



2024 Year In Review

January

- → MRAA Names 2024 Board of Directors
- → MRAA Announces 2024 Young Leaders Advisory Council
- → MRAA Adds Business Development Specialist

February

- \rightarrow MRAA Board Approves 2024 Advocacy Priorities
- \rightarrow MRAA's Aimie Earns "Best Use of AI" Neptune Award
- → Arizona House Committee Passes Boater Education Legislation
- → Federal Trade Commission Anti-Fraud Rule Supported by Marine Industry

March

- \rightarrow MRAA Sponsors Soundings Trade Only Women's Day Event
- \rightarrow MRAA Speaks Out Against Vessel Speed Rule
- \rightarrow MRAA Sponsors SheMoves Conference to Empower and Elevate Women
- → Arizona House Passes Boater Education Legislation
- → MRAA's Liz Keener Named to Boating Industry's "40 Under 40"

April

- \rightarrow MRAA Partner Perspectives Video Series Offers Marine Industry Insights
- \rightarrow House Passes Historic Bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Package
- \rightarrow MRAA Sponsors Groundbreaking Soundings Trade Only Marine Workplace Research Study

May

- \rightarrow Discover Boating Boat Shows Among USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards
- → Former MLB Star Gary Sheffield Joins Discover Boating's "See You Out Here" Campaign
- \rightarrow MRAA, Association of Marina Industries Meet with White House
- → MRAA Advocates at American Boating Congress
- \rightarrow Dealer Concerns Highlighted at Small Business Legislative Council Fly-In
- \rightarrow Arizona's Rep. Cook Named State Legislator of the Year by MRAA, NMMA

June

- → MRAA Unveils New Legislative Tracker Made Possible by Diamond Ambassador Members
- → Centurion & Supreme Announce 2025 Dealer Meeting at Dealer Week
- \rightarrow Jeff Strong, MRAA Board Chair, Testifies on Capitol Hill

July

- → Dealer Week Registration Opens, MRAA Unveils Theme
- \rightarrow MRAA, ASA Partner to Launch Education Hub within MRAATraining.com
- → National Marine Trades Council Hosts Successful Annual Conference in Stillwater, Minn.
- → Customer Satisfaction Index Awards Honor MRAA Certified Dealerships

August

- \rightarrow Sens. Manchin, Graham Introduce Legislation to Pause Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule
- \rightarrow MRAA Educational Foundation Opens Call for 2024 Award Applications
- → MRAA Adds Senior Director of Engagement
- → New York's Rep. D'Esposito Visits Strong's Marine

September

- \rightarrow MRAA President Highlights Marine Retail Market Outlook at NMLA Conference
- → MRAA Announces Expanded Service Department Special Event to Kick Off Dealer Week

October

- \rightarrow MRAA Launches Service Advisor Certification
- → MRAA Partners with Sportfishing Industry to Advise Next Administration on Policy
- → Dealer Week 2024 Surpasses 400 Dealer Registrations Following Early Bird
- → Discover Boating Video Series Recognized by Sea Tow Foundation in 2024 National Boating Safety Awards

November

- \rightarrow Discover Boating Dealer Finder Drives Increased Users to Dealer Sites in 2024
- → Data Shows Outdoor Recreation a \$1.2 Trillion Economic Engine

December

- \rightarrow MRAA Introduces Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program
- → MRAA Educational Foundation Names Nancy Cueroni 2024 Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year
- \rightarrow 28 Dealers Named Great Dealerships to Work For
- \rightarrow Jeff Strong Recognized for Commitment to Advocacy
- \rightarrow Rob Brown of Clark Marine Named Inaugural Marine Industry Trailblazer
- \rightarrow MRAA Hosts Successful 6th Annual Dealer Week Conference and Expo

A Note from MRAA's President

As you can see from the timeline that kicks off this publication, 2024 was another busy year for your dealer association. The following report will dive into detail on many of those milestones, but in this note I want to concentrate on one announcement you may have missed that I believe will impact this industry in a significant and positive way for many years to come.

In December, MRAA announced the launch of the marine industry's Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program. I want to emphasize a few points about this program. 1) First and foremost, it's a game-changer. 2) It is an example of what great industry collaboration looks like. 3) 2024 was just the start.

Why do I say it's a game-changer? Well, when we get the dealer-manufacturer relationship right, our businesses and our shared customers flourish. Good relationships start with good communication, and in order for us to get the customer experience right, we need dealers and manufacturers to maintain incredibly strong relationships. This Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program provides a framework for communicating expectations, a method for measuring results, and a regular cadence of two-way feedback about how the partners can improve their performance.

The program was developed in consultation with both dealers and manufacturers. MRAA is obviously a dealer-focused organization, and we are in constant communication with our board and members regarding their challenges. However, in 2019 MRAA launched its Strategic Partner program, which has given the association greater insight into the challenges faced by manufacturers, suppliers and service providers. It was feedback from all those stakeholders that sparked the idea for this program, and it was their guidance and input that helped us refine it into its final form.

Right now, two multi-brand boat builders are piloting the Dealer-Manufacturer program, and we're already capturing incredible insights on how, together, we can improve the customer experience. I anticipate we will have much more to share in next year's Impact Report, but in the meantime, you can review a more thorough overview of the program later in this report.

Of course, we are also excited about all the other products and services that MRAA launched in 2024, including our Service Advisor Certification, the second of our position-specific certifications and something dealers have told us they wanted for years. You can read about that and more in the pages that follow. I hope you find this annual recap valuable, and if it inspires you to become more involved with MRAA in 2025, please reach out anytime.



- Matt Gruhn

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2024 Board of Directors

Jeff Strong, President of Strong's Marine in New York, continued his two-year term as Chair of the MRAA Board of Directors, which began in 2023. 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.

