



2023

# Impact Report



# 2023 Year In Review

## January

- MRAA Releases 2023 Advocacy Priorities
- J.D. Power, MRAA Partner for Quarterly Market Insights
- MRAA Installs 2023 Board of Directors, New Chair
- 2023 Continuous Certification Launches

## February

- MRAA Launches Updated Strategic Roadmap
- MRAA Announces 6 New Members of Young Leaders Advisory Council
- MRAA Adds 4 New Employees
- Discover Boating Recognized with Neptune Award for Best Integrated Marketing

## March

- MRAA Releases 8 Special Edition Dealer Week Podcasts
- Discover Boating Hosts Webinar on Barriers, Opportunities of Next Generation Boaters

## April

- MRAA Spotlights The Key to Effective Onboarding & High Retention Rates

## May

- Marine Industry Association of Central Florida Adds MRAA Membership Benefit
- MRAA Attends American Boating Congress
- Minnesota Passes Landmark Mandatory Boater Education Legislation

## June

- “Guide to a World-Class Customer Experience” Released

## July

- Skier’s Choice, Centurion Supreme Announce National Dealer Meetings at Dealer Week
- Dealer Week 2023 Registration Opens
- Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership Announced in Minnesota

## August

- MRAA Adds New Director of Government Relations
- MRAA Announces Dealer Week Education Pathway Hosts
- DiscoverBoating.com Upgrades Consumer Experience
- MRAA Launches Service Management Study
- MRAA Adds 15 Partner Members, A Single-Month Record

## September

- MRAA Educational Foundation Releases Call for 2023 Scholarships, Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year Award
- MRAA Adds 3 New Dealer Certification Consultants

## October

- MRAA Announces 2023 Expo Hall to Feature Most Exhibitors, Largest Floor Space in Dealer Week History
- MRAA Hires 2 New Roles for Education Team

## November

- MRAA, ABYC Launch Service Management Certification Program
- MRAA, 700Credit Launch Guide to Fraud Detection & Prevention
- MRAA Joins National Safe Boating Council Board of Directors

## December

- MRAA Introduces “Aimie,” AI-powered Content Delivery
- Michele Goldsmith Named Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year
- Zachary Meyer Named Duane Spader Leadership Development Scholarship Recipient
- Jennifer Haning Named 2023 Kevin Lodder Scholarship Recipient
- MRAA Dealer Week Conference & Expo Smashes Attendance Records
- Boat Dealers Exempt from New FTC Auto Regulations
- 22 Dealers Named Great Dealerships to Work For

# A Note from MRAA's President

In many ways, 2023 represented a pivotal year for the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas. The previous spring, our team spent two days huddled with about 50 of the smartest people in the marine industry — dealers, manufacturers, suppliers and service providers, in addition to other association leaders — to create a three-year Strategic Roadmap to guide our work. As you would expect from a group of leaders in this industry, MRAA came away with an extremely ambitious agenda.

This report covers the accomplishments MRAA made in 2023, the first year of that plan, and I believe when you read through them, you will agree that the MRAA team and its partners were successful in kicking off a consequential new era for the MRAA, for boat dealers, and for our great industry.

In particular, you'll see that we placed even more emphasis on our Advocacy work, thanks to the support of our all-new Diamond Ambassador Program. We also added a significant new education program with the launch of the Service Management Certification Program — a significant focal point our strategy meeting participants encouraged us to prioritize. And we took a big step into the future with the introduction of Aimie, MRAA's AI-powered marine industry assistant.

By year-end, 2023 became a milestone year for the association by nearly every metric, with records set related to Dealer Membership, Partner Membership, Certification participation, online training participation, Dealer Week exhibits and attendees, and advocacy-related victories.

The MRAA's mission to fuel the success of our dealers and our industry has never been more impactful, and this report underscores the wins, the milestones, and the opportunities we're still chasing.

In the meantime, we are always seeking partners who believe in our mission and want to support the critical work we conduct for the marine industry. If you have not yet looked at ways to collaborate with the MRAA, I hope this Annual Impact Report will help you find an area where you can plug your organization in and contribute to MRAA's growing impact.

- Matt Gruhn



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Boat Dealers Exempt from New FTC Auto Regulations

MRAA Adds 6 New Staff

Certification Flourishes With New 7-Week Format

MRAA, ABYC Launch Service Management Certification Program

Discover Boating Recognized with Neptune Award for Best Integrated Marketing Campaign

Retail Membership Reaches All-Time High

Partner Membership Surges

Manufacturers Select Dealer Week to Host 2023 Dealer Meetings

MRAA Introduces "Aimie," AI-powered Content Delivery

Dealer Week Breaks Records

MRAA Partnership Recognition

# New Year, New Board of Directors

MRAA began 2023 with a new roster of board members as well as a new board chair.

Jeff Strong, President of Strong's Marine in New York, assumed the role of Chair of the MRAA Board of Directors. Strong has owned Strong's Marine since 1992, growing the family-owned business into an eight-location dealership with 200 employees during peak summer months.

Additional 2023 Executive Committee officers are Vice Chair Joe Lewis of Mount Dora

Boating Center in Florida; Secretary/Treasurer Craig Brosenne of Hagadone Marine Group in Idaho; and Immediate Past Chair Rob Soucy of Port Harbor Marine in Maine.

New 2023 additions to the MRAA Board of Directors included Brandon Sharpe of Arrowhead Yacht Club & Marina in Oklahoma, Region 9 Director (AR, LA, OK, TX); and Susan Duquette of Lakeview Marine in Massachusetts, a new Director At Large representing MRAA's Young Leaders Advisory Council.

