-Carleton was up +7.3% but Toronto was down -6.3%, Edmonton was off -2.0%, Calgary -6.0%, Victoria -12.4% and Vancouver was -11.6%.

Compare that to the US where the price of single-family U.S. homes in the 20 largest metropolitan areas fell 18 per cent in October 2008 from a year earlier. Leading the markets down was Phoenix off -32.7% and Las Vegas down -31.7%. Other sun cities suffered too. Miami was -29.0% and Tampa was off -19.8%. No surprise with the auto industry problems that Detroit was off -20.4% while New York was down -7.5%, Boston was off -6.0% and none of the big American cities were up; most were down in double digits.

We have all heard opinions that Canada was largely isolated from the pain in the United States and that high oil prices and more conservative lending helped us to partially decouple from the global economy.

One of the Star's experts forecast that the market will "flat-line" after 2009 for three or possibly four years, with not much activity, similar to the 1992 to 1997 period in the Toronto market after the last real estate bubble burst.

Robert Hogue, Senior economist at RBC was one of the experts. A housing affordability study prepared by Hogue showed that homes were becoming modestly more affordable in the Toronto market. In November, it took 53.3 per cent of pre-tax earnings to afford a bungalow in the Toronto market. But that's still up from the long-term average of 48.3 per cent.

"That means you've got to have a decline in interest rates or prices of homes coming down to meet the long-term average," said Hogue.

Still, Toronto looked solid compared with some other Canadian cities, where the affordability index was 33 per cent higher than long-term averages for Vancouver and 40 per cent for Saskatoon.

The most immediate problem for the Toronto market is a potential oversupply of newly built condominiums, said the economist who felt that condo pricing will lead the correction down.

Carl Gomez, VP research for Bentall Capital said that Canada's housing market was "modestly overvalued" with home prices needing to fall by as much as 25 to 30 per cent from the peak in Alberta and British Columbia. Ontario prices, he figures, were about 10 per cent overvalued.

On the other hand, both the American and Canadian government economic stimulus packages had not been announced when that was written. The auto industry is a huge factor for Ontario and helping Detroit is high on the US agenda. But, Barack Obama's recently announced US economic stimulus proposal includes some significant protectionist clauses that could leave Canadian materials and manufactured goods out in the cold.

The conclusion we are reaching, is that since people's homes are the main underpinning for their financial well-being, until housing prices stabilize, it is sure to be a rocky road ahead. So, plan for reduced sales, but try to hold margins up and smother your remaining clients in love and great service.

We hope the ideas in this issue of *Boating Industry Canada* can be at least a modest economic stimulus for your marine business.

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Harbercraft Celebrates 50 years WITH NEW FACILITY



BY CATHIE LANK

WestWinn Group, makers of Harbercraft, Jetcraft and Kingfisher premium aluminum boats is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year by opening a new manufacturing facility this spring in Vernon, B.C. Building a new facility in the midst of such an unsettled global market may seem risky but WestWinn has positioned itself well for such a bold move.



Harbercraft Boats were born in Fort Erie, Ontario in 1959. The Harber family manufactured popular car-top aluminum fishing boats that were light and easy to transport. Soon the demand for these boats had grown across Canada. In 1970, a new manufacturing plant was built outside of Vernon, B.C.

Byron Bolton, WestWinn Group's president and owner, purchased Harbercraft seventeen years ago. Although the car-top model is long gone, the Harbercraft brand thrives as a reputable, Canadian made, all-welded heavy gauge aluminum boat known for its ideal balance of performance, precision handling and ride comfort. Harbercraft's innovative clean styling with superior finish appeals to the practical "no-nonsense" outdoorsman who values durability, simplicity and performance.

Mike Clements, Production Manager and Tim Osborn, Product Specialist and Byron Bolton, President discuss floor plan for new Westwinn Centre of Excellence.

New for 2009, the 33' Kingfisher is Harbercraft's ultimate aluminum coastal boat. This year Harbercraft Celebrates 50 Years With New Building.

"WestWinn now serves three primary segments of the market," explains Bolton. "We serve western North American freshwater fishing enthusiasts as well as offshore fishing enthusiasts and extreme river jet boat enthusiasts. We also produce boats for commercial use such as law enforcement, fire and rescue, charters and tours as well as for research applications."

The company's products are sold through a comprehensive dealer network from California to Alaska to Ontario as well as a growing international dealer network. The Jetcraft brand is sold exclusively in the U.S. while Harbercraft serves the Canadian market. Kingfisher coastal boats are built to suit offshore sport fishing enthusiasts and are marketed globally.

Although the company has several

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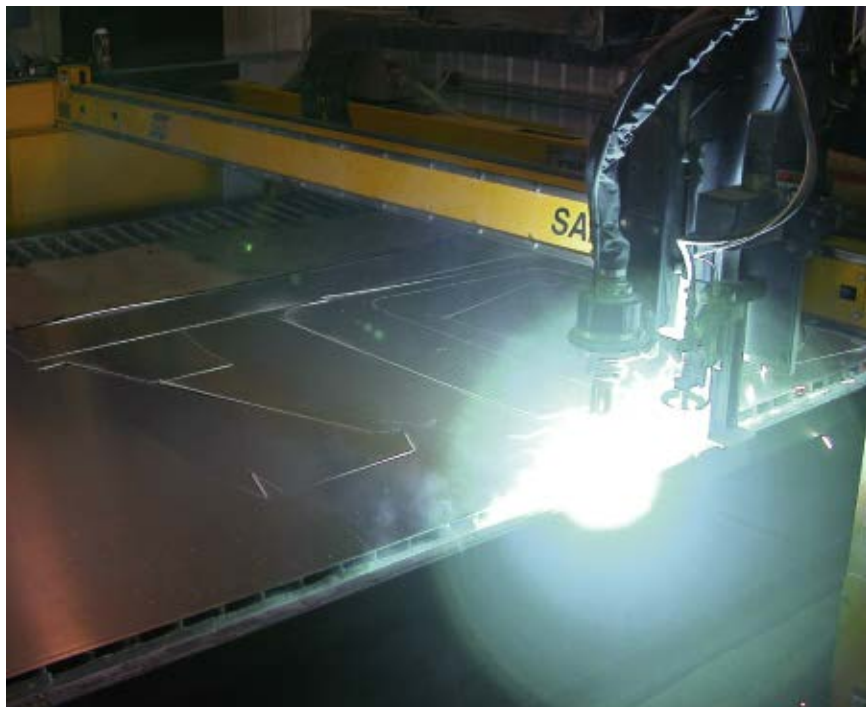
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Westwinn believes that their CNC plasma cutting machines create the most technologically advanced hull in the all-welded aluminum market today.

competitors such as Alumaweld, Hewescraft and North River in the States and Daigle, Stanley and Coastal Craft in Canada, they are well positioned in the market. In fact, WestWinn is the largest manufacturer of all-welded aluminum boats in Canada.