Executive Committee officers included 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 to the board in 2024 was Bryan Buckland, owner of Chessie Marine Sales in Maryland.

MRAA's 2024 Board of Directors



PRESIDENT Jeff Strong Strong's Marine



IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Rob Soucy Port Harbor Marine



<u>VICE CHAIR</u> Joe Lewis Mount Dora Boating Center



<u>REGION 1</u> **Craig LeBlanc** Allen Harbor Marine Service



<u>SECRETARY/TREASURER</u> Craig Brosenne Hagadone Marine Group

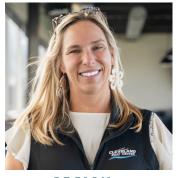


REGION 2 Bob Petzold Petzold's Marine Center





Bryan Buckland Chessie Marine Sales



<u>REGION 4</u> **Stacy Greenwood** Cleveland Boat Center



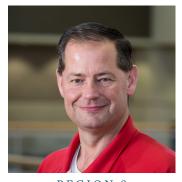
<u>REGION 7</u> Jason Shallcross Reed's Marine



<u>REGION 10</u> **Bob Bense** Superior Boat Repair & Sales



<u>REGION 5</u> **Paul Berube** Boaters Exchange



<u>REGION 8</u> **Jeff Siems** Blue Springs Marine



REGION 11Carly PooleBuckeye Marine



<u>REGION 6</u> **Chad Taylor** Taylor's South Shore Marine



<u>REGION 9</u> **Brandon Sharpe** Arrowhead Yacht Club & Marina



DIRECTOR AT LARGE, YLAC Susan Duquette Lakeview Marine



Young Leaders Advisory Council Adds New Members

YLAC Chair Susan Duquette, President of Lakeview Marine, Inc., in Webster, Mass., maintained her role as Chair in 2024, representing the council on the MRAA Board of Directors. Wendy Ramsey, General Manager at Pirate Cove Marine in Ontario, returned as Co-Chair.

New YLAC Members for 2024



COUNCIL MEMBER

James Cimino Owner, Sierra Hills Mobile Marine



COUNCIL MEMBER

Justin Dysert Lead Sales Consultant, Taylor's South Shore Marina



COUNCIL MEMBER Will Monson General Sales Manager, Moose Landing Marina



COUNCIL MEMBER Braden Panasiuk General Manager, Gibbons Motor Toys



COUNCIL MEMBER Briley Phillips Sales Associate, Phil Dill Boats



Zack Ryden Controller, Ryden Marine & Minocqua Yamaha



COUNCIL MEMBER

Jon Stovall General Sales Manager, Ocean Blue Yacht Sales

Returning YLAC Members for 2024



<u>CHAIR</u> Susan Duquette President, Lakeview Marine, Inc.



CO-CHAIR

Wendy Ramsey General Manager, Pirate Cove Marine



Christian Hansen General Manager, Idaho Water Sports



COUNCIL MEMBER

Owner, Reeder-Trausch Marine



COUNCIL MEMBER

Ashlynn LaLonde Olson Vice President, Hutchinson's Boat Works, Inc.



Heather Mess National Marina Manager, MarineMax, Inc.



INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE Kenda Kennard

Business Development Representative, Huntington Distribution Finance



INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE Krista Sparkes Regional Director, Smoker Craft, Inc.



MRAA STAFF REP.

Sarah Korbel Events and Operations Manager, MRAA

YLAC's mission is to supplement and support the Board of Directors of the MRAA. YLAC provides guidance regarding the current state of day-to-day operations. The group strives to set an example by identifying, inspiring, recruiting and onboarding key under-40 members to participate in the association, facilitating the future growth and success of MRAA.

Advocacy Year In Review

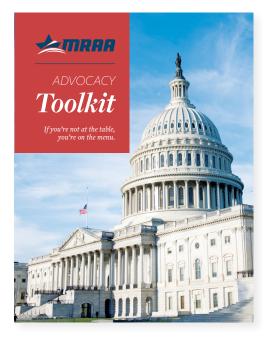
One of MRAA's core functions is to serve as the voice of marine dealers to legislators, promoting boating-friendly policy while fighting off harmful legislation. Once again in 2024, MRAA invested significant resources toward this mission and can share the following updates on significant achievements during 2024.

New Tool Improves MRAA's Ability to Track Legislation

The amount of proposed legislation that could potentially affect the marine industry is overwhelming, and for dealers who have their hands full running a business it's difficult — if not impossible — to try to keep up. One of the major benefits of having a dedicated association like the MRAA is that our team monitors what's happening on their behalf. In 2024, the MRAA Government Relations Team, with the support of our Diamond Ambassador Members, brought on board a new legislative tracker tool powered by Quorum to streamline this process. This innovative tool highlights legislation the MRAA is tracking and advocating for or against on behalf of the marine



industry and our members. The tracker is divided into state and federal legislation, with the state tracker featuring a map to allow members to view what the MRAA is tracking in their state. The tool also allows members to filter and sort state and federal legislation by topic, position and status. The MRAA made the investment in this new software with the support of our Diamond Ambassador Members, including MarineMax, who was a founding Diamond Member in 2023.



Advocacy Toolkit

To inspire MRAA Members to get more engaged in advocacy and government relations, the MRAA Government Relations Team released the Advocacy Toolkit. The Toolkit was designed to give marine retailers a baseline understanding of what advocacy and lobbying entail, as well as ways to get engaged with the MRAA and resources for dealers to begin outreach to their elected officials. A major focus of the Toolkit is giving marine retailers the tools they need to reach out to elected officials in their area and set up a tour of their business. Inviting elected officials to dealerships is a great way to build a relationship, allowing them to learn more about your business and pain points, and it provides a glimpse of the economic impact of recreational boating for small businesses and communities alike. The Toolkit is available at mraa.com/get-involved.

