

materials ordered through the Campaign kits, the Campaign employs a nationally connected Public Relations firm to distribute news and video releases, and scheduled TV and radio interviews with USCG and NSBC boating safety experts. Kick-off events are also promoted during National Safe Boating Week. The results are amazing if you gauge the program's success from the number of impressions received based on dollars expended. Impressions are the estimated numbers reached through the print, radio, TV or cable advertisements. Of the \$300,000 grant, approximately 85% goes directly to product awareness. Many other national campaigns do not yield that great a percentage. Multiply this success with the volumes of volunteer effort, and we have an incredible result for the \$300,000 investment. Other campaigns may receive higher profile visibility, but then again, the amount of funding for those campaigns are many times greater than what is available for the national life jacket "Wear It" Campaign.

With regards to those studies* and their conclusions that the outreach programs aren't working, the JSI study recommended creating targeted campaigns. It is a point well taken. The Canadian Study proclaimed 86% of the people they surveyed knew very little or nothing about new style wearable PFDs. I believe that many people don't wear PFDs because they think they are "awkward, uncomfortable and interfere with their activity." We need to break the paradigm. The JSI study recommended that the industry market the new designed devices, especially the inflatable PFD. Think about it. When is the last time you saw a great looking or cutting edge PFD advertised? I have observed dozens of commercials over the past several months and in many of the ads people were boating wearing PFDs. These were car, food, beverage, insurance, mutual funds and other, non-boating commercials. The standard Type II or a basic Type III life jacket was being worn. This is advancement! It wasn't too many years ago we were lucky to see a PFD in the boat in advertisements at all. It should be a given that the industry should not only lead the charge of portraying PFD use as a part of the sport, but should also help by supplying new cutting edge PFDs to companies using boats in their advertisements. Through advertising councils and advocacy groups this can be done. It isn't direct advertising; it is product placement... a very important way to promote without talking about it in the ad.

I also believe the JSI study presents a skewed view on what is really happening. The study was conducted during the two hottest months of the year and the majority of boats observed were over 16 feet in length. With the sunny, calm days of summer and there are plenty of other boaters on the water and perception of risk is low. The study states "boaters seem to base their wear decisions on risk assessment." It should follow that if you really want to see how "J. Boater" perceives the risk, the study should be conducted in the spring when there is a greater perceived risk.

The JSI study indicates, personal watercraft (PWC) riders, children, kayakers, and boaters on sailboats (even with motors) show higher wear rates. High wear rate on PWC and by children is attributed to state laws. While I may tend to agree, I'm not so certain it is solely the law. It may also be the good example set by the many instructors, advertisements and publications that portray these user groups in life jackets as an accepted part of the sport. How about the day sailor or kayaker? Why do those user groups have higher wear rates? Law does not mandate the wear requirement by these groups. Many sailors started sailing by going to a training program. During the learning of the sailing skills life jacket use was presented and practiced. Kayakers have a reasonable expectation of getting wet, so use of the life jacket is marketed along with the activity and, again, wear is accepted as a part of the sport.

We can benefit from good information found in both studies, but it isn't that the current effort isn't working. I believe it is, but the effort is under funded and the studies are incomplete. We have hundreds of stories of people who are alive today because they wore their life jacket. Imagine the fatality rate if the Campaign message had not been produced. Don't get discouraged. Armed with stories of lives saved and the example of wearing your PFD when boating, we must continue to spread the word. Don't believe your efforts have not been successful. There are people alive because you taught them the value of wearing a PFD. Keep up the good work, and have a great 2004 boating season!

**JSI Study - National PFD Wear Rate Observation Study conducted by JSI Research & Training Institute, summers of 1998 - 2002, funded by the Aquatic Resources Trust fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.*

**Canadian Study - Will It Float? Mandatory PFD Wear Legislation in Canada. Canadian Safe Boating Council. For more information go to www.csbcc.ca*

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

by Barbara Byers



Canadian Safe Boating Week Changes Tacks

For 2004, the Canadian Safe Boating Council, in conjunction with its partners, members and the Canadian Coast Guard will alter course to starboard and create a new program based on local delivery of the "Safe Boating" message.

The program will target community newspapers and cable television networks, allowing a lot more to be done with a little. Comprehensive media kits featuring prepared editorial and ad slicks for print media, and broadcast quality video stories and B-roll for community television will be distributed nationally to over 800 newspapers and 26 cable companies.

Don't miss the Canadian Safe Boating Council's 2004 conference, September 23 - 25, in beautiful Whistler, British Columbia, site of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. The agenda is packed full of great sessions on PFD wearing, PFD research studies and more. Conference fees includes a white water rafting excursion and the setting is spectacular!

Go to www.csbcc.ca for more information.

NEWS FLASH !

NSBC RECEIPT OF AWARD

Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), recently awarded the National Safe Boating Council \$1,000. The award was recommended by the **Corporate Giving Committee of the Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.** The award cites the Safe Boating Council's efforts in promoting water and boating safety education. As an organization that is strongly committed to public safety around the world, **Underwriters Laboratories** applauds the work that the Council is doing.

NEWS FLASH !