The success of the company points to an excellent product whose design has been refined over the years through passionate research and testing based on customer feedback.

"Product design is driven by customer needs," explains Bolton. "Over the years, I've taken a keen interest in product design by truly understanding what the customer needs including styling that stands out from the crowd. Our customers are fishing enthusiasts who use

Pre-Flex® Technology in Action. It is a proud Canadian aluminum boat construction innovation.

our boats in all sorts of conditions so we truly value their input. Most of our team also loves fishing which helps the entire process. As our slogan says, We Understand... We Fish Too."

WestWinn's products are continually evolving and it's something Bolton attributes to their success. Over the last two years they developed 19 new products and 110 upgrades to their designs and this momentum keeps building today.

"We believe our product development focus has given us an advantage," says Bolton. "We are proud of our achievements and our focus in this area is relentless."

R & D has led WestWinn to its most important design advancement and this is unique to all their boat brands; the Pre-Flex® built hull. Building with Pre-Flex® requires specialized jigs and computer numerical control (CNC) technology.

"We pre-load the hull components prior to welding which forms a hull with unparalleled strength, impact resistance and the comfort of sound damping. Once completed, the hull is removed from the jig, remaining in the shape our engineers intended; creating a safe and reliable boat that will last a lifetime. The genesis of this technology came from our background in river jet boat racing. Those boats have 1,000 horsepower engines and go over 100 mph. We joined forces with Rob Chrunk, a world leader in jet boat manufacturing, and co-developed the Pre-Flex® technology. We're proud to say that this is truly a Canadian innovation," explains Bolton.

The new manufacturing facility, christened the WestWinn Centre of Excellence, will allow for enhanced product testing and development. It will house separate areas for development, manufacturing and offices all under 52,000 square feet of highly efficient space with state-of-the-art equipment. Everything from the parts to the finished product will be assembled at the facility. It will employ about 100 skilled craftsmen. It is being built with significant focus on employee safety and workstation ergonomics. It is designed to accommodate flexible manufacturing and an environmentally friendly heat recovery system will cut gas consump-





tion considerably explains Bolton. This facility will afford WestWinn and their dealers a significant cost advantage while providing their customers mass customization flexibility.

"Another competitive advantage our customers and dealers enjoy is our exclusive supply arrangement with Yamaha for J MAX 4-stroke jet propulsion," says Bolton. "Three years of R & D for one purpose: to deliver a new level of jet boating excitement."

Looking ahead Bolton believes the company has done a distinguished job succeeding in the boatbuilding business; something he attributes to a young entrepreneurial team with a large amount of collective experience between

them. He also feels what sets them apart is how they work together. Everyone is dedicated to building the right product at the right price and we always strive to over-deliver to earn unshakable customer loyalty.

"Our customer-centric dealer family is truly the cornerstone of our success," says Bolton. "Some competitors sell factory direct. As a result, they don't always have the ability to gather trustworthy feedback that enables them to quickly respond to changing trends and preferences. For us, the customer is first in everything we do. A successful simple practice we employ is to always think from our customer's perspective before implementing."

Although Bolton was anticipating a market correction he didn't expect the all-encompassing global recession. Of course it means more effort staying on top of things, but he believes their bold



WestWinn has focused on building a model that fits every need - from its hard charging River Jet (above) models to its crossover Hard-Top series to their category leading Kingfisher (left) ocean series. 32 models with over 250 exciting options to choose from.

Byron Bolton Conducting R & D aboard a Kingfisher. Their company slogan is: "We Understand...We Fish Too!"



moves with products and customer care will provide WestWinn and their dealers an edge.

This year WestWinn will focus on further developing its team, dealer family, product portfolio and remain steadfast to their vision. A new focus on growing their Kingfisher brand beyond its traditional west coast markets, will also be important.

"Our dealers are not carrying significant inventories. As a result, they can offer current '09 products at competitive prices," says Bolton.

Bolton concludes that WestWinn would not be where it is today without the support of his mentors, Bayliner's Slim Sommerville and Ross Jardine, founder of Campion. "These men helped me clarify my vision and were employed as sounding boards when overcoming challenges," explains Bolton. "I'm deeply passionate about every boat we build for many different reasons and count myself exceptionally lucky to be doing what I do."

For more information visit:
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www.jetcraftboats.com
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Yamaha's **New** F40A

Aiming at the Market Sweet-Spot

"WE FOUGHT so hard to get this up through research and development," said Rick Layzell. "There are a lot of reasons why having a great engine in the 40 hp range is really important, especially in Canada."

Rick continued, "Considerations we face that aren't necessarily in other markets are Canada's Age and Horsepower Restrictions for boat operation. The regulations state that 'Youth under 16 years of age may not operate boats with motors over certain horsepower limits unless someone 16 years of age or older, is in the boat and directly supervising them so, for families who need their young people to drive a boat to their island, who want their kids to be able to go water skiing or fishing, an older person must be in the boat supervising unless that boat is under the horsepower limits. Since many families with children have just one boat, they have to choose carefully."

Specifically, the regulations state that unsupervised people under 12 years cannot operate motors over 10 hp and people between 12 and 16 are limited to a maximum of 40 hp.

Clearly and for many reasons, the regulations impact many families and that makes it particularly desirable for dealers to have a strong product offering in the 40 hp range. But, there's more than just the Age and Horsepower Restrictions attracting buyers to the 40 hp level.

"This is a real sweet spot in the market," said Rick. "Our new F40A addresses the diversity of boating types here in Canada. This is an engine that works in a multitude of different applications. A 40 hp engine is ideal for many two-log pontoon boats and it also works very



well for small center consoles and aluminum fishing boats. Because of its light weight, a 40 hp boat and engine combination makes a great trailer package and in particular, a 40 hp engine is often perfect for inflatable boats.

Some owners trailer their inflatable boat to go exploring new places. Many realize an inflatable is a great dive boat for SCUBA. Other owners value the virtues of the inflatable as a tender for large yachts. It is no wonder that the inflatable market has been strong and growing; and we expect that will contin-

ue. Considering the size and weight of the popular inflatable models, the F40A Yamaha is the right engine to deliver excellent performance on inflatable boats.

Jamie Small at CO2 Inflatable Boats says that the Yamaha F40 is his top-selling engine.

A 40 hp engine is no less important in markets like Muskoka and Georgian Bay. Many families want a 40 as power for the family workhorse boat for those people with islands and remote cottages. And, they want the whole family to be able to drive it.

Across Canada, especially in the north, tiller-handle engines are the way to go. They are really popular with resorts and camps in places like Lake of the Woods and the many great fishing lakes in Manitoba, Quebec and Alberta. For people at sportsman's lodges and fishing camps who also need big weight carrying capacity, or who are going fishing on those huge but often remote northern lakes, an engine like Yamaha's new F40A is really an excellent choice.

BC's inland lakes and the coast as well, also find the Yamaha F40 a versatile choice.