## MRAA's 2023 Board of Directors



PRESIDENT

**Jeff Strong**  
Strong's Marine



VICE CHAIR

**Joe Lewis**  
Mount Dora Boating Center



SECRETARY/TREASURER

**Craig Brosenne**  
Hagadone Marine Group



IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

**Rob Soucy**  
Port Harbor Marine



REGION 1

**Craig LeBlanc**  
Allen Harbor Marine Service



REGION 2

**Bob Petzold**  
Petzold's Marine Center



REGION 3

**Jason Murphy**  
Norfolk Marine



REGION 4

**Stacy Greenwood**  
Cleveland Boat Center



REGION 5

**Paul Berube**  
Boaters Exchange



REGION 6

**Chad Taylor**  
Taylor's South Shore Marine



REGION 7

**Jason Shallcross**  
Reed's Marine



REGION 8

**Jeff Siems**  
Blue Springs Marine



REGION 9

**Brandon Sharpe**  
Arrowhead Yacht Club & Marina



REGION 10

**Bob Bense**  
Superior Boat Repair & Sales



REGION 11

**Carly Poole**  
Buckeye Marine



DIRECTOR AT LARGE, YLAC

**Susan Duquette**  
Lakeview Marine

# Young Leaders Advisory Council Adds New Voices

MRAA maintains a Young Leaders Advisory Council (YLAC) to gather input from young marine professionals. Susan Duquette served as 2023 YLAC Chair and welcomed six new members to the council.

The council's mission is to supplement and support the MRAA Board of Directors of the MRAA. Throughout the year, the group developed several resources for dealers as well as provided input that guided the MRAA strategic decision making. A current list of YLAC members, as well as resources created by the group, is available at [mraa.com/young-leaders-advisory-council](http://mraa.com/young-leaders-advisory-council).

## 2023 Resources Developed by YLAC

- Why Join MRAA Flyer
- Incentives and Discounts Flyer
- Why Work in Boating Flyer

A large, bold, light blue number '6' is centered on a dark blue background.

**NEW**  
Members

A large, bold, white number '3' is centered on a red background.

**NEW**  
Resources



# STRONGER TOGETHER

**You don't have to go it alone.**  
With the MRAA, you get access to resources, tools, and industry insights — and a vast network of dealers working through the same problems you are. Join us.



"MRAA membership is important for Marine Retailers because **as a group we are stronger.** There are countless examples of regulatory challenges on the state and federal level, and for our voices to be heard we need to stand together. The MRAA gives us the power to face challenges that may threaten the way we do business."



**Susan Dupette**  
Lakeside Marine

"Why be a member? Being a member of MRAA is an **AMAZING education opportunity** for all your staff. It helps in staying up to date with issues across the US. And it's a great networking opportunity at Dealer Week."



**Wendy Ramsey**  
Pivate Cove Marine Inc

"Join MRAA so you can join your fellow peers and business folks to share ideas, struggles, and hardships. By doing so you can let others learn from your shortcomings, mistakes, and successes all while learning the same from others in MRAA. It's also good to **have a lifeline for networking.**"



**J Harless**  
Reeder Yacht Marine

"I think **MRAA is a great networking tool for dealerships.** I am seeing a lot of ownership change overs in my area and think it's a great resource to find other marinas under brand new ownership, dealing with not having an exit strategy, or any other state of their current business that they may be facing issues with."



**Ashlyn LaGrande Olson**  
Hutchinson's Boat Works, Inc.

"Elevating all staff with the training programs available leads to increased efficiencies in all aspects of a dealers business — from sales to service. As we head into tougher times, it is going to become **more important than ever as efficiency adds dollars to the bottom line.**"



**Kenda Konrad**  
Harrington Distribution Finance

Scan this QR Code, or visit [mraa.com/join-mraa](http://mraa.com/join-mraa) to learn more about the benefits membership and join today!

## → Why Join MRAA Flyer

# MRAA Benefits & Discounts

**MRAA MEMBER**

### MRAA Programs

- MRAA Dealership Certification**  
MRAA Members are encouraged to improve their operations, employee engagement and customer experience by becoming Certified Dealerships and are offered a member discount to enroll. Dealers may also get support from their manufacturers to get Certified. These dealers earn additional benefits once they become Certified. To learn more, visit [mraa.com/get-certified](http://mraa.com/get-certified).
- MRAA/ADVC Service Management Certification**  
MRAA Retail Members receive discounts on the Service Management Certification program, which is the first in a series of position-specific certifications planned for development. Learn more about how to become certified and its benefits at: [mraa.com/ServiceCertification](http://mraa.com/ServiceCertification).
- MRAA Training.com**  
MRAA Silver and Gold members gain access to over 260 courses on sales, marketing, leadership, management, F&B, customer service, the service department and more! You can search by topic, speaker, and keywords to find tailored, boat business content to help improve your dealership.
- Dealer Week**  
MRAA Members receive hefty discounts on Dealer Week registration, saving you up to **\$40 per person**.
- MRAA Health**  
Receive significant savings on your company's insurance benefits with this Member-Only health care program. The average savings MRAA members are quoted is **\$2,000 per employee, per year**. MRAA members have had opportunities to save upwards of **\$40,000 to \$80,000 per year**.
- MRAA Data Center**  
Exclusive access to our monthly Pulse Report which helps to identify today's trends and dealer sentiment helping you to make more informed decisions for your business. Also, members can access our quarterly Marine Market Insights Report, produced in conjunction with J.D. Power.
- MRAA Career Center**  
The Career Center connects employers and job seekers to find careers within the marine industry.
- MRAA Virtual Business Development Center**  
CSI Inc. manages the MRAA VDBC program. When enrolled, your customers receive personalized thank you emails, telephone calls to survey experience, and you receive actionable feedback to uplift and resolve issues quick saving your team time and money.
- Succession Planning Toolkit**  
MRAA members get **exclusive access** to the Succession Planning Toolkit Guide made in Partnership with Spader Business Planning, Stacey International, The Rawls Business Group and Bellina Blatt, PC.
- Aimie**  
MRAA's exciting new technology that bundles up years of expertise and education. Available to Silver and Gold members only.


