



For Immediate Release

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Providence Boat Show Highlights Easy, Affordable Paths into Boating Three-Day Expo Takes Place February 3-5 at Rhode Island Convention Center

Providence (R.I.) January 17, 2017 – Organizers of the Providence Boat Show have placed a special emphasis this year on easy, affordable ways to go boating. The three-day expo presented by Washington Trust takes place February 3-5 at the Rhode Island Convention Center.

“We have a wide range of boats, from the latest designs from leading manufacturers, to stand-up paddleboards, to brokers who help individuals purchase pre-owned boats, to boating clubs,” said Wendy Mackie, CEO of the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (RIMTA), which owns and manages the boat show. “All show-goers will find a way to enjoy the water that is right-sized for their pocketbook.”

The Providence show features 125 exhibitors from throughout the region and some 130 boats. Show-goers will see the latest in technology from leading manufacturers, as new powerboats and paddle craft represent nearly 20 percent of the fleet on view. Attendees can also learn about a type of watercraft whose popularity has caught on like wildfire: stand-up paddleboards.

According to a study conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association, the growth of stand-up paddleboarding has outstripped all other outdoor recreations, having grown in participation by 26% over a three-year period.

Providence Boat Show exhibitor Guy Gauvin, co-founder of East Coast Paddle Sports, does not need a study to prove the appeal of these watercraft. Gauvin’s company opened in 2014 with a mobile trailer to rent paddleboards--which are longer, wider and more stable than a typical surf board. Demand grew quickly, and rental and retail locations were established in East Greenwich and Wakefield. The company put 800 people on the water their first summer, and that number grew nearly eight-fold to 6,000 people in their third summer.

The boat show’s indoor pool will feature stand-up paddleboard (SUP) demos. The growing popularity of these boards has given rise to new ways to use them, including SUP yoga and fishing, both of which will

be demonstrated at the show. Megrew's Boats (Charlestown, R.I.) will also demo a brand-new Hobie Eclipse Mirage "peddleboard" where users get an elliptical-like workout while touring the coast. According to Gauvin, entry-level paddleboards can start as low as \$600.

Show attendees can inspect some 130 boats at the show, but there are thousands more for sale at this three-day event. Boat brokers and dealers that represent previously owned boats located throughout New England will also be at the show.

"When you attend a boat show, one of the more important 'products' you come in contact with are knowledgeable marine professionals," says Matt Leduc of Latitude Yacht Brokerage in Jamestown. "Brokers with years of experience who can help buyers find the boat they are looking for will be at the boat show."

Show-goers can meet several brokers in a single day and learn about the specifics of pre-owned boats available in New England. Leduc also points out that winter is an excellent time to start a search, to get a jump on the spring rush when the best inventory can become depleted.

The boat show includes free seminars on Sport Fishing coordinated by Captain Jack Sprengel of East Coast Charters in Warwick. Captain Jack has hand-picked experts and tournament fishermen who will educate both local anglers and fishing enthusiasts who want to travel to the Ocean State. Sessions focus on technique as well as the unique coastal geography of places such as Block Island Sound and Rhode Island's East and West Bays. Free seamanship seminars will be offered by captains from Annapolis School of Seamanship.

Premium learning opportunities include a special "Women on the Water" seminar with Confident Captain/Ocean Pros (Middletown, R.I.) on Saturday, and Knife Skills Classes coordinated by Flint & Flame of Bristol for seafood fans who want to learn proper shucking and fish-fillet techniques from local chefs.

The centrally located Anchor Bar and the indoor pool, with SUP demos as well as remote-control boating for the young and young at heart, will be a hub of activity. The show also features an Exploration Zone, with hands-on activity for all ages, and an ArtSea Gallery, where show-goers can view and purchase the work of local artists inspired by the sea. New Englander Michael Tougias, author of *Ten Hours Until Dawn*, will regale show-goers with a dramatic rescue-at-sea story that took place during the blizzard of 1978, on Sunday at noon; Tougias is also author of *The Finest Hours*, on which the Walt Disney Studios film of the same name is based.

Sponsors that have joined Presenting Sponsor Washington Trust to support this Rhode Island event include Brewer Yacht Yards & Marinas, Dockwa, Helly Hansen, and Kellogg Marine Supply. Thanks to Brewers and Dockwa, all attendees can enter a drawing to win three free nights at any of the 26 Brewer marinas located from Maryland to Maine.

For more details, and to get information on discounted tickets, visit the show's website at providenceboatshow.com. The show is open Friday, February 3 (12 – 8 pm), Saturday, February 4 (10 am – 8 pm), and Sunday, February 5 (10 am – 3 pm).

NOTE TO MEDIA: Photos are available; please contact [Cynthia Goss](mailto:Cynthia.Goss@washingtontrust.com).