To begin with, the F40A is a new, original design for marine use. It's an inline three cylinder, single overhead camshaft engine designed to be both compact and powerful. Yamaha has created it from the start to be available as either a propeller or a jet drive. The jets are hot-sellers in BC and Alberta.

Yamaha Canada fought hard to ensure that the F40A was state-of-the-art competitively and that it featured the huge consumer benefit of electronic multipoint fuel injection for easy turnkey starting. The Yamaha designers

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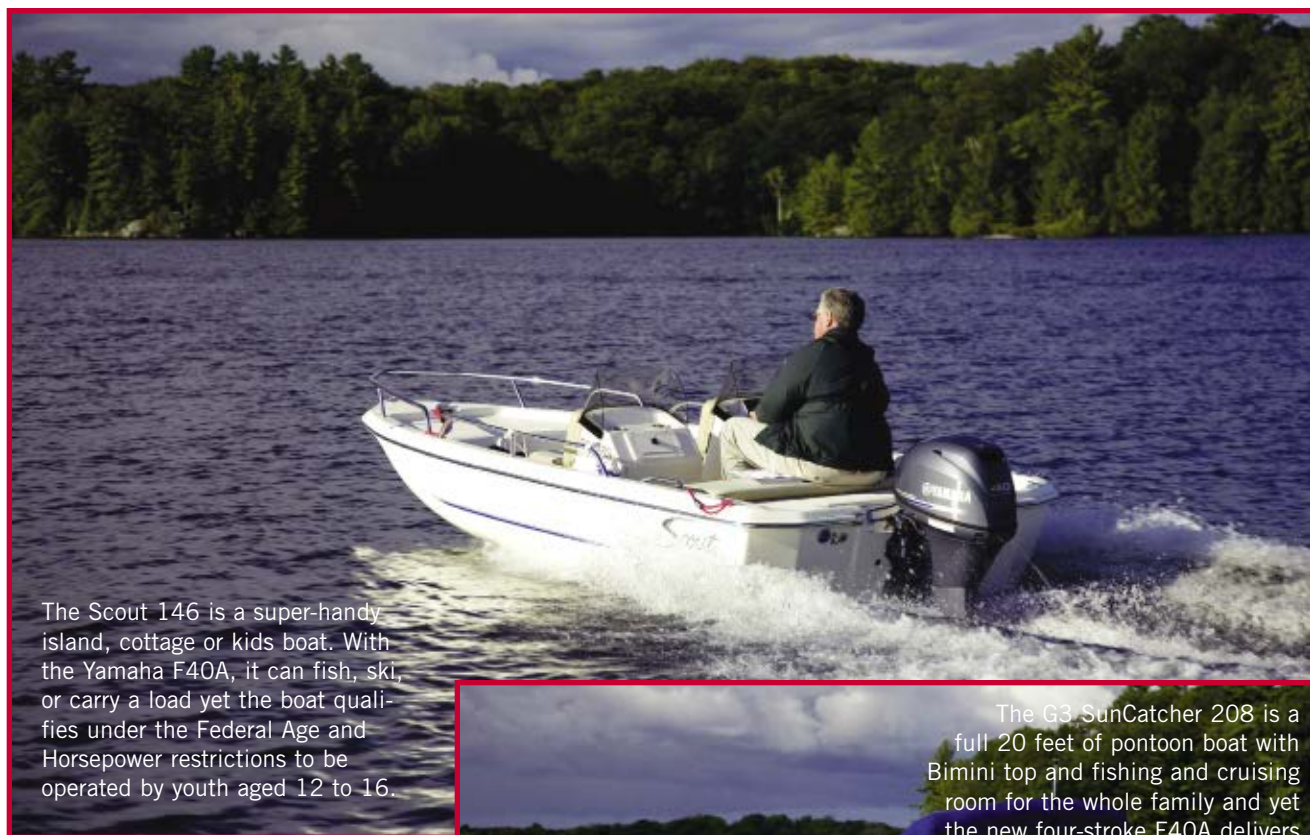
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[PROPULSION]



The Scout 146 is a super-handy island, cottage or kids boat. With the Yamaha F40A, it can fish, ski, or carry a load yet the boat qualifies under the Federal Age and Horsepower restrictions to be operated by youth aged 12 to 16.

also added a large, on-the-engine water separating fuel filter to add to long-term reliability.

The F40A has a newly designed single throttle valve with a long intake track manifold and an electronic control module to deliver easy starting, fast acceleration and excellent top speed with outstanding fuel economy.

Perhaps the strongest feature on this new engine is Yamaha's optional Command Link gauge system that can now be rigged to this versatile engine. When you order the Command Link option or the standard Multifunction Tiller Handle, you get Yamaha's exclusive Variable Trolling RPM Switch which makes this fairly large engine, capable of trolling like a much smaller motor.

Variable Trolling is a feature that especially benefits the fishing camps and fisherman. Generally, the camp operators prefer to troll on a main motor like the F40A rather than adding the increased expense and service costs of having both a main engine and a kicker. Trolling with a 40 when it has the Variable Trolling RPM Switch



The G3 SunCatcher 208 is a full 20 feet of pontoon boat with Bimini top and fishing and cruising room for the whole family and yet the new four-stroke F40A delivers solid performance on this big boat.

gives exceptionally smooth and quiet operation, while still delivering excellent fuel efficiency.

In use, you simply press a button on the Command Link tachometer or the VTS switch on the Multifunction Tiller Handle. Now, the operator can adjust the engine's trolling speed from 650 to 900 rpm in precise 50 rpm increments. This precise and consistent trolling speed, that can be held through a wide array of conditions, ensures that you are trolling at exactly the right speed for the particular fish species you have targeted.

Yamaha has put a lot of effort into the Multifunction Tiller Handle. In

addition to the VTS switch, they've included a front mounted gear shift and the ignition key switch on the very long handle. This provides better leverage for maximum control and also, comfort and safety.

Whether the F40A is on a family utility, a pontoon, dive boat or wilderness fishing boat, it's impressive to see such an array of "big engine" features on an affordable mid-range family outboard.

"Yeah...and the price is almost the same as on the old engine," lamented Rick Layzell, "Yet, you get all these new features. But, if that's what it takes to win the buyer's commitment, we're doing it!" ●

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Docks and Lifts

A Revenue Opportunity?

BY ANDY ADAMS

Recognizing that global economic conditions are likely to cut into new boat sales in 2009, *Boating Industry Canada* set out to consider other business activities that could pick up the slack (so to speak).

Docks and lifts seem to represent an allied revenue opportunity for marine dealers because docks and lifts are both an integral part of the boating experience and even in a down sales year, the marina's boat customers are #1!

In fact, it is that critically important client relationship, that is served by being in a position to assist with docks and lifts...and the lifetime value of the marina's client relationships are both the marina's economic future and also the "goodwill" value of the business if you were to sell it.