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- PartnerShip**  
MRAA Members receive exclusive discounts on inbound and outbound shipments of all sizes. Members have saved anywhere from \$500 to over \$10,000 per year on inbound and outbound shipping.
- Paycor**  
Paycor's online payroll and HR software is an easy-to-use, yet powerful tool that can quickly and easily pay employees, eliminate concerns about tax compliance, all while exploring more ways to save you money.
- PRIORITY ONE**  
Flexible, business forward finance and insurance solutions for your dealership. Leverage industry-leading technology to simplify your customer's path to purchase while you **earn more reserve**.
- ROLICK**  
A great resource for your marketing. Rollick's program generates high quality leads for your dealership and provides you with best-in-class lead response tools and concierge services to deliver an exceptional buying and ownership experience for the customer.
- SEA TOW**  
Receive access to exclusive, value added, membership options that can be included with the sale of a boat, including MRAA discounts on SeaTow membership.
- SHURHOLD**  
MRAA members **save \$66 - \$1,000** on your initial order. Full-color, high-resolution wrap-around printed buckets are the perfect branding opportunity for Stores, Dealers, and Boat Builders.
- Spader Business Management**  
The endorsed 20 Group provider of the MRAA - Access dealership best practices, financial insights and business performance strategies.
- Wells Fargo**  
MRAA members receive Payment Processing **special rates and discounts** from Wells Fargo, even if you already use Wells Fargo.

# WHY WORK IN BOATING?

There are many industries you could look to for a career. Why pick boating? Job opportunity is vast, and whether your interest is business, sales, design, working with your hands, marketing, inventing, there's a job for you. Here's a list of reasons why we think it's a fun industry to be in.

- + You get to work outside in nature.
- + You're frequently meeting new people.
- + Work events are often "on the water."
- + It's easy to take vacations around the holidays.
- + "Depending on where you live, it can be easy to take time off in the winter."
- + You can be the first to see or test new products.
- + You get to introduce people to how fun boating is.
- + You are helping to create lasting memories.
- + **Test driving new boats on the water is a lot of fun.**
- + There's the opportunity to travel to different places.
- + If you are a tech, your number works around the world
- + **Advocating for what you love and enjoy doing!**
- + You could be a captain of a boat and travel around the world.
- + **It feels good doing work you are passionate about.**
- + It's creative — creating and designing new products ... engines, boats.
- + You get to work with your hands.
- + **YOU'RE NEVER BORED.**
- + **Boating is fun — we sell fun for a living.**
- + There's a career for everything — technicians, marketing, business, engineering, inventing



## → Why Work in Boating Flyer

# Updated Strategic Roadmap Kicks Off

Prior to the start of 2023, the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas finalized a three-year strategic plan that seeks to further strengthen how the association fuels the success of the marine industry. Through expanded dealer training and educational programs and a focus on higher levels of industry engagement, MRAA's plan put an overarching emphasis on helping the industry deliver a world-class customer experience.

The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan resulted from collaborative efforts and a two-day meeting among MRAA staff, its board of directors, members of its Young Leaders Advisory Council, and its Strategic Partners. The group of nearly 50 people sifted through multiple MRAA member and non-member surveys and more than 45 individual, one-on-one dealer conversations.

The plan's strategic roadmap provides insights into tactical work that MRAA will focus on, such as building new education and training programs, creating retail data dashboards, and efforts to reduce industrywide Repair Event Cycle Times. The group also put a major focus on driving engagement levels with MRAA's

programs. Those efforts include promoting the benefits of Dealership Certification, both throughout the industry and to consumers; sharing the immense value of MRAA's work on behalf of dealers and the industry; and becoming an even stronger dealer development option for manufacturers and suppliers.

Participation in the MRAA strategic planning process included MRAA Strategic Partners Bennington Marine/Polaris, Boats Group, Brunswick Dealer Advantage, Correct Craft, Lightspeed, Malibu Boats, Inc., Smokercraft, Inc., Volvo Penta, Wells Fargo, Yamaha Marine Group, the National Marine Manufacturers Association and the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation. Dealer participation included representatives from Allen Harbor Marine, Boaters Exchange, Buckeye Marine, Cleveland Boat Center, Hagadone Marine Group, Hoffmaster's Marina, Lakeview Marine, MarineMax, Mount Dora Boating Center, Inc., OneWater Marine, Petzold's Marine, Port Harbor Marine, Reed's Marine, Strong's Marine, Superior Boat Repair & Sales, and Taylor's South Shore Marine.



MRAA Staff and Partners gather at an annual strategy meeting hosted at IBEX 2023. A similar meeting in 2022 resulted in MRAA's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.



## MRAA Strategic Priorities

- Expand solutions that drive dealer success
- Engage more dealers and manufacturers in MRAA's programs
- Promote marine retail strength through data, advocacy

# Increased Focus on Data

## J.D. Power, MRAA Create Quarterly Market Insights

MRAA's efforts in 2023 were driven by the goals of the Strategic Plan.

In pursuit of the association's goal to better utilize data to strengthen the industry, MRAA announced a new data-driven partnership with J.D. Power – Specialty Vehicles.

This collaboration between J.D. Power and the MRAA was designed to help marine dealers make better business decisions through quarterly market insights reports and analysis, with data such as average retail value by boat type and model year, most researched brands, top researched model years by boat category, fuel price data, and web traffic by state.

MRAA Retail Members have access to the Marine Market Insights Reports within the MRAA Resource Center on MRAA.com.

## MRAA Launches Service Management Study

In uncertain markets, service departments provide stability in a well-run dealership. They are pivotal in generating cash flow, profits, customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

In 2023, MRAA launched a Service Management Survey to identify and benchmark industry averages and performance levels to help dealership service teams improve.