Advisory Council of Marine Associations

In 2024, the MRAA Board of Directors approved a set of legislative and regulatory advocacy resolutions as recommended by the Advisory Council of Marine Associations (ACMA).

ACMA was created to advise the MRAA on its annual policy agenda and comprises state, regional and national marine trade associations. ACMA highlights MRAA's collaborative approach to working on issues impacting the industry at large.

In addition to working with ACMA on the resolutions, MRAA leads bi-weekly calls where ACMA members provide updates on state and federal policy priorities as well as other relevant industry news in their region. These calls provide an opportunity to discuss legislative and regulatory actions impacting the industry and updates on the work ACMA members are doing on policy priorities in their region. The MRAA began leading these calls in late 2019 to increase collaboration among ACMA members and ultimately create a tight-knit network of marine trade associations that engage together on legislative and regulatory priorities.

2024 Resolutions

- → Create and Advocate for state and federal programs to assist with marine industry workforce development.
- \rightarrow Support Federal and State Blue Economy Legislation.
- \rightarrow Advocate for waterways access and policies to minimize user conflict.
- → Work with Federal, State, and Local legislators and regulatory agencies to prioritize or protect the interests of the recreational marine industry, including dealers, manufacturers, and consumers.



American Boating Congress

Each year, the recreational boating industry comes together in Washington, D.C., for the American Boating Congress (ABC), hosted by the National Marine Manufacturers Association and industry co-sponsors, including MRAA. The 2024 event marked the largest attendance of MRAA members at ABC to date, with participation from MRAA staff, members of the Board of Directors, and several retail members. Together, these representatives carried the marine industry's priorities to Capitol Hill for important one-on-one conversations with lawmakers.

During the event, MRAA's Government Relations team and members met with elected officials to spotlight key policy issues impacting marine retailers and the recreational boating industry. Meetings included discussions with the staff of Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN), Sen. Todd Young (R-IN), Rep. Nick LaLota (R-NY-1), Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH-2), and others. These conversations opened the door to address significant topics such as the LAKES Act, the proposed Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule, and tariffs on aluminum extrusions.

In addition to these meetings, conversations with lawmakers centered on critical issues like infrastructure, boater access, manufacturing, and sustainability. ABC attendees also had the opportunity to hear from influential speakers, including Mike Allen and Alex Thompson of Axios and Nathan Gonzales of Inside Elections, who shared their perspectives on the inner workings of Congress, the Administration, and the concerns of voters.





Patty Lawrence, Director of Education International Boatbuilders' Exhibition, Tashia Roberson-Wing, Legislative Assistant Representative Landsman (D-OH-01), Chad Taylor, President Taylor's South Shore Marina, John Relyea, CEO Brand Lab Gear.

MRAA Staff and Board Representatives at the American Boating Congress in Washington D.C., May, 2024. From left to right; Mike Sayre, MRAA Director of Government Relations, Chad Taylor, President Taylor's South Shore Marina, Mike Davin, MRAA Vice President of Industry Relations, Jeff Strong, President Strong's Marine, Matt Gruhn, MRAA President, Chad Tokowicz, MRAA Government Relations Manager, and Joe Lewis, General Manager Mount Dora Boating Center.

Federal Advocacy

As they say on Capitol Hill, if you aren't at the table, you are on the menu, and for that reason the MRAA is continuously connecting with members of the House and Senate to ensure that they know about the business of boating. The MRAA was active on Capitol Hill in 2024 and working on federal regulatory issues.

Corporate Transparency Act

In May the MRAA Government Relations Team participated in the Small Business Legislative Council (SBLC) fly-in in Washington, D.C., to discuss small business issues impacting recreational boat dealers and other SBLC members. During the fly-in MRAA government relations staff met with both Minority and Majority staff on the Senate Small Business Committee; the Legislative Director of Senator Rick Scott; Policy Director of House Majority Leader; Coalitions Director for Speaker of the House Mike Johnson; and with Congressman Davidson (R-OH). In these meetings MRAA Staff highlighted concerns with the potential impact of Corporate Transparency Act on marine retailers while also highlighting other issues and priorities of the recreational marine industry.

Advocating for Access - Resisting the Proposed Right Whale Vessel Speed

Throughout 2024, the recreational boating industry continued to push back against the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's proposal to limit access to the Atlantic. The MRAA, continuing to highlight the proposed rule's negative impact on boaters and marine businesses, met with officials in the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). During the meeting with OIRA staff, the MRAA Government Relations Team explained how the proposed rule would negatively impact MRAA members and highlighted a lack of due diligence on the impacts to small businesses. After meeting with White House Officials, MRAA continued to monitor and engage on the issue. In early 2025, the rule was withdrawn, thanks in large part to industry education efforts, opening the door for productive new conversations about more effective ways to protect both boating access and endangered species.





MRAA on The Hill - Chairman of the Board Testifies

In June, Jeff Strong, MRAA Board Chair and President of Strong's Marine, testified before Congress on Capitol Hill regarding the MAPOceans Act and the Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule. His testimony provided key insights into how marine retailers stand to benefit from various bills before the committee while highlighting the shortcomings of the proposed Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule. Strong spoke before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries.

Dealership Visit - Congressman D'Esposito Visits Strong's Marine

Following Jeff Strong's testimony, Rep. Anthony Esposito (R-NY-4) visited Strong's Marine Freeport location during the August Recess. The visit provided a unique opportunity for Rep. D'Esposito to engage with the local marine industry, discuss important issues facing small businesses and marine retailers, and continue to build the Congressional Boating Caucus. During the visit, Rep. D'Esposito toured the facility, met with staff and spoke with Strong's Marine Owner Jeff Strong and Dante Grover, Owner at Al Grover's Marine, about the economic impact of the marine industry in New York's 4th district.