To learn more about how docks and lifts might support your revenue stream and your client relationships, we set out on foot, walking over literally a million square feet to talk to several companies in the docks and lifts business.

Boating Industry Canada dragged their notepad and camera all over the Toronto International Boat Show and here is what we learned:

Docks range from simple and easily retailed to huge and highly specialized

Lifts range from inexpensive but complicated to very simple but expensive hydraulic systems

Dock suppliers range from enthusiastic about marinas being dealers to barely luke warm

Profit levels range from fair but on small numbers to significant but requiring a major commitment

First, we talked to Paul Fry at Kropf Marine who custom designs and builds what some competitors regard as the



Dock In A Box is set up for dealers to stock and retail product.

Cadillac of docks. Kropf is looking for dealers and have territories available but the size, sophistication and scope of the deals really requires a fully dedicated business and crew. They sell to municipalities, large marinas and other demanding, high-dollar applications. You don't just add this line – you get into the docks business.

That is our segue into the fact that some marinas and some suppliers feel docks and lifts are a bad fit.

The reason is that clients of the marina want both their boat launched and their docks and lifts put in on the same timing. It's a collision when the marina gets into doing in-out work in the spring and fall. You either start a division and hire for the docks and lifts business or you need to hand it over to the docks supplier.

Rick Hickson at R&J Machine in Lakefield, Ontario is a dock and lift supplier who likes marina dealers. He can set the dealer up to retail or support the

dealer as a rep for the entire line. They recognize that the marina has the important client relationship. He said that things seem to work best when the marina introduces the customer and R&J provides a percentage of the commission but does the design, installation, warranty and maintenance.

No two shorelines are alike so several of the dock companies said they prefer to be involved.

Bill Madill of Whitewater Docks manufactures a very interesting welded plastic tube system that is also high-end and suitable for commercial applications.

He says he is open to new dealers and he echoes the sentiment that every site is different so they like to meet the buyers to apply their knowledge and experience to give the customer the best solution. They feel that their installation, warranty and future service make it more desirable for the dealer to work on a finder's fee basis rather than being the servicing dealer.

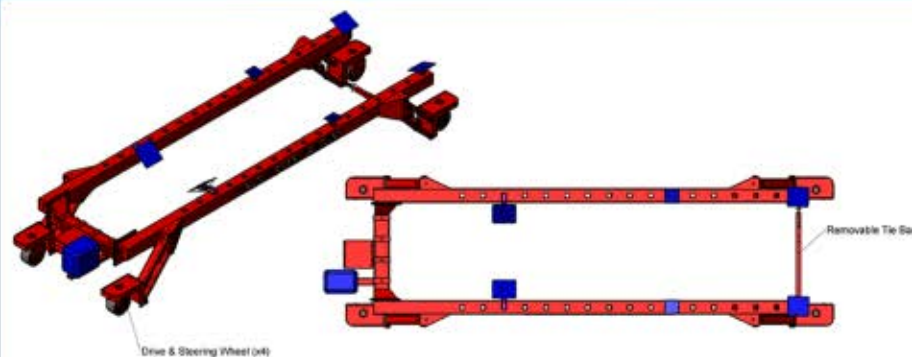


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Easy-to-retail Jet Float cubes (inset) can be expanded year after year

We talked to Jan Butterworth at Dockside Equipment. They work along with the Naylor company building some products for Naylor and getting some Naylor products to sell. Dockside Equipment emphasizes service and wants a dealer to have a qualified installation team.

Talking about product design, Butterworth pointed out that people care about their environment in the sense that they want less visual pollution. That means that cottage owners want nice-looking hydraulic lifts and handsome, clean-lined docks. They don't want to see a boat lift that is a cheap cage of wires and levers.

Product lines that are more tuned into retail sales by marinas include the Dock In A Box line. This product line is better sized and suited to owner installation.

Dock In A Box provides the marina with an alternate revenue stream by selling docks, lifts and various parts and they have a casual dealer program for that. It is an innovative company and we also discussed a program where a marina can lease lifts.

Their special arrangement allows the marina owner to generate income during the high season and then pay later in the fall. For six months, they make the payments starting a month or two into their high season and the payments end six months later, so no further payments in the off-season. Renting lifts at your marina can generate larger revenue than regular slips. Dock In A box can also handle all the labour.

For perhaps the simplest retail arrangement, Jet Dock has their open-ended modular interlocking plastic

float system. This product is designed to sell through dealers and you can achieve anything from a 27% to 100% markup. New dealers start with a \$26,000 investment for a truckload of product and a display.

So, some dock and lift product lines are well suited for marinas to stock and sell while the higher-end docks and lifts generally need a

greater commitment to be in that business. Otherwise, the marina should just connect the customer for a finder's fee.

Although on commissions and finder's fees, Brad Hutchinson who sells Sun Stream has a different perspective. He works with well-established dealers in some of the most prestigious cottage areas. They've learned that those dealers

sion to finance a new boat, build that sale by up-selling into a matching lift. That way the new boat is best protected from the elements, the client's investment is cared for and they are likely financing anyway. It makes sense to get a complete package.

Downie offered several other good ideas. Shoreline is critical. He noted that on the affordability scale, expanding the client's dock area delivers an unbeatable waterfront outdoor patio that can evolve into a whole place for entertainment. The dock isn't just where you tie the boat up anymore.

We spoke to Buckeye Marine in Bobcaygeon who has created a waterfront accessories display with ladders, benches, tables and convenience features that has been a winner for them.

Barrett Marketing Group has ShoreMaster across the country and they do have dealers but Downie admits, some of the most successful ShoreMaster retailers are specifically in the dock business. He emphasizes that service is the key to success. People don't expect something for nothing. In some ways, the big profits are made on service.

For every dock or lift retailer, make it easy to buy the product. Doug said it's all about making the boat buyer happy. His best dealer sells high-end ski boats and when they make a sale, they literally walk the customer over to the display lift and dock system

and say, "This is what you need for your new towboat." Doug says that dealer is successful about 25% of the time. It makes it easy to finance the complete package as an all-in-one and that makes sense when they've just made a major purchase like a new towboat.

On selling lifts, Doug believes that a proper cover on the lift means the boat is protected from the wind, rain and sun fading. Over the years he has observed that a lift with a good-quality canopy really encourages the owner to use their boat more. That's a winning formula! ●



This elegant ShoreMaster set up makes the most of swampy shoreline and includes ladder, patio, bench and lifts with excellent canopies.

just want their customers looked after the best possible way. In fact, Brad said that some marinas do not want the customer to think that they got a commission by referring them.

Doug Downie at Barrett Marketing Group sells ShoreMaster who offers one of the widest lines of docks, lifts and related products. The ShoreMaster docks go from big commercial units to modular starter-level residential and Barrett Marketing group sells through dealers.