### Data By The Numbers

**12** 2023 Pulse Reports Available

**10** Years Marine Retailer Sentiment Index covers

# Emphasis on Industry Advocacy

Industry advocacy and government relations has always been a part of MRAA's mission, but in 2023 the association made significant new investments to reinforce its efforts.

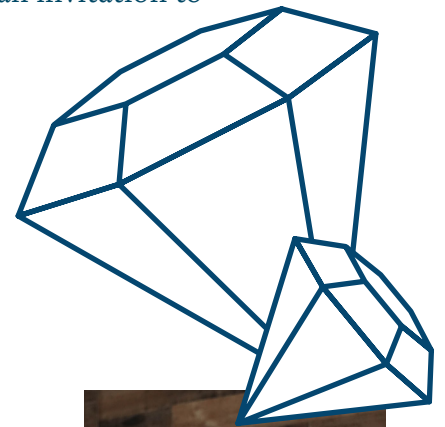
## Diamond Ambassadors

This increased focus was made possible through the support of a new group of members to the association, the Diamond Ambassador members. This new membership level was created for organizations that specifically wanted to invest in MRAA's advocacy work.

In addition to their financial support, Diamond Ambassadors sit on the MRAA Advocacy Council, steering MRAA's legislative and regulatory agenda and receive an invitation to participate in MRAA Strategic Planning Meetings.

### 2023 Diamond Ambassadors

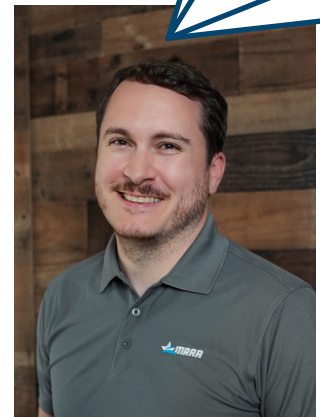
- MarineMax
- OneWater Marine
- Tommy's Boats



## New Director of Government Relations

An immediate impact of the Diamond Ambassadors' support was to bolster MRAA's advocacy team with the addition of Mike Sayre as Director of Government Relations.

Sayre now oversees MRAA's advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., working with MRAA Government Relations Manager, Chad Tokowicz. Throughout the year, the team worked to address critical issues for the industry, such as the Federal Trade Commission's proposed Auto Rule, vessel speed restrictions along the Eastern seaboard and Gulf coast, as well as overall support for the outdoor recreation economy and workforce.



Sayre came to the MRAA with seven years of experience working for the American Motorcyclist Association where he ran the AMA's government relations team and grassroots advocacy efforts on recreation and infrastructure issues. He has a Master's of Public Policy from Michigan State University and a Bachelor's in Political Science from the University of Michigan.



## 2023 ACMA Resolutions

As in previous years, the MRAA Board of Directors began the year by announcing its legislative and regulatory advocacy priorities as recommended by the Advisory Council of Marine Associations (ACMA).

An integral part of the MRAA's advocacy efforts, ACMA was created to advise MRAA on its annual policy agenda and comprises state, regional and national marine trade associations. ACMA helps highlight the MRAA's collaborative approach to working on issues impacting the industry at large and its dedication to championing the dealer voice.

The ACMA resolutions provide direction and guidance for the MRAA's advocacy efforts and highlight the importance of collaboration between state and national organizations in tackling overlapping priorities. State marine trade association involvement allows for direct stakeholder input, providing MRAA staff a comprehensive understanding of the issues impacting dealers throughout the country.

### 2023 Resolutions

- *Create an Advocate for state and federal programs to assist with marine industry workforce development.*
- *Support and inform preexisting external workforce development efforts.*
- *Seek marine industry and dealer exemptions from proposed overburdensome legislative and regulatory action.*
- *Advocate for waterways access and policies to minimize user conflict.*

## American Boating Congress

Each year, the recreational boating industry gathers in Washington, D.C., for the American Boating Congress (ABC) hosted by the National Marine Manufacturers Association and industry co-sponsors, including MRAA. In 2023, MRAA staff, members of the Board of Directors and several retail members brought marine industry issues to Capitol Hill for one-on-one conversations with lawmakers.

In 2023, Members of Congress including Representatives Garret Graves (R-LA-06) and Pete Stauber (R-MN-08) as well as Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kevin Cramer (R-ND) provided key Congressional insights for attendees of ABC. Several members of Congress also confirmed their support for recreational boating industry and its policy priorities while discussing current challenges this Congress.

One of the main topics of discussion at ABC was the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule. Expert speakers provide an overview of the rule as well as expectations for moving forward. A newly created Whale and Vessel Safety Task Force also shared industry efforts to build solutions to create a safer boating environment, while maintaining access and minimalizing the impact to Right Whales. Finally, Sen. Manchin provided a rousing speech promising to fight NOAA's proposal on behalf of the marine industry.

During meetings on Capitol Hill, MRAA members met with their members of Congress to discuss a variety of MRAA policy priorities as well as issues directly impacting their business, like shortages in the marine industry workforce, concerns with dealership regulation, and impediments to access, including the proposed speed restriction.



MRAA Government Relations Manager, Chad Tokowicz, and MRAA Board of Directors Vice Chair, Joe Lewis, in Washington D.C. for ABC in 2023.

### American Boating Congress By The Numbers

# 250

**STAKEHOLDERS**  
Attended The American  
Boating Congress

# 4

Current Members of  
**CONGRESS**  
Presented at ABC

## Minnesota Passes Landmark Mandatory Boater Education Legislation

MRAA celebrated the successful passage of Mandatory Boater Education Legislation in its home state of Minnesota. This landmark legislation marks a significant step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of boaters and all who enjoy aquatic recreation throughout the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

The new law, signed by Governor Tim Walz, uses a phase-in approach to eventually require nearly every boater in Minnesota to complete a boater-education course and obtain a boater-education card before operating a motorized watercraft. The legislation is the result of collaborative efforts between the recreational boating industry, boating safety advocates and lawmakers who recognized the importance of promoting safe boating practices throughout Minnesota. The MRAA aligned with the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the Water Sports Industry Association and local Minnesota stakeholders to successfully pass the bill.



