

Nonprofit Organization Grants:
Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
Recreational Boating Safety

Federal Grant Title: National Non-Profit Organization Grant Program
Federal Agency: United States Coast Guard
Funding Opportunity Number: DHS-USCG-2014-001
Type of Funding: Cooperative Agreement
CFDA Numbers: 97.012
CFDA Descriptions: Boating Safety Financial Assistance

Grantee: National Water Safety Congress (NWSC)
Grant Number: 3314FAN140218
Grant Title: 2015 International Boating and Water Safety Summit

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Synopsis:

The International Boating & Water Safety Summit is the premier event for training, awareness, meeting, and networking for professionals and those involved in boating and water safety. General and breakout sessions, along with on-water training, cover a broad spectrum of national and international concerns with a focus on The Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Program geared to provide implementation opportunities and career development.

**2015 International Boating and Water Safety Summit
Agreement No. 33FAN1402.18
Final Report**

For 2015, the National Water Safety Congress (NWSC) and National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) were awarded grant funding to produce the International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS), Agreement No. 33FAN1402.18.

The goal of this agreement was “to develop and conduct a Recreational Boating Safety Outreach and Awareness conference.” The NWSC and the NSBC jointly accomplished our stated goals by “planning, implementing, overseeing, and conducting a National Recreational Boating Safety Outreach and Awareness Conference supporting the National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016.

Executive Summary

The NWSC and the NSBC proposed a joint project that, for the 19th year, would produce the IBWSS as the main deliverable. In response to the U.S. Coast Guard’s “Areas of Interest,” the proposal would develop a comprehensive program, placing emphasis on offering multiple educational opportunities that provide the participants professional development and enhancement based on concepts from the RBS Strategic Plan.

The 19th annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit was held at the Sandestin Hotel in Sandestin Florida from March 29 2015 through April 1 2015. Among those participating were representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations; federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies; regulatory and water safety agencies; boating and aquatic industry specialists; volunteer and professional boating and water safety educators; and university program directors.

Each of the 11 objectives outlined in the RBS Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 were addressed at the 2014 IBWSS through the deliberate and calculated selection of general session and seminar session speakers, and on-water initiatives available to IBWSS attendees.

Overview

The 2015 IBWSS was attended by more than 200 boating and water safety professionals and those that share an interest in this community. The overall focus of the IBWSS was to assist in achieving a reduction in recreational boating casualties. The three-day conference began on the evening of the Opening Reception with exhibitors available to talk to IBWSS attendees and showcase products, projects, and initiatives to help attendees better facilitate their boating and water safety programs. The 2015 IBWSS General Sessions began on March 29th with Captain Burton and Captain Boross addressing the audience with the U.S. Coast Guard Update from the Office of Boating Safety. This general session day continued with presentations on Surviving the Vortex of Celebrity News – The Real Erin Brockovich Story, a Detailed Review of the 2015 National Boating Education Standards, Changing Boating Behavior – Using Research to Effectively Target Your Messaging, followed by our Keynote speakers Almost to Shore:Worst-

Case Scenario Gone Right. The NSBC followed the keynote with Wear It! Implementing the Life Jacket Campaign Into Your Program. The day ended with State Reciprocity for Boat Operator Education – Does One Size Fit All?.

Through the use of break-out sessions, the conference allowed for multiple subject areas to be presented including, but not limited to, life jacket wear; operator inattention; boater education; accident reporting; navigation rules; outreach and awareness efforts; and boating under the influence.

On March 31st IBWSS attendees received first-hand, hands-on experience with On-Water activities. Participants engaged in activities throughout the day including paddling with the pros in which attendees could try different types of non-powered craft with the assistance and guidance of ACA staff. The U.S. Power Squadron was also presented their On-Water skills Training initiative that included on-water observations. The on-the-water afternoon concluded with a competition that allowed attendees to put into practice what they had learned.

On April 1st, the attendees broke up into hourly seminar sessions, which allowed for them to get more information and become aware of key programs related to the RBS Strategic Plan. Each speaker outlined opportunities for attendees to be able to implement in their own programs. In total, 15 seminar sessions were offered this day for attendees to plan their own unique agenda, resulting in a highly-beneficial schedule. Some of the topics included were Introduction to Cold Water Boot Camp USA – Train the Trainer, Distress Technology in Boating, USACE's Let It Go Campaign, Weather on the Water: a National Weather Service Marine Forecasting and Safety Perspective, Tubing Safety, Hybrid PWC Product Safety and Education, National Certification & Credentialing Program for Paid and Volunteer Recreational Boating Professionals, BoatOnCourse.com: Navigation Rules Awareness Sequel, among others.

The 2015 IBWSS closed its final day of sessions with the announcement of this year's Media Contest winners. The Media Contest was intended to showcase the outreach efforts of organizations, agencies, and groups in the realm of boating and water safety. The Media Contest serves two main purposes: it gives the attendees an opportunity to see what is working for others around the country as they deal new and innovative ways to promote boating and water safety in their own communities and organizations, and it gives those organizations and agencies with successful media and outreach messaging a forum to showcase their work.

Conclusion

In addition to the main deliverable of the International Boating and Water Safety Summit itself, the NWSC and the NSBC coordinate an integrated media and marketing effort with other key deliverables to highlight the IBWSS and its benefits to those in the fields of recreational boating and water safety.

The NWSC and NSBC continued to update and oversee www.IBWSS.org, a website designed specifically for the IBWSS. The website is designed to be user-friendly: attendees and those interested in learning more about IBWSS can do so year-round, and could also register as an

attendee and exhibitor for 2015 IBWSS, learn more about advertising and sponsorship opportunities, and see timely updates as they planned ahead for the 2016 IBWSS in Florida.

The 2015 IBWSS Program was provided to each IBWSS attendee upon checking in at the IBWSS location. The Program outlines the overall agenda for the 2015 IBWSS, introduces the speakers and exhibitors, and provides a general layout of the location so that IBWSS attendees can prepare and plan their own unique IBWSS experience.

To complement the IBWSS Program, the NWSC and NSBC continued use of a mobile app in 2015, available for attendees to download to their smart phone for free. The app mirrors the IBWSS Program, and allows attendees to engage and communicate with one another through a social platform. The NWSC and NSBC oversee a Twitter account, as well as Facebook page that give attendees, and those that can't be at IBWS in person, more opportunity to network and share boating and water safety trends and ideas through multiple platforms.

At the conclusion of the 2015 IBWSS, conference attendees were asked to complete an On-Site Evaluation of the event. The Evaluation included their satisfaction with the overall Program and its support of the RBS Strategic Plan, the location, and sought recommendations to improve future IBWSSs. In addition, two months after the conference ended, IBWSS attendees received a follow-up survey via email requesting they share what they implemented into their own boating and water safety programs from what they learned at IBWSS.

Based on 2015 surveys conducted two months after the IBWSS attendees verified the importance of the IBWSS in their efforts to promote boating and water safety. Participants have recognized the IBWSS as *the* conference to attend to obtain new ideas, enhance their knowledge base and receive necessary training to implement within their agencies and communities.

The 2015 IBWSS has presented itself as the premier conference for organizational meetings, training, boating and water safety education, outreach and training. Based on the feedback from attendees, the NWSC and NSBC's goal to directly address the Strategic Plan on the National Recreational Boating Safety Program 2012 – 2016 by offering multiple subject areas that afford the participants professional development opportunities and educational enhancement was achieved.