With that focus, Doug Downie said that when a customer has made the deci-



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Ad Nauseam STRIKE WHILE THOSE SHOW LEADS ARE HOT



BY JOHN MORRIS

WELL WHAT DO you make of that? The Toronto show has come and gone and, despite the world's financial murk, most people we spoke to came away from the Direct Energy Centre smiling. The Show's manager, Cynthia Hare tells us that attendance was down 16% but our anecdotal evidence is that what was missing was the tire kicking beer nut crowd while the attendees in the house were actually there to shop. How can this be? Let's not ask questions, but rather consider how to make hay out of this surprisingly sunny result.

By way of some slight analysis, consider these two theories about why people are buying boats even if the world is generally sitting on its wallet. First of all, while it's dangerous to generalize, boat buyers are not just ordinary folks – they are often more affluent and often

more credit worthy. Today, the credit market may have dried up for the iffy shopper looking to purchase a 62-inch TV, but there is plenty of money around for consumers with good credit scores. Not only that, but the borrowing rate fell recently and is now lower than we have seen it in decades. The wise boater is spotting inventory on hand combined with that cheap financing and is thinking that now is the time to buy!

Secondly, if you're the wealthy boomer with a pocketful of cash, are you going to give it to your broker to invest when they have just killed your RRSP, or are you going to put the money into a dreamboat and enjoy the lifestyle you deserve? I rest my case, Your Honour.

So the question we are answering today is a nice one – how to maximize the leads from the show.

We start out with a simple medium tech idea from our own BIC sales eagles

– a business card reader. A simple \$150 reader can make that portion of the list accumulation process far easier. Get yours for not much at the office store and get scanning.

A database is obvious. We spoke with a number of top producers who use Channel Blade's Footsteps and spoke well of it. You may have a different supplier or your own system. It's hard to think that anyone is doing it by hand any more, but why not use the technology to keep following up.

With a new staff and all the fiscal issues hanging about, Carly Poole at Buckeye in Bobcaygen went to the Toronto show with qualified leads rather than sales as the company's primary objective. Similar to other operators, Carly ensured those leads were input quickly and "Thank You" follow-up notes went out within 12-24 hours. Sales staff ranks the leads and the most qualified.

"Our follow up is low pressure," notes Poole. Buckeye's newsletter concentrates on staff profile, information about courses, boating destinations and lifestyle. Also important is that Buckeye always respects the client's email /voice/mail preferences. That makes a lot of sense in these days of new window sales teams in your neighbourhood, doesn't it!

Bruce Cleland, the sales manager at Gordon Bay in Muskoka shares that philosophy. "We're careful not to pounce on them," he tells us. He saw many serious potential buyers at the show and feels the leads are not just tire kickers. "Several came back to the booth again and again. Buyers want information – they are cautious, but they are out there."

At some level, the work that you have put into establishing your marina's reputation will pay off today in lead conversion. If your ad and PR efforts, which we have looked at, and will continue to cover like grandma's hand made quilt,



have been effective, that will be an enormous benefit in today's sales process. Consider that bank of goodwill when you are assessing your current ad/PR efforts. Consider when you will need every drop of a great image.

Even with your reputation in place, following up pronto is the most common message. Deborah Paris of Paris Marine tells us that unlike some teams, the Paris Marine people race back to the

office after every show. "There is no break after; we only do one show then we take our vacations later on." Paris follows up then follows up more, inviting top prospects to an open house in their inviting premises (a great showroom pays dividends, too).

But immediate follow-up is our key tip, says Paris. "Two weeks out, the leads are stone cold...they've forgotten about the show."



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GE Pledges Commitment

Floor Plan Support Continues for the Marine Industry

BY STEPHEN JONES, MARKETING,
GE COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION FINANCE

Foreword: Boating Industry Canada was anxious to learn more about the status of marine dealer floorplanning in Canada and invited GE Commercial Distribution Finance to provide us with this valuable update.

Andy Adams - Editor

AS EVERYONE is now acutely aware, the downturn in the financial markets has created tumultuous economic times that have impacted businesses to varying degrees throughout the world. Rising costs of capital, tightening risk criteria and fluctuating index rates seem to be affecting companies of all sizes across most industries. Anyone who watches the nightly news knows that from manufacturing to financial institutions very few industries have been unaffected, and a look through the bond rates issued by major companies operating in Canada gives a very good indication of the rising cost of capital.

GE's Commercial Distribution Finance Canada business (CDF) is part of GE Capital, which provides loans, leases, financing programs, and other financial solutions in over 35 countries around the world. It is important to note that GE Capital has seen lower loss rates and loan-loss reserve ratios than those of most global financial institutions because the company originates mostly secured or asset-backed loans. GE has taken significant steps to ensure the long-term viability of GE Capital. These include reducing leverage and long-term debt needs to solidify our credit rating.

Most importantly, despite the economic turmoil, CDF remains a committed partner to the marine industry in Canada. The team at CDF demonstrates



an understanding that our success is contingent upon the success of our customers. CDF has been managing through these tough business conditions with cost cutting actions within the business and systematic changes to manage fluctuating index rates and rising costs of capital rather than temporary solutions. CDF's view of our role in the marine industry is a long-term commitment, providing customers with the level of service and the products they have come to expect.

Although there is no doubt that the financial competitive landscape in Canada is shifting, the Canadian banking system remains healthy and a viable source of capital. As TD Bank economist Craig Alexander said in an interview with the Canadian Press on January 24, 2009 "The reality is that credit is flowing in Canada". Alexander was responding to a Bank of Canada report released on January 23, 2009, which stated that amid widespread calls for Canada's banks to increase credit to hard-pressed consumers and businesses, the latest data indicates they're doing exactly that.

Jocelyn Wyatt and Jeff McDermott of GE Commercial Distribution Finance were at the Toronto International Boat Show to work with their clients for the 2009 season.

The Bank of Canada found that on the business side, bank loans to Canadian residents for commercial purposes rose during the month of December 2008 and ended up on the year. Despite challenging market conditions, financing options continue to be available.

Of course this does not take away from the fact that, during this economic period, marine dealers and manufacturers should understand the heightened importance of managing business costs and cash flows closely. The events of the last few months have demonstrated the vital need to develop contingency plans and to allow for flexibility to address the changing demands of a rapidly evolving economy. Strong business management practices, flexible plans to address the changing economic landscape and the long-term commitment of financial solution providers like CDF will better position us all to weather this uncertain period. ●



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Butson Boats Defines “Win-Win” at Muskoka’s Red Leaves Boatbuilding Becomes Entertainment

BY JOHN MORRIS

IN LATE AUGUST 2008, celebrated wooden boat builders and restoration experts, Butson Boats Ltd., opened adjacent to Wallace Marina, as part of Red Leaves, Muskoka’s new luxury resort development on historic Lake Rosseau.

Ron and his son Tim Butson, whose company has been building, repairing and restoring wooden boats since 1981, relocated from Bala, to operate the new boat building workshop and varnish shop as a central showcase within the new project. What a creative and unique concept; boatbuilding as entertainment!