**Did You Know?**

There are

**800,000**

**REGISTERED BOATS IN MINNESOTA**

Beginning in

**2028**

Minnesota will require anyone born on or after July 1, 1987, to receive a boater education certificate.



## MRAA Representative added to National Safe Boating Council

Continuing MRAA's focus on boater safety, Chad Tokowicz, MRAA Government Relations Manager, was appointed to the National Safe Boating Council's (NSBC) Board of Directors.

Founded in 1958, the NSBC serves as a national catalyst for developing a safe boating culture by providing education, programming and training for industry partners and the boating community to influence safe, secure and responsible boating. Tokowicz was appointed as an at-large Board member by the current NSBC Chair, Alan Dennison of the BoatUS Foundation, to provide a retail perspective and ensure that boating safety tenets permeate the recreational boating industry.



*MRAA's Chad Tokowicz out on the water with the NSBC Board of Directors at the strategic planning session in 2023.*


## Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership Announced in Minnesota

In July, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT), and Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) announced a partnership to enhance and expand Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy for the social and economic benefit of all Minnesotans.

The Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership will combine each agency's individual strengths — natural resource management, economic development, and marketing — to connect individuals and communities to outdoor recreation resources, build coalitions, and communicate significant benefits of outdoor recreation.

The partnership will build on previous work by the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Task Force, in which MRAA participated, and Governor's Council on Economic Expansion.

**\$10  
BILLION**  
Minnesota's Outdoor  
Recreation Economy



**More Than**  
**3,500**  
**BOAT DEALERSHIPS**  
**Remain Unharmed by**  
**FTC Auto Regulations**

## **Boat Dealers Exempt from New FTC Auto Regulations**

The MRAA collaborated with the RV Dealers Association, the National Powersports Dealer Association, a number of state-based marine trades associations, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy and more, to voice its opposition to the FTC's Auto Rule, ultimately making the case for an exemption.

The FTC first issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking related to motor vehicle shopping in June 2022, and the original rule did not explicitly exclude marine retailers, causing concern within the industry due to the potential cost and burden of compliance. In its original form, the Auto Rule would have required marine dealers to fundamentally change the way they do business and subjected them to an entirely new regulatory scheme. Additionally, the MRAA was concerned about the potential economic impact on marine retailers and other small businesses because the FTC failed to complete a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis to determine the economic impact.

The final language of the Auto Rule, renamed the Combating Auto Retail Scams (CARS) Rule, explicitly exempts marine retailers and other non-automotive dealers thanks to the advocacy efforts of MRAA and its coalition partners requesting that our industry be exempted from the burdensome requirements of the rule. This exemption represents a huge victory for MRAA's advocacy efforts and recreational boat dealers.

# MRAA Adds 6 New Staff

The MRAA grew significantly in 2023, adding six full-time staff members. The new team members were added throughout the organization, with roles in education, marketing, sales, membership and advocacy.

## **Grace Schmidt** **Design Coordinator**

Schmidt coordinates and executes design projects, including graphics, publications and advertisements, related to MRAA marketing and education-based deliverables. Schmidt, who holds a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design, has professional experience as a freelance designer and artist. In her free time, she loves painting, playing cards with her family and exploring new cities with friends.



## **Angela Murphy** **Online Education Manager**

Murphy manages MRAATraining.com, MRAA's Continuous Certification Curriculum, Dealer Week Online, and other e-learning products. Murphy, who has a Master's Degree in Education with a focus in Technology Integration, brings a wealth of educational proficiency, having served as a schoolteacher for many years. Outside of work, she enjoys crafting and spending time with her family. Her idea of the perfect day is floating on the lake in the family boat.



## **Gabrielle Ronnenberg** **Sales & Marketing Specialist**

Ronnenberg oversees deliverables for MRAA's Partner Memberships and Dealer Week exhibitors and works with the MRAA sales and marketing teams on special projects. Ronnenberg, who holds a bachelor's degree in Global Communication and Media Studies, has previous expertise in customer service, marketing and communications roles for legal, medical, tax and accounting and non-profit industries. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, participating in outdoor activities and drawing.



# MRAA Adds 6 New Staff

## **Jennifer McLachlan** **Membership Specialist**

McLachlan creates, implements and monitors member onboarding, engagement and retention plans for MRAA. McLachlan, who has a degree in Marketing and Professional Sales, previously worked for a boat dealer as a service writer and warranty administrator. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, reading, boating and baking.



## **Bernie DeGraw** **Senior Education Developer**

DeGraw works closely with the MRAA Education Team to develop new educational opportunities for MRAA Members, leveraging his valuable experience managing a marine dealership. He holds a bachelor's degree in English and a Master's in School Counseling. DeGraw will maintain his role as part owner of FLX Marine in the Finger Lakes of Central New York. He spends his free time with his family, boating and reading.



## **Carolyn Howell** **Education Coordinator**

Howell is a recent college graduate who joined MRAA after completing an internship with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. She brings a strong editorial and design background to her role, where she supports MRAA's education efforts on behalf of retailers. Howell is an avid outdoor enthusiast who enjoys hiking, boating, fishing and exploring the Twin Cities with her friends.



# Certification Flourishes With New 7-Week Format

In early 2022, MRAA introduced the Seven-Week Certification Webinar Series, working with groups of dealerships to help them complete Certification in a concentrated, seven-week period. That change has made a huge impact on dealers and the program. The webinar series launch, along with support from several boat and engine manufacturers, helped Dealership Certification enrollment double from 2021 to 2022 and Certification completion rise to 97 percent.