From Left, Jeff Strong, Owner Strong's Marine, Representative Anthony D'Esposito, Dante Grover, Owner Al Grover's Marine.

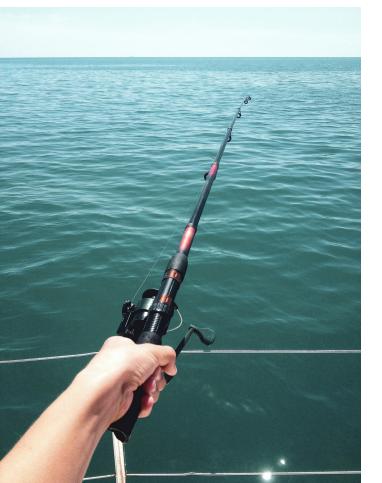
Strong Receives Dealer Ambassador Award

For his dedication to advocacy in 2024, Jeff Strong was presented with the annual MRAA Dealer Ambassador Award at Dealer Week in December in Orlando, Fla.

The award recognizes an MRAA member who displays an outstanding commitment to advocating on behalf of the recreational boating industry and actively works to better recreational boating in their community. The MRAA Dealer Ambassador Award helps to highlight dealers who go above and beyond in their advocacy engagements and inspire other marine retailers to support boating activism.

"From joining us at the American Boating Congress, to coming back to D.C. on short notice to testify on key legislation, and everything in-between, Jeff has continually highlighted his dedication to advocating for marine retailers and we cannot thank him enough for his efforts to ensure that decisionmakers on and off Capitol Hill understand the power and importance of our industry," said Chad Tokowicz, MRAA Government Relations Manager.





Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund Reauthorization

Throughout 2024, the Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA), a coalition of organizations in the recreational boating and fishing space, met to begin preparing for a legislative push in the 119th Congress to reauthorize the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF). The Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund is a federally managed program that reinvests excise taxes on fishing equipment, motorboat fuel, and related gear into fish conservation, recreational boating infrastructure, and aquatic education initiatives and must be reauthorized every five years. In 2025, the reauthorization of this important program will be a top priority of the ABA and the MRAA Government Relations team.

State Advocacy

MRAA's Government Relations team not only works on federal issues, it also tracks and helps coordinate the response to issues at the state level. Some of the issues that the team worked on in 2024 include:

Minnesota Boat Wrap Recycling Program

Throughout the 2024 Minnesota legislative session, the MRAA worked hand-in-hand with the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the Water Sports Industry Association, and other state and national trade groups to inform legislation focused on the recycling of boat shrink wrap. Working directly with the sponsor of the legislation, Rep. Kraft, the MRAA and our coalition partners ensured that the final legislation balanced efforts to recycle boat shrink wrap while minimizing the impact to the retailer. Ultimately, HF3320 was passed, establishing a product stewardship program to help responsibly recycle and reuse boat shrinkwrap. This stewardship program is ultimately going to be funded and supported by the producers of the shrink wrap, with dealers acting as collection points for the used shrink wrap. This model helps to balance the impact to retailers, as they will not be required to pay into the stewardship program and will face no financial burden.



Boater Education Efforts

In Arizona, the MRAA, National Marine Manufacturers Association, and other state and local groups worked to increase boater safety measures throughout 2024. Currently, Arizona is one of only five states across the U.S. without mandatory boater education for any age group. Furthermore, Arizona continues to see boating accidents: in 2022 alone, boating accidents killed 13 individuals, injured 60, and caused \$1 million in damages across the state. Throughout 2024, the MRAA worked to support HB 2149, put forth by Rep. David Cook and Sen. Brian Fernandez. The bill would have established a boater education program to ensure the safe use of Arizona's expansive waterways. Unfortunately, despite favorable passage out of the Arizona House, the bill stalled in the Senate and ultimately died. Boater education will continue to be a primary area of focus for the MRAA Government Relations team in 2025.

MRAA Advocacy in Action

Throughout 2024, the MRAA Government Relations Team continued to advocate for marine retailers at various events and conferences throughout the country.



International Boating and Water Safety Summit

This year at the International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS) the MRAA Government Relations team presented twice, with Mike Sayre, Director of Government Relations, focusing on parallels between recreational boating safety and the motorcycle industry, and Chad Tokowicz, Government Relations Manager, highlighting MRAA's efforts to pass or update mandatory boater education policies throughout the country. These presentations provided a unique opportunity for the MRAA Government Relations Team to educate stakeholders on the important policy work we do while highlighting the intersection of business and recreational boating safety.

Small Business Legislative Council Fly In

The Government Relations Team participated in the Small Business Legislative Council (SBLC) fly-in to discuss small business issues impacting recreational boat dealers and potential regulatory hurdles in the future. Government Relations Director Mike Sayre and Government Relations Manager Chad Tokowicz discussed pressing issues impacting the organization and its members, including: the Corporate Transparency Act; the small business benefits of the House-passed Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024; and the risk of allowing a lapse in beneficial small business provisions within the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. The MRAA joined the SBLC in 2024 to increase its focus on issues impacting small businesses like taxes and regulatory requirements.





Water Sports Industry Association Summit

This year, Chad Tokowicz, MRAA Government Relations Manager, attended the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) Annual Summit. The Summit, which is hosted each winter by the WSIA, brings together professionals in the water sports industry to network, learn and collaborate. During the summit WSIA committees and the WSIA Board of Directors meet to conduct business. These meetings, which are open to non-voting members and visitors, focus on issues including vessel designs and how to build boats best to remove Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), wake park standards and parasailing issues.