“It’s a win-win for all of us. Red Leaves is the ideal location for us to



The new J.W. Marriott hotel and condominiums as seen from the water, will be the main focus of the new Red Leaves development.

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[THE BOAT SHOP Part-1]



The new Butson Boats building [center] part of the entertainment in the resort development, is beside the well-known former Wallace Marina in the sheltered bay just west of the J.W. Marriott development, near where the new theater will be located.

showcase the traditional art of wooden boat building to Muskoka visitors and residents while we provide an original focus for their superb village development” says Tim Butson. “Resort guests and visitors to The Rock golf course are people who understand and respect the tradition, craftsmanship and heritage of wooden boats and their place in the Muskoka heritage.”

The owners and designers of Red Leaves have incorporated a handsome new boat shop building to house Butson’s directly on the Lake Rosseau waterfront. The facility is an excellent complement to the luxurious Muskoka venue. Red Leaves is home to The Rosseau, Canada’s first JW Marriott & Spa, joining a worldwide collection of hallmark deluxe hotels in the Marriott group.

The Butson name has been associated with boat building for more than 160 years, back to Cornwall, England where the family was involved with building



Despite retiring last year, 82-year-old Ron Butson, his wits and skills fully intact, holds a carefully carved half model. He was taking the lines off the model and lofting them in the time-honored and traditional manner as he begins another new planked mahogany boat.

boats in Fowey Harbour. This boatbuilding family is known for having a meticulous approach to hand-selecting materials for every job, from small repairs to full restorations. Their approach carries on the rare, time-honoured tradition of wooden boatbuilding deployed by their Muskokan predecessors like Bert Minett. Thanks to the Butsons, the name Minett continues to be associated with artistry, luxury finishing and bespoke woodworking. Ron Butson, who at 82 has retired, continues to come in on a regular basis. Ron began building boats in Muskoka as soon



One of the craftsmen at Butson’s is caulking the seams on the newly replaced bottom of this mahogany boat, coincidentally the very first boat that Ron Butson built on his arrival to the Muskoka area back in the 1960s.

as he arrived in Canada in the 1960s.

Butson’s shop also builds new boats of their own design and are best known for their Gentleman’s Racer, inspired by a line of boats introduced by Bert Minett more than 50 years ago in this exact area. This new, vintage-style vessel accommodates a modern V8 engine with matching increased power performance.

Set on more than 1,400 acres, Red Leaves includes more than a mile of continuous Lake Rosseau waterfront. Red Leaves is unfolding in phases, and besides The Rosseau includes, the legendary Muskoka family retreat, Cleveland’s House, an unspoiled 700-acre Nature Reserve, and the Nick Faldo-designed golf course, The Rock. Over the years, Red Leaves will expand to include an entire resort community including a vibrant four-season village, unique shops and a vibrant performing arts theatre.

Developers Ken and Peter Fowler have an extensive hospitality background including the Jack Astor’s restaurants, Canyon Creek and other restaurants in both Canada and the United States. The discussions to incorporate Butson’s have been in the works for nearly a decade, beginning when the project was initially conceived.

“You can’t look old or run down anymore. Customers want top-quality and there is a new core of super discriminating customers coming along to the Muskoka Lakes area who want to participate in the rich heritage Muskoka enjoys in every way,” said Tim Butson.

The location on Lake Rosseau provides easy access for Muskoka’s boaters and the bright open shop takes advantage of the panoramic setting. The new home provides Butson’s with a perfect venue to continue Muskoka’s historic boatbuilding traditions in style. What a perfect “win-win” for all! ●

Antifouling:

More Than One Way To Think Green

BY GLEN CAIRNS

GOING GREEN means looking at the big picture when it comes to antifouling. For lots of good reasons we want our boat shops and marinas to be using the most environmentally safe products we can, within the reasonable bounds of what is affordable and what our customers demand. With a little education boaters can make both a green and effective decision for their antifouling paint.

First a little history: From early days copper in various forms, from copper sheathing to cuprous oxide, was the best available biocide for antifouling. Remember TBT (tributyltin)? When it was introduced in the 1970s it seemed to deliver what everybody wanted. TBT was very effective in preventing slime and algae growth, as well as in discour-

aging the various little critters that love to attach themselves to boats. It came in nice strong colours and it was safe to use on aluminium hulls and outdrives. The only problem was it was just too effective against the critters and carried on attacking them long after it had left the bottom of the boat. Research began to show negative effects on the marine environment and by the late 1980s TBT had been banned for recreational boats in both Europe and North America. So it was back to the future for paint manufacturers.

With the switch back to copper, several issues became apparent. First, it was not safe to use on aluminium and second copper is much less effective

against slime and algae. Today, all the major paint companies are spending millions of dollars on research into effective and environmentally safe antifouling paints and finishes.

Broadly speaking we have two basic choices in antifouling; hard finishes and soft finishes. Soft paints, known as ablative, are meant to wear away as the boat moves through the water, continually exposing fresh biocide. This has the advantage of a controlled release of biocide and other points, which I'll touch on later. Hard finish antifouling paints do not wear away in the manner of an ablative, but begin to release their biocide immediately on contact with the water. After launching, the biocide is depleted in a fairly short time, usually 6 months or so. Traditional copper-based antifouling paints are moderately hard and may make sense in areas where the boat is used for a short season.





Harder antifoulings are practical for boats that are trailered or where owners want to be able to scrub the bottom during the season, something you cannot do with an ablative paint. From a boat shop perspective it is the fact that hard antifouling, which needs to be renewed each season, builds up over time. Eventually, this accumulated paint has to be removed in a messy and time-consuming job.

Increasingly, environmental agencies are casting a critical eye on just what happens to this waste and disposal will become more expensive and problematic over time. Teflon® based paints are another popular type of hard antifouling. These provide a very durable slick surface that discourages fouling and can be polished to a smooth finish. Paints such as VC17 from Interlux are popular with the racing crowd. Research continues on these smooth surface paints with the goal of an effective non-toxic finish. We're not there yet and Teflon® paints do still have the disadvantage of building up over time.

When looking at the environmental impact of antifouling paints there are two basic factors to consider: First, what happens above water; that is to say, the effect of VOC emissions during application and the disposal of waste after cleaning. VOCs are solvents (volatile organic compounds) that get released into the air as the paint dries. The sec-



ond is the impact on the marine environment once the paint is immersed and begins to release its biocide. The type and composition of these biocides is an area of continuing research at all paint companies. Work continues on various organic based biocides, but at this time copper is still the most common.

For dealing with the problem of VOCs, the thrust of research has been in water-based paints and all the major paint companies are working on these formulations. Several, such as Aqua Gard, are on the market now. With water-based paint there are no harmful VOCs. This eliminates ventilation problems with shop application; makes for easier clean-up and there are no serious disposal issues for waste product.