In 2023, that momentum continued, taking the program to new heights and certifying an amazing 71 new dealerships.

To support the growth of the program, Certification brought on three new consultants to keep up with demand. The new additions nearly doubled MRAA's team of consultants, all of whom distribute best practices, tools, resources and provide sound advice to the dealers within Certification. Existing program consultants include Steve Jones, Zane Stevenson and Rallee Chupich. The team is led by Bob McCann, Lead Certification Consultant and industry veteran.

## New Certification Consultants

### **Kurt Von Ahnen**

Von Ahnen, who has nearly 30 years of experience in powersports and automotive, has created the “Mañana No Mas!” membership, a learning and community-based platform service, as well as his Powersports Academy education portal. A certified speaker, trainer and coach, Von Ahnen has spoken at marine dealer events and looks forward to expanding his marine industry reach. Additionally, he spoke on leadership and service and parts in two Dealer Week 2023 educational sessions.

### **Paula Crosbie and Dixie Morrow**

Crosbie and Morrow, partners at PCLM Business Solutions, each have nearly 20 years of experience as Lightspeed dealer management system (DMS) trainers. At PCLM, they help dealers with DMS optimization, financials, remote accounting, departmental training and more. Their combined skillsets are a natural fit with the Dealership Certification program because they're well-versed in process mapping and operational improvements.



**2023**

**Dealership Certification By The Numbers**

**3**

**New Certification  
Consultants**

**22**

**Total Great  
Dealerships  
to Work For**

**71**

**New Dealerships  
Certified in 2023**

**335**

**Total Certified  
Dealership  
Locations**

# MRAA, ABYC Launch Service Management Certification Program

Fulfilling one of the most pressing needs identified in MRAA's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, the MRAA in collaboration with the American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) launched an all-new Service Management Certification program, which they partnered to develop.

This program, which includes an 11-course online training program with downloadable workbook, a printed study guide, and a proctored exam, was created under the guidance of experienced service managers. Those professionals, including dealership and boatyard service managers and boat engine manufacturers, guided MRAA and ABYC's curriculum development to address the many common pain points that service management faces, including workforce challenges, customer communication breakdowns, and efficiency and profitability killers.

The certification program, tailored for marine service professionals, was built to serve business owners, operations directors, service managers, shop foremen, parts managers, service advisors and others involved in service management who seek to develop their skills and results.

About 70 people took the program's pilot exam in 2023, and the program is full speed ahead for 2024 certifications.



# Discover Boating, Powered By MRAA and NMMA, Recognized with Neptune Award for Best Integrated Marketing Campaign

MRAA partners with the National Marine Manufacturers Association to manage Discover Boating, the industry's consumer awareness campaign.

In 2023, Discover Boating's "See You Out Here" campaign was recognized with a Neptune Award for best integrated marketing campaign. The winners were announced by the Marine Marketers of America (MMA), the association for marketing professionals in the recreational marine industry, at the Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show.

MRAA powers a Dealer Finder tool on the DiscoverBoating.com website, which is designed to connect interested boaters with retailers in their area. As Discover Boating's campaigns drive more interest in boating, dealers stand to benefit from increased awareness.





**Discover Boating By The Numbers**



**3.6**

**BILLION**

Impressions Generated

**11.8**

**MILLION**

Dollars in Media Value

**8000**

**THOUSAND**

Followers on Social Media

**7.7**

**MILLION**

Social Influencer Engagements

**5.4**

**MILLION**

Visits to DiscoverBoating.com

# Retail Membership Reaches All-Time High

The core of MRAA's mission is to help boat retailers become more successful, and that starts with its members. For that reason, MRAA is always looking to reach out and engage with more dealerships, and by that metric the association was very successful in 2023. During the year, MRAA reached an all-time high watermark for its number of retail members. The association currently represents more than 1,200 dealership locations.

That growth was fueled by the hard work of MRAA's membership team, the support of its partners, and continued excitement surrounding Dealer Week.

As a testament to the value of MRAA membership, the Board of Directors of the Marine Industry Association of Central Florida (MIACF) approved a new benefit for all MIACF Members that includes a free, 1-year membership to the MRAA. That added 15 new Bronze Members who could receive access to MRAA's core benefits, resources and partner programs, providing each business with ample opportunities for growth and improvement.





## Retail Membership By The Numbers

**40%**

**PERCENT INCREASE**  
In Retail Members since 2019

**123**

**MEMBERS**  
Joined in 2023

**1200**

**DEALERSHIP**  
Locations Represented Total



# Partner Membership Surges

MRAA's Partner Members are marine manufacturers, suppliers and service providers who commit to aligning their brands with the programs and opportunities MRAA offers in its efforts to fuel the success of the marine industry. Support from Partners allows the Association to expand its offerings and create a positive, long-term impact on MRAA member businesses.

In 2023, Partner Membership reached new levels with 160 companies joining the MRAA at some level. MRAA's highest level of engagement, Strategic Partner, remains sold out. However, every other level saw growth, with 2 partners upgrading to Education Champion, 15 new Platinum Partners, and 41 new Standard Partners.

Additionally, in the month of August, MRAA added 15 new Partner Members, establishing an all-time high for a single month.

# RECORD



# BREAKING



**Partner Membership By The Numbers**

**12**

**Strategic  
Partners**

**10**

**Education  
Champions**

**34**

**Platinum  
Partners**

**104**

**Standard  
Partners**

# Manufacturers Select Dealer Week to Host 2023 Dealer Meetings

In 2022, for the first time MRAA's Dealer Week Conference and Expo co-located with a boat manufacturer's annual dealer meeting, when Smokercraft hosted its meeting at Dealer Week in Austin, Texas.

In 2023, two dealer meetings were hosted in conjunction with Dealer Week. Skier's Choice, manufacturer of Supra and Moomba performance inboard wakeboard and waterski towboats, as well as Centurion & Supreme Boats brought their dealer networks to Tampa, Fla.