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Annual Conference

Each year, the MRAA attends the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Annual Conference to build relationships with State Boating Law Administrators, discuss issues and topics within the recreational boating industry, and learn how the MRAA can be a leader for positive change. In 2024, the Annual Meeting took place in New Orleans, where over three days the MRAA Government Relations Team networked with stakeholders, learned about various recreational boating issues across the country, and laid the groundwork for a productive 2025. Developing and maintaining relationships with State Boating Law Administrators is crucial for the MRAA and marine retailers, as it provides an opportunity to work collaboratively with law enforcement and marine patrols to solve problems through education and collaboration rather than regulation and enforcement.



Mike Sayre, MRAA Government Relations Director and Chad Tokowicz, MRAA Government Relations Manager at NASBLA 2024

MRAA Launches Service Advisor Certification

MRAA launched an all-new Service Advisor Certification Program in 2024 – a high-demand, position-specific certification designed to elevate a dealership's service department by boosting technician efficiency, driving up revenue and profits, and transforming customer experience.

"Not only does the service advisor spend the most time with the customer over their ownership cycle compared to every other position," said Lead Instructor and Subject Matter Expert Valerie Ziebron of VRZ Consulting, "but they are the gatekeeper to the dealership's most complex department."

To build MRAA's Service Advisor Certification, the education team and Ziebron consulted with leading service department professionals who shared proven solutions to common service pain points and samples of practical and effective tools to be shared as part of this program.

The Service Advisor Certification Program includes a 7-course online training package, a 124-page printed workbook and study guide, and dozens of downloadable digital resources, customizable tools and templates. It covers critical areas such as: Effective communication, customer retention strategies, time management and organization, conflict resolution, and sales strategies.

MRAA's Service Advisor Certification Program comes on the heels of the Service Management Certification program developed in partnership between MRAA and the American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) launched in January 2024. Nearly 50 service management professionals participated in MRAA's first Service Management Certification class.

To learn more about or enroll in Service Advisor Certification, visit mraa.com/service-advisorcertification. For more on the ABYC / MRAA Service Management Certification Program, visit mraa. com/servicecertification.

NOW AVAILABLE!

SERVICE ADVISOR CERTIFICATION



MRAA Adds New Staff

The MRAA grew in 2024, adding a number of new roles and staff to support members.

Gunnar Davies

Senior Marketing Specialist

Davies monitors and analyzes leads across all marketing channels, ensuring alignment of marketing content strategies and managing social media platforms to drive engagement and results. He has a bachelor's degree in Business Marketing and several years of experience in the boat manufacturing side of the industry. Outside the office, Davies, a selfdescribed podcast fanatic, is a four-season outdoorsman who enjoys working out, reading, and playing and coaching hockey.



Josh Nelson

Senior Accountant

Nelson records daily transactions, prepares financial statements and helps all MRAA business units best manage their financial reports to achieve their goals. He has a Bachelor's of Accountancy and more than 10 years of experience in the public and private accounting sectors. Nelson enjoys running, traveling and spending time with friends.

Freya Olsen

Senior Director of Engagement

Olsen oversees the creation and implementation of MRAA's membership engagement strategies, leading a team of professionals to increase participation in MRAA member programs and services used to serve, support and protect their businesses and the marine industry at large.

With nearly 20 years of marine industry-based association experience, Olsen brings a wealth of proven expertise in marketing, membership, education, industry relations and program management. Most recently, she held the position of Director of Industry Relations at the National Marine Manufacturers Association, where she served as one of the leads for Discover Boating, working side by side with manufacturer and dealer stakeholders since the program's inception.





Kaelyn Olson

Membership Engagement Coordinator

Olson leads the management and execution of deliverables for MRAA's Partner Memberships and Dealer Week exhibitors while collaborating with the sales and marketing teams to ensure quality customer service. She has a bachelor's degree in Allied Health and professional experience in customer service, management and sales. In her free time, she loves spending time with family, cooking and going out on the town with friends.

Bob Stanke

Senior Director of Marketing

Stanke leads the MRAA's marketing department, providing strategic direction and management of the Association's brand messaging, processes and marketing of products, services and educational programs. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Information Systems. He has more than 25 years of experience in marketing and marketing technology, with proficiency in consumer goods, health and fitness, sports and entertainment and financial services. Outside of work, Stanke enjoys hanging out with his wife and four kids and can be found on golf courses in Minnesota or western Wisconsin.

Nichole Wishart

MRAA Business Development Specialist

Wishart works with MRAA's sales team to develop and execute sales strategies for driving revenue for the MRAA through Partner Memberships, Dealer Week exhibits and sponsorships, and sponsorships of other MRAArelated programs and services. Wishart has more than 25 years of customer service experience and a background in sales and marketing. Wishart has developed a lifelong passion for basketball, having spent most of her life in a gym as a player, coach, parent, or spectator. She also enjoys the lake life, active adventures and game nights with family and friends.











CONGRATULATIONS AIMIE!

Al for Marine Industry Education

MRAA's "Aimie" Earns Best Use of AI Neptune Award

Aimie (AI for Marine Industry Education), MRAA's artificial intelligence-powered content delivery system for boat dealers, received a Best Use of AI Neptune Award at the 2024 Miami International Boat Show.

The Best Use of AI Neptune Award celebrates innovators harnessing cutting-edge AI in their marketing strategies. Examples include using AI for personalized content recommendations, chatbots for real-time customer interactions, predictive analytics for targeted campaigns and AI-generated content for social media. The companies honored leverage AI to enhance customer experiences, optimize ad spending and craft hyper-personalized marketing messages.