When considering the environmental impact of any antifouling it is always important to look at all the factors involved. An ablative antifouling such as Micron CSC from Interlux, while it does not solve the VOC issue, still has a positive impact on the environment. The fact that the paint wears away in a controlled fashion, releasing its biocide over a longer period, means less concentration

of toxin in the water. The ability to overcoat an ablative paint with no sanding or nasty paint stripper means no messy cleanup and therefore no toxic waste.

The effectiveness of the paint translates into less fuel per mile and from the boat shop's point of view; the simplicity of application can make for a more profitable paint job.

The effectiveness of any particular paint varies depending on where it is being used. The amount of fouling can vary a great deal even in a small area, even in the same marina, depending on factors such as water flow, salinity, pollution, etc. What we need to do as shop owners and retailers is try to give the customer the information

they need to make a knowledgeable decision as to which paint to use.

When I spoke with the representatives of International Paints and Aqua Gard, while each made a case for the advantages of their product, one issue they both mentioned was that the Canadian boater has a more limited product choice than does his American counterpart. This is due to the fact that Canada does not accept US data at face value, but needs to conduct its own tests for each ingredient in any new antifouling product. There may be perfectly good reasons for this, but it does slow down the introduction of new products into our market. The cost to a manufacturer for testing and even special labelling may not be warranted in some cases, given the relatively small volume of paint sold.

One thing we should always remind our customers, is that movement through the water retards the growth of any fouling. Indeed, ablative paints only work effectively through the friction of water over the hull. So the bottom line is, whatever the paint you chose, use your boat! ●

Boat Shops Can Earn New Profits From Small Boat Owners With Boat Brite Clear Bottom Coat

Ugly brown staining is an unsightly problem for more and more small boats in cottage country and trailer boats too. No one wants that brown algae stain to show on their trailer boat, especially if it is left in the driveway between summer weekends and fishing trips.

A new product from the makers of Captain John's Boat Brite and YachtShine Products, will introduce a solution for this at the end of February 2009.

The Boat Brite Clear Bottom Coat is an optically-clear coating that can be applied to fiberglass and aluminum boats and all underwater running gear including out-drives, trim tabs etc. The preparation is simple needing only a spray and wipe cleaning with the Boat Brite Clear Bottom Coat Pre-Cleaner. No sanding or scuffing is needed for the coating to adhere.

The Boat Brite Clear Bottom Coat is not an antifouling paint as it does not contain biocides. It is environmentally benign and non-toxic. It does however significantly reduce the adhesion of freshwater fouling from vegetation and mollusks due to the chemistry which after the

Boat Brite Clear Bottom Coat has cured, leaves a very hard and slick finish.

Boats used regularly will remain virtually fouling-free due to the friction of the hull passing through water. Boats used periodically will enjoy the easy removal of any light algae film with just a quick wipe with a cloth or brush. Boats rarely used even with antifouling paint, have a "lawn" growing on the bottom but are able to be completely cleaned of this growth with just high pressure water – no acid is needed – and this is significant as the environmental agencies along the Great Lakes and other freshwater regions are "requesting" that bottom washing using acid be reduced and not to be done at the water's edge.

Boat Shops will find a new service opportunity among small boat owners who want their boat professionally cleaned and then given this type of clear bottom coat to protect their investment.

The Boat Brite Clear Bottom Coat will be available late February 2009.

For further information visit www.boatbrite.com

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Register Now for the Next Series of NMEA Marine Electronics Courses



It was recently announced that due to great support from the Canadian Marine Industry, the NMEA is again offering Marine Electronics Courses in Canada but these start March 4th in Toronto so you will need to move quickly and you must register in order to attend.

The Course Outline and Study Manuals are pre-shipped to individuals attending. Ken Harrison of Summerhill.ca explained to us that successful students will need to review the course materials beforehand to get the most out of their investment.

The National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA) is the unifying force behind the entire marine electronics industry, bringing together all aspects of the industry for the betterment of all in our business and it is well known that there is a growing demand for educated marine electronics specialists to join this well-paying industry.

The sessions begin with the Toronto, Ontario Courses. There will be:

- March 4th, MEI Marine Electronics Installer
- March 5th, NMEA 2000 Networking

The Toronto courses start at 8:30 am at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Toronto Airport at 33 Carlson Court,

Toronto. Telephone 416-675-1234 for reservations.

The Richmond, BC courses are scheduled as:

- March 18th, MEI Marine Electronics Installer
- March 19th, NMEA 2000 Networking

These courses also start at 8:30 am. The location is the Best Western Richmond Hotel and Convention Center, 7551 Westminster Hwy in Richmond. Telephone 604-273-7878 for reservations.

Atlantic Canada course dates yet to be announced but sessions are planned again this year.

Check out the "NEW" NMEA Website at www.nmea.org. All the courses are listed under "Education". If you require additional assistance please contact:

Cindy Love NMEA Office:
clove@nmea.org 410-975-9425 or,
Ken Harrison NMEA International
Director: summerhillca@rogers.com

NMMA Canada Responds to Government Pre-Budget Consultations

By Sara Anghel

The economy is the number one issue on the government's agenda and while political turmoil forced this major issue to the back burner before Christmas, the government did eventually survive and initiate a short pre-budget consultation process in which NMMA Canada made a submission. The highlights of our submission are outlined below.

The government should assist manufacturers in getting into new markets and expanding undeveloped market opportunities.

Cross Border Shopping – it is a fact of life but there needs to be a level playing field.

While Canada is not in the same situation as the United States surrounding credit a close eye needs to be kept on the credit situation in

Canada.

The work share program which allows employers to keep their staff on a part-time basis without having to lay them off should be expanded and continued in an effort to protect jobs and stimulate the economy.

On the environment, the government should support marine manufacturers on going green, eliminating waste, reducing power and natural gas consumption.

On technology, the government would see jobs remain in the country if there was a focus on providing financial assistance/incentives for equipment and technology upgrades, new product development and training. The federal government could stimulate our industry, by raising the 35% current tax credit to a higher level.

The government has previously announced its intention to develop a National Tourism Strategy. The focus has been on how to attract international travelers to Canada. While that is an important component, it is important to realize that in tough economic times, people tend to travel within their borders, therefore campaigns should have a strong element to promote boating within the country. Our industry has a \$6 billion dollar impact to our country's economy in tourism alone and we want to work with the government to ensure that recreational boating is a part of any national tourism strategy and campaign. Having said that, one way to attract those international travelers, especially the ones from the US, is to ensure that they have a hassle-free experience in border crossing.

The government's budget was announced on January 27. It is a mix of modest tax cuts, increased program spending and significant short-term incentives and spending to boost investment, consumption and employment, the latter primarily through accelerated infrastructure spending.

The real test of this budget is political. Highlights which affect our

INDUSTRY NEWS

industry include:

Invest to allow an additional \$1.5 billion in financing to support small and medium-sized businesses, including a \$350-million capital investment in the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC). The initiative is expected to help small and medium-sized businesses across Canada gain access to financing. \$200 million to National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program to enable it to temporarily expand initiatives for small and medium sized businesses.