“We are very excited this year to be combining our Skier's Choice national dealer meeting with MRAA's Dealer Week. Every year we look for guest speakers with a powerful message to come to our dealer meeting, so this year we are bringing our dealers to those speakers. Our meetings are not just about our products, but we also like to train their entire dealerships on how we can all improve and grow in every aspect of the dealership. Combining with Dealer Week gives us a great opportunity to focus on our products with our dealers and then give them a great opportunity to educate their entire staff on how to be the best dealership possible by utilizing the Dealer Week training.”

- Chris Crysdale, VP Marketing & Sales at Skier's Choice

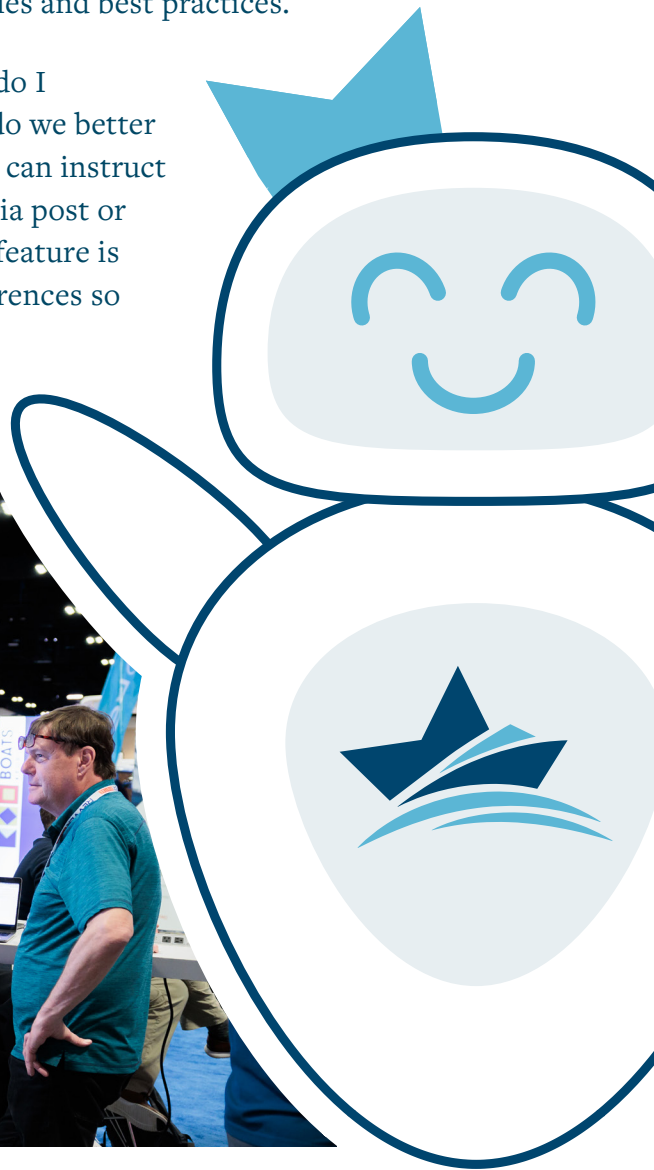


# MRAA Introduces “Aimie,” AI-powered Content Delivery

The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas introduced an artificial intelligence-powered content delivery system that will revolutionize how MRAA Members can find answers to their most pressing challenges and opportunities — and will do so faster than ever before.

Introduced at Dealer Week, the platform is known as Aimie, an acronym for “AI for Marine Industry Education.” Aimie has been trained on MRAA’s vast catalog of dealership-specific content, which means the AI can access MRAA’s online courses, blogs, publications, webinars and websites in order to answer dealer questions and share insights, strategies and best practices.

Dealership employees can ask Aimie questions such as, “How do I overcome objections to today’s high interest rates?” or “How do we better manage our inventory levels?” Similarly, dealership employees can instruct Aimie to create something on their behalf such as a social media post or a job description for a new position. But perhaps Aimie’s best feature is that it then also provides direct links to the resources she references so dealerships can dive deeper and learn more about the topic they asked about.



# Dealer Week Breaks Records

More than 1,500 marine industry professionals attended the 2023 Dealer Week Conference and Expo, held Dec. 4-7 in Tampa, Fla., establishing records for total registration, dealership attendance, number of exhibitors and expo hall floor space coverage.

Dealership attendance set a new high-water mark at 721 dealership personnel, while total attendance improved by 15 percent, surpassing 1,500 total attendees for the first time in the event's history. The 150 Expo Hall booths and 18 dock slips sold out, contributing to the largest show floor in the event's history. More than 40 first-time exhibitors showcased booths at the Tampa Convention Center and 45-plus boat brands were represented. Additional manufacturers, exhibitors and suppliers wanting to exhibit already make up a waiting list for Dealer Week 2024.

For the first time in history two manufacturers – Centurion & Supreme and Skier's Choice – held annual dealer meetings in conjunction with Dealer Week. Additionally, a pre-event Service Management Workshop, designed to share data, education and insight to help navigate issues, reduce team stress and boost dealership success, sold out.

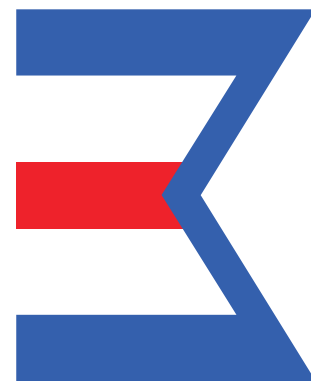
## DEALER WEEK WAS A







**MORE THAN**  
**1,500**  
**Total Attendees**



**15%**  
**INCREASE**  
**in Total Attendance**

**150**  
**EXPO HALL**  
**Exhibits**

**MORE THAN**  
**700**  
**DEALERSHIP PERSONNEL**

**18**  
**ON WATER**  
**Exhibits**

THE MRAA IS PROUD TO PARTNER  
 WITH THESE **STRATEGIC PARTNERS** —  
 LEADING THE WAY FOR DEALER SUCCESS.