MRAA launched Aimie in December 2023 at the Dealer Week Conference and Expo in Tampa, Fla. The closed AI model, created in partnership with BettyBot.ai, provides MRAA Silver and Gold Members answers to their business questions using marine-industry specific content that MRAA has generated and collected over the course of more than a decade. Unlike ChatGPT, Aimie can point users directly to marine industry resources that address their unique needs.

MRAA Partner Perspectives Video Series Offers Marine Industry Insights

In 2024, MRAA released a series of Partner Perspectives videos, hosted by marine journalist Alan Wendt, that feature candid Q&A-style interviews with boat manufacturers, suppliers and service providers. The videos offer nearly 90 minutes of content and provide an insider's perspective of boating industry manufacturing, financing, data management, production and distribution.



2024 Partner Perspective Video Interviews

- → Barletta Boat Company Jeff Haradine, President
- → BoatMart Nicole Schantz, VP of OEM and Strategic Partnerships
- → Brunswick Financial Services Will Lockridge, Director
- → Centurion and Supreme Boats Amy Mauzy, VP Marketing & Brand Direction
- \rightarrow Elite Recreational Finance Jared Zimlin, Business Development Director
- \rightarrow First Approval Source Jeff Backus, Founder and COO
- \rightarrow Huntington Distribution Finance, Tracy Williams, SVP, Marine Vertical Leader
- \rightarrow Lightspeed DMS Chris Hauck, Director of Product Management
- → National Marine Distributors Association Nancy Cueroni, Executive Director
- → Northpoint Commercial Finance Russel Baqir, SVP Business Development
- → 700Credit John Warner, VP National Accounts & Business Development
- → Volvo Penta Jens Bering, VP of Marine Sales





MRAA, ASA Launches Education Hub within MRAATraining.com

MRAA and the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) announced a partnership in 2024 to create an Education Hub for ASA member organizations. Unveiled at ASA's International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST) show in Orlando, Fla., the new custom training hub is housed within MRAA's Learning Management System, MRAATraining.com.

"Like recreational boat dealers, these peers in our industry need to showcase the angling lifestyle every single day with every consumer touchpoint," said Liz Keener, MRAA Director of Dealer Development. "Partnering with the ASA to produce an educational library will help fishing and outdoor retailers enhance their skills to improve sales and ownership experiences with their customers, elevating both the recreational boating and fishing industries."

The MRAA and ASA curate education in the form of courses, resources and programs on topics of interest to sportfishing retailers. ASA Members can access the ASA Education Hub, which includes 60-plus sales, marketing and leadership courses, ICAST Lunch & Learn content from 2023 and 2024, advocacy information and more.

The collaboration contains additional deliverables, including new education in the form of blogs, live webinars, resources and two MRAA staff members to support educational programming at ICAST and the Sportfishing Summit.

"One of the core pillars of ASA's mission is education," said Mary Beth Long, ASA Vice President of Communications. "We make it a priority to keep our members abreast of the latest business, government affairs and economic trends as well as access to sportfishing industry experts. Our new partnership with MRAA helps us to provide more robust offerings such as a larger library of sales, marketing and leadership content and on-demand educational opportunities."

CSI Awards Honor MRAA Certified Dealerships

An impressive 126 unique Certified Dealerships were honored by the National Marine Manufacturers Association as recipients of the 2023 Marine Industry Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Awards.

The 2023 CSI Awards honored 1,000 boat dealers for customer satisfaction excellence in sales and 759 boat dealers for excellence in continued service. It was the eighth straight year NMMA has used dealer satisfaction data collected through the Marine Industry CSI program to recognize boat dealers that actively quantify customer satisfaction and choose continuous improvement to provide excellent customer care.

The 2023 CSI Award dealer recipients achieved an independently measured standard of excellence of 90% or higher in customer satisfaction over the past program year. Data was collected as part of a survey of customers who purchased a new boat between Jan. 1, 2023, and Dec. 31, 2023. For this reporting period, the program surveyed more than 175,000 customers.



DISCOVER BOATING

2024 Discover Boating Brand Campaign Attracts Millions

During 2024, Discover Boating, powered by NMMA and MRAA, was focused on attracting the next generation to the boating lifestyle while simultaneously retaining current boaters. Through Discover Boating's year-round, fully integrated omni channel strategy — including the "See You Out Here" campaign — that's helping new audiences see themselves as part of the boating lifestyle.

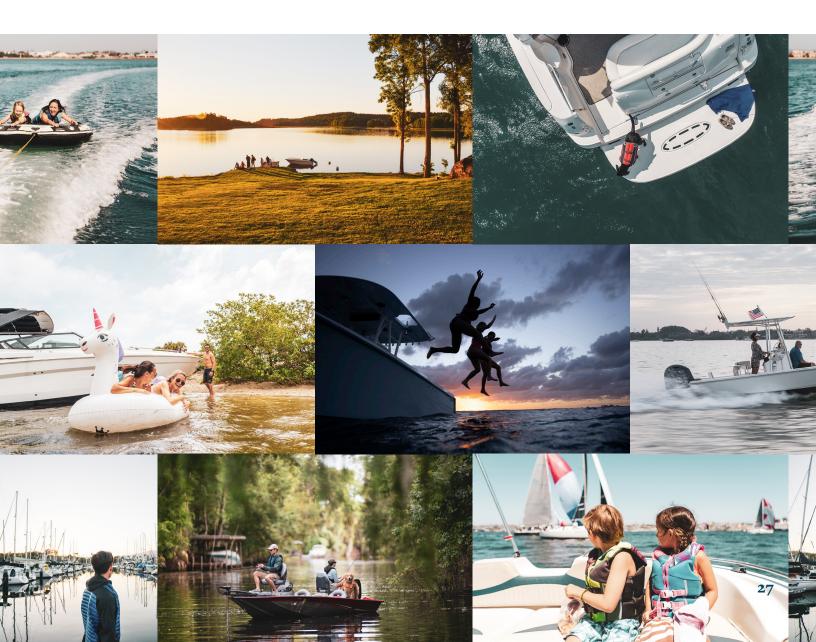
This is happening thanks to a robust digital community, 10 Discover Boating boat shows in key markets around the country, strategic brand partnerships that elevate and extend Discover Boating's reach, and the boat buying and ownership experience through training and resources offered by MRAA to its dealer members. The industry-wide effort connected with people identified in Discover Boating research as most likely to be interested in boating – as many as 91 million people – supporting their boating interests wherever they were in their journey, ensuring they not only felt welcome, but informed, empowered, and excited about boat ownership and the memories, joys and benefits of life on the water.

