

Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council Instituted

Alaska Governor Tony Knowles named members to the newly formed Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council. The group's job will be to advise the state on boating safety issues and recommend priorities for making Alaska waters safer.

Council membership reflects various boat user groups and geographic areas of the state. Named to the council were Mike Folkerts of Eagle River representing The Whittier Boat Owners Association, Cliff Judkins of Anchorage for the Alaska Boating Association, Joel Mitchell, a personal watercraft user from Juneau, Steve Morgheim of Anchorage representing the Alaska Marine Dealers Association, and Kathy O'Gara of Sitka representing the Southeast Regional Health Consortium. Also tapped for the council were Barbara Sands of Anchorage representing the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Brad Snow of the Fairbanks Paddlers Association, sail charter operator Karen Walter of Juneau, and Margaret Wilson of Fairbanks representing the Tanana Chiefs Council.

The Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council's first meeting took place in Anchorage on January 28, 1999. At this meeting, the top three priorities chosen by this group are grass roots support for boating safety, education, and access to safety equipment statewide. This group is expected to meet again in the Spring.



Comments Sought on New Boating Registration Fees

The U.S. Coast Guard is proposing new fees for boat registration in Alaska. Currently, the fee is \$6.00 for a three year period. This fee schedule was set in 1971. The current proposal is to raise the fee structure to the following schedule:

New number/Transfer of Number: \$24.00
Renewal of Number: \$16.00
Duplicate Certificate/Decal \$9.00

This proposed fee structure reflects the actual costs of registration which were determined by a study several months ago. The fee increase tentatively takes place on July 1, 1999.

The full Notice of Proposed Rulemaking can be found at:

www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a990201c.html

Comments regarding the proposed fee increase are being accepted until April 1, 1999, and can be sent to:
Docket Management Facility
(USCG 998-3323)
U.S. Department of Transportation, Room PL-401
400 7th St. SW
Washington, DC 20590-0001

ALASKA SAFE BOATING PROGRAM TO BE ESTABLISHED

The United States Coast Guard will soon use taxes collected in Alaska from boaters for an Alaska safe boating program. Boater fuel taxes are collected in all 50 states. In all states except Alaska, these taxes are used for a safe boating program. Although Alaska has most of the laws in place to establish such a program, until recently it had no agency to administer it.

The Office of Boating Safety has been established within the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation. As a result, the Coast Guard has agreed to partially reimburse the fuel taxes back to Alaska for its new boating safety initiative. If Alaska passes a law assuming responsibility for boating registration, and regulations which mirror federal requirements, Alaska will be eligible for full reimbursement of these fuel taxes.