Outlining legislative changes to the Navigable Waters Act; making the necessary changes to facilitate infrastructure developments.

Strengthening benefits for Canadian workers; \$1.9 billion over two years including five extra weeks of Employment Insurance benefits.

Changes to EI for up to 10,000 long tenured workers who need time

and financial support to adapt to the changing economy.

Extending work sharing agreements by 14 weeks, to a maximum of 52 weeks and increasing access to work sharing agreements.

Eliminating tariffs on a range of machinery and equipment, which is expected to lower costs for Canadian producers in a variety of sectors; recognizing that these sectors must purchase expensive specialized equipment from overseas. This is designed to enhance productivity of these operations and improve competitiveness. This measure is expected to affect close to \$2 billion in annual imports of machinery and equipment and provide over \$440 million in savings for Canadian industry over the next five years.

Make available to Canadian businesses up to \$200 billion in liquidity and financing to keep the economy moving. This new financing framework will have several components. It

will extend the insured mortgage purchase program through the first half of the next fiscal year to encourage private sector financial institutions to increase lending. Government will also establish a new Canadian secured credit facility to help consumers and businesses in financing the purchase of vehicles and equipment.

While directly not affecting the recreation industry, there will be \$217 million to build and improve core commercial fishing harbours across Canada.

There are a number of allocations regarding tourism – \$40 million to the Canadian Tourism Commission; additional funding for national parks; and another statement about developing a tourism strategy.

Extend the 50 percent accelerated CCA rate by two years and provide a temporary 100 percent CCA depreciation rate for eligible computer hardware and software acquired over the



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next two years.

Increase the amount of income eligible for the small-business tax rate again, from \$400,000 to \$500,000.

While there may not be any specific mention for the recreational boating industry, it is important to note that NMMA Canada's budget submission mentioned some of the incentives outlined in the budget including the expansion of the work share employment program, tax incentives for business, tourism and the credit situation.

In the coming weeks and months, it will be important that our industry look closely at what opportunities government has made available to us and work collectively with them to expand on these opportunities.

GME Gains Industry Canada Approval for EPIRBs

GME, an Australian manufacturer of marine electronics, has received Industry Canada approval for its MT403 Accusat range of EPIRBs.

The GME Accusat MT403 product line includes GPS equipped and standard beacons, in manual and auto release configurations. The entire range utilizes lithium manganese dioxide batteries (LiMnO₂) assembled in a non-hazmat format for simple and unrestricted transportation by road or air.

"Although we have been FCC



and US Coast Guard approved in the United States for some time now, the securing of the Industry Canada approval is a vital element and a very important milestone for GME in the execution of our overall North American marketing strategy," says Sean Griffin, GME's international business product development manager.

In Canada, the GME products will be Distributed by the North America Master Distributor Whiffletree Corporation Inc. 207-647-3300 or whiffletreecorp.com and sales represented by Ken Harrison at Summerhill.ca; (705) 812-1660 or summerhillca@rogers.com and by Paul Barton of KNJ Marketing; 781-297-3504 or pbarton@knjmarketing.com.

Yamaha Completes \$6 Million Expansion At Tennessee Boat Building Plant

Yamaha Motor Corporation, USA has announced the completion of a 64,000 square foot expansion and the deployment of sequenced manufacturing technologies at its boat manufacturing facility in Vonore, TN. The investments make the Yamaha plant one of the most advanced boat-building operations in the world.



"This multi million dollar investment in our boat plant represents our commitment to deploying the latest technologies, processes and operational improvements to make a better boat for our customers," said Mark



Speaks, president of Yamaha's Watercraft Group. "These are the cornerstones to our business and they are what we've built our reputation on. This investment puts us in a highly advantageous position for future growth."

Highlighting the \$6 million dollar investment is the addition of a state-of-the-art robotic gelcoat application booth, high-speed robotic CNC cutters, and a proprietary RF urethane injection system (for flotation foam) that uses technology derived from NASA. Also included is a long list of "green" technologies that improve the work environment and significantly reduce waste product.

"This facility is arguably the most automated manufacturing operation in the boating industry," according to Greg Harbison, division manager of manufacturing at Yamaha's Tennessee boat plant. "Our investments in the areas of robotics and CNC cutting have greatly improved the standardization of our boat building process. We are now achieving a level of precision unheard of in our business. The bottom line is that we are building higher quality boats with greater efficiency."

The Vonore operation builds a range of Yamaha 23-foot and 21-foot runabouts and tower boats. Yamaha 23-foot boats are the best-selling models in their category.

www.yamaha-motor.ca

Is Your Voice Being Heard?

The Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC) and the Recreational Boating Advisory Committees (RBACs):

- What are they?
- What do they do?
- Who participates?

BY JOHN GULLICK AND SANDY CURRIE

Boating Industry Canada wondered if the broad mass of marine industry professionals were aware of what takes place at the CMAC and RBAC meetings between people from our industry and the corresponding government personnel. We invited John Gullick and Sandy Currie who both regularly attend these meetings, to give our Boating Industry Canada readers a brief overview.

Andy Adams - Editor



The question this article attempts to answer is: How do recreational boaters in Canada, (of which there are 5-6 million) and Transport Canada go about communicating with each other?

First there is a twice yearly (May and November) National CMAC that is hosted by Transport Canada (TC). It draws in all those with an interest in things marine, both pleasure and commercial. The focus is usually on more operational issues.

The meetings are very much a combination of useful bi-directional information sharing and discussions, working groups and standing committees, some that work well and some not so well. Some attendees are well informed, while others have limited actual subject knowledge. There are many active participants while others just listen.

At National CMAC there is a Recreational Boating Standing

Committee set up to discuss issues specifically related to all forms of recreational boating. Often it is a "show and tell" session featuring Transport Canada (TC) staff letting the group know the current status of the specific files they are working on. In a one-day session there is often little time to discuss these issues, let alone fully understand them. Occasionally a cord is struck or a nerve is hit that can result in some constructive debate or some pointed negative feedback.

Lately, within Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety and Ship Safety there have been several permanent and temporary staff changes that we feel has resulted in a slowing of the work processes while new or temporary staff get up to speed. Another drawback is that some groups are not present at CMAC: cottagers associations, anglers and hunters, paddlers/kayakers to name a few. With the exception of some of the marine trades associations and the occasional manufacturer there are often very few industry people present.

The national CMAC is preceded by Regional CMAC meetings on the coasts, in Quebec and Ontario. Though unlikely, this may be the reason that there is little representation at the national CMAC from outside Ontario. The national CMAC can often be a broader repeat of regional CMAC meetings that have the advantage of a more local input and focus. TC often uses the regional CMACs as consultation sessions and there is frequently useful and important debate.

To ensure that your voice is heard, ask your Transport Canada office when the next meetings are and get yourself invited!

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* Discover Boating Canada, The Economic Impact of Recreational Boating in Canada, 2006 Summary Report