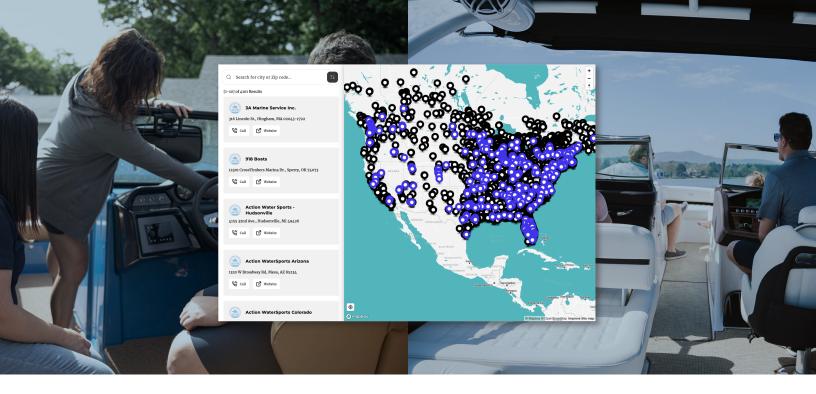
With the industry's investment in Discover Boating's long-term strategy, and two years into a new omni-channel approach, results have been strong. In its 2024 fiscal year, Discover Boating made valuable introductions to manufacturers and dealers across all stages of the consumer's journey.

For the Discover Boating year (Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 30, 2024), Discover Boating reached new heights, delivering 7.3 billion impressions (the number of times people saw the content) and attracted more than 6.5 million of the people reached to Discover Boating's websites in the U.S. and Canada (up 5% against plan and 23% year-over-year), which supported 1.6 million introductions to manufacturers and dealers through website referrals, boat shows and leads (up 10% against plan and flat year-over-year).

In its effort to expand the market for recreational boating, Discover Boating saw an uptick in the number of females visiting DiscoverBoating.com at 33% (up from 31% last year), and DiscoverBoating.ca at 38% (up from 34% last year) revealing that when connected with in a genuine way, women are indeed interested in boating and take action. Over the past year, Discover Boating marketing results helped reach new audiences and engage current boaters:

- → **25 Million** social influencer impressions
- → **5,000+** boating related content pieces shared
- → **951,000** followers on social media
- → 7.3 billion impressions generated
- → **\$10.4 million** dollars in media value





Discover Boating Dealer Finder Drives Customers to Dealers

Discover Boating's Dealer Finder tool, which is powered by MRAA's comprehensive database of North American boat retailers, saw a significant increase in the amount of people it drove to dealer sites in 2024.

This year, the U.S. Dealer Finder drove more than 65,000 introductions/clicks to dealer websites and phone numbers, up 145% increase from last year. The tool saw more than 93,000 users, up 150% compared to last year, and 128,000 pageviews.

The Canada Dealer Finder also saw an increase with 11,500 introductions to Canadian dealers – up 106% compared to last year. The tool had more than 25,000 users (up 1% year-over-year) and nearly 30,000 pageviews this year.

Additional enhancements to the tool are underway including a fresh look and feel of how the dealer listing cards are displayed as well as the implementation of the geolocation functionality.

With this new feature, users can opt in through their browser settings to allow location permission, so the tool automatically presents dealers within a 25-mile radius in that location.

Dealers looking to update their listing or be added to the Find a Boat Dealer locator tool can fill out a form on the website and MRAA will reach out to help make changes.

Data Shows Outdoor Recreation is a \$1.2 Trillion Economic Engine

Economic data released by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economy Analysis (BEA) in 2024 shows that outdoor recreation, and in particular boating and fishing, continue to be a major driver of the U.S. economy, jobs and local communities. According to the latest data from the BEA Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, outdoor recreation generated \$1.2 trillion in economic output (2.3% GDP), comprised 3.1% of U.S. employees and accounted for 5 million jobs in 2023.

Recreational boating and fishing continues to be a major driver of the outdoor recreation economy and this year was the largest recreational activity for the nation, coming in at \$36.8 billion in current-dollar value added and was the largest recreational activity in 34 states and the District of Columbia. The states with the largest contributions were Florida (\$4.2 billion), California (\$3.1 billion) and Texas (2.8 billion).

"Recreational boating continues to be a key part of America's Outdoor Recreation Economy, and the new 2023 BEA data highlights Americans' desire to be outside, get on the water and enjoy their favorite pastimes," said Matt Gruhn, President of the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas. "The success of the recreational boating industry is ultimately fueled by marine retailers who keep boaters on the water and are key for ensuring that we continue to grow participation in America's Outdoor Recreation Economy. This economic impact underscores the importance of prioritizing policies that support marine retailers, fuel continued investments in conservation and ensure domestic marine manufacturers can remain strong to ensure the recreational boating industry stays a uniquely American sector."