The MRAA is proud to partner with these  
**Education Champions** — leading the way for dealer growth.



In 2023, the MRAA was supported by a **record number of Platinum and Partner members**. MRAA is grateful to all our partners for making the work detailed in this report possible.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>AppOne, Inc.</b>                                   | BMO (formerly Bank of the West)           | Medart Marine                                  |
| <b>Avalon Pontoons</b>                                | Boat Fix                                  | Merrick Bank                                   |
| <b>Bellavia Blatt, PC</b>                             | Boat Marketing Pros                       | Mocama Marine                                  |
| <b>Bentley Pontoons</b>                               | Boat Outfitters                           | MOTOTV Network                                 |
| <b>BoatUS</b>   | BoatChat                                  | National Marine Lenders Association            |
| <b>Boatzon</b>  | BoatHistoryReport.com                     | National Powersport Auctions                   |
| <b>Bukaty Companies</b>                               | BoatTEST.com                              | Native Rank Inc.                               |
| <b>CardConnect (formerly Pineapple Payments)</b>      | Boatyard                                  | NauticStar                                     |
| <b>Chaparral Boats / Robalo Boats</b>                 | Bob's Machine                             | Octane Marketing                               |
| <b>Forest River Marine</b>                            | Brand Lab Gear                            | OneSource Financial                            |
| <b>Honda Marine</b>                                   | Capone & Associates                       | Operate Beyond                                 |
| <b>Integrated Dealer Systems</b>                      | CBIZ                                      | Outer Armor by Commercial Sewing               |
| <b>Marcus Sheridan International</b>                  | Chris Craft Boats                         | Parker Business Planning                       |
| <b>Million Learning</b>                               | Consumer Research Solutions               | PartnerShip                                    |
| <b>Montara Boats</b>                                  | Crownline Boats                           | Phoenix Trailers                               |
| <b>Motility Software Solutions</b>                    | Customer Service Intelligence, Inc. (CSI) | Power-Pole                                     |
| <b>Paradigm Boats LLC</b>                             | Dealer OMG (Online Marketing Group)       | Priority One Financial Services                |
| <b>Performance Brokerage Services, Inc.</b>           | Dealer Spike / ARI Network Services       | Radian   |
| <b>Protective Asset Protection</b>                    | DealerRock                                | RecFi, LLC                                     |
| <b>Regulator Marine</b>                               | Dealership Performance 360 CRM            | Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation      |
| <b>Revver Digital</b>                                 | Defiance Boats                            | Red Oak Inventory Finance                      |
| <b>Rollick, Inc.</b>                                  | Derema Group                              | Relentless Dealer Services                     |
| <b>Roswell Marine</b>                                 | Digital Power Solutions                   | Renaissance Marine Group                       |
| <b>Savannah Boat Works</b>                            | DockMaster Software                       | Safer Boater                                   |
| <b>Sea Fox Boat Works</b>                             | DockWorks                                 | SAVA Powered Surfboards USA                    |
| <b>Sea Tow Services International</b>                 | Dr. Shrink, Inc.                          | Sea Pro Boats                                  |
| <b>Shurhold Industries, Inc.</b>                      | DuraLift Marine                           | SeaDek Marine Products                         |
| <b>Spader Business Management</b>                     | Elco Motor Yachts                         | Sebrite Financial                              |
| <b>Stacey International LLC</b>                       | Epic Finance, LLC                         | ServiceGuard Systems, Inc.                     |
| <b>The Rawls Group - Business Succession Planners</b> | Everglades Boats                          | Sheffield Financial, a division of Truist Bank |
| <b>Tiara Yachts</b>                                   | ezDrive Thrusters                         | Shore Premier Finance                          |
| <b>Tigé Boats, Inc.</b>                               | Find It Now GPS Security                  | Soundings Trade Only                           |
| <b>Titan Certified</b>                                | GatorStep                                 | Spectrum Color                                 |
| <b>Vanderbilt Luxury Pontoons, LLC</b>                | Glen Raven, Inc.                          | Stabicraft USA                                 |
| <b>Veranda Luxury Pontoons</b>                        | Grady-White Boats                         | SureShade LLC                                  |
| <b>VRZ Consulting</b>                                 | Highfield Boats                           | Suzuki Marine USA, LLC                         |
| <b>Wheelhouse College</b>                             | Indmar Marine Engines                     | TEXA USA                                       |
| <b>ZiiDMS</b>   | Info-Link Technologies, Inc.              | The Accounting Guys                            |
| 50 State DMV  | Innovative Dealer Services, Inc.          | The Stanek Group at Morgan Stanley             |
| Accelerate2Compliance                                 | Kenect                                    | Total Control Software Corporation             |
| Annapolis Yacht Documentation                         | Kicker Marine Audio                       | Truist Bank                                    |
| Aqua Finance  | LABNation                                 | Ultimar, Inc.                                  |
| Avid Boats  | LaVictoire Finance                        | United States Warranty Corporation             |
| Bank OZK  | Marine Dealer Technologies, Inc.          | Varatti Boats                                  |
| Beachworks LLC  | Marine Wholesale                          | Viaggio Marine                                 |
| Belter Insurance Agency                               | MasterCraft Boat Holdings, Inc.           | VisionAST                                      |
| Beneteau Group America, Inc.                          | Maxima Boats USA                          | Wake Lending                                   |
| BIT Marine Software                                   | Maxwell Medals & Awards                   | Wet Sounds, Inc.                               |
| Blackpurl   | MDS Brand                                 | Winboats                                       |
|   | Medallion Bank                            |  |

\* Names in bold are Platinum Partners