This is the largest recorded measure since the BEA started calculating the size of the outdoor recreation economy in 2012. According to newly revised data in this year's release from the BEA, the outdoor recreation economy has grown 36% in real terms since 2012. These new figures reveal that the outdoor recreation economy contributes more to the U.S. economy than farming, mining and utilities.

This is the seventh consecutive year that the BEA has released government data on this critical industry sector. Today's release confirms the role of outdoor recreation as a central contributor to thriving economies, healthy people and connected communities.

The outdoor recreation economy exceeded growth of the U.S. economy from 2022 to 2023 with outdoor recreation real GDP growing 3.6% compared to 2.9% for the U.S. economy and jobs growing 3.3% compared to 1.8%.

MRAA Introduces Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program

In December, the MRAA announced the introduction of the marine industry's first-ever Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program.

Designed to improve the customer experience by fostering meaningful conversations between dealers and manufacturers related to their respective performance in the relationship, the Scorecard Program brings together two years' worth of insights and wisdom from all corners of the marine industry, in addition to in-depth research both within and outside the marine industry. MRAA used dozens of one-on-one conversations with both dealers and manufacturers and several collaborative strategy meetings with MRAA's board of directors (all dealers) and Strategic Partners (all manufacturers and service providers) to craft the scorecards, performance categories and several supporting resources.

"The introduction of MRAA's Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program marks a significant moment for the marine industry," said MRAA President Matt Gruhn. "For decades, the boating industry has operated with a unique approach to dealer-manufacturer partnerships and has done so with very few examples of the parties standardizing communication and feedback on the partnership's performance. This scorecard initiative seeks to not only provide a platform for quality feedback to be delivered to dealers and manufacturers, but through the conversations it will create and the performance improvement opportunities it will identify, we expect that these Scorecards will ultimately lead to a better boat buying and ownership experience."

Through its extensive research, MRAA identified six key areas in the dealer-manufacturer relationship that impact the customer experience. Through deep analysis of those six key areas, MRAA's Board and Strategic Partners identified 10 key performance categories for dealers and 10 key performance categories for manufacturers and used them to build out the Scorecards. Once established, MRAA vetted the Scorecards and the performance categories through both its board and several boat manufacturers for further feedback. The Scorecards were finalized in October 2024.



Two multi-brand boat manufacturers — Correct Craft, Inc. and Malibu, Inc. —participated in a pilot program to not only collect feedback from their dealers but also provide MRAA feedback on how to continue to fine-tune the Scorecard Program. MRAA selected Customer Service Intelligence, Inc. (CSI), a long-time MRAA partner and 30-year leader in customer satisfaction and voice of the customer surveying, to help execute the Scorecard Program. CSI provides a platform and technology to survey dealers and manufacturers and provides comprehensive reports and a dashboard for manufacturers to collect insights for business improvement.

After the pilot program is complete and following any necessary updates, MRAA will roll out an industrywide version of the Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program in 2025. Manufacturers will be invited to participate and MRAA will provide manufacturers with in-depth reporting, to include dealer scores and feedback, action plans, urgent action items, and comparisons against industry averages and segment averages in all categories. Each individual manufacturer's scores and reporting will be kept confidential. Manufacturers will then work to score each of their dealers and establish two-way communication around the feedback the partners provide each other.

For more information, please visit www.mraa.com/scorecards where you can find sample scorecards, answers to frequently asked questions, and resources to maximize the potential of MRAA's Dealer-Manufacturer Scorecard Program.

Centurion & Supreme Host Dealer Meeting at Dealer Week

Centurion & Supreme Boats once again chose to co-locate their dealer meeting at the 2024 Dealer Week Conference and Expo in Orlando, Fla. This is the second year in a row the brands hosted their dealer meeting with Dealer Week, after a successful model-year 2024 meeting in Tampa in 2023.

Centurion & Supreme introduced marine retailers to its 2025 lineup at a private event, December 6-8, before the start of the MRAA conference.

Florida-based Correct Craft, which operates globally and will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2025, is the parent company of Centurion & Supreme. Correct Craft, a Dealer Week 2024 Exhibitor, is one of 12 MRAA Strategic Partners committed to fueling the MRAA's mission to strengthen dealers and contribute to both dealer success and the success of the marine industry.

The first co-located dealer meeting was at Dealer Week 2022 in Austin, Texas. Since that time, multiple brands have chosen to pair their annual event with Dealer Week to provide their dealer networks with access to the event's industry leading training and experience.





Dealer Week 2024 Features Largest-Ever Expo Hall

More than 1,400 marine industry professionals participated in the 2024 Dealer Week Conference and Expo, held Dec. 8-11 in Orlando, Fla., through either in-person attendance or Dealer Week Online.

The in-person event featured the largest Expo Hall in event history with four education classrooms and 170 Expo Hall booths, including 55 first-time exhibitors and 34 boat manufacturers. The conference welcomed more than 500 dealer attendees.

"This year many of our attendees, both exhibitors and dealers, used the phrase 'the best Dealer Week yet' to describe the conference. We had fantastic turnout and the biggest expo hall we've ever had, even in a challenging year," said Mike Davin, VP of Industry Relations at MRAA. "Our team annually works to create an impactful event and evolve our attendee experience."

In addition to the main conference at Dealer Week, a pre-event Service Department Special Event, hosted by Valerie Ziebron and Bernie DeGraw, included 50 dealership personnel in a special one-day training designed to share data, teachings and insight to help dealers navigate service issues, reduce team stress and boost dealership success.

Save the date for the 2025 Dealer Week Conference and Expo, scheduled for Dec. 7-10 in Tampa.

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REGAL





In 2024, 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.

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