



Bassmaster Expo is a 'Keeper'

What better way to reach anglers with the “Wear It!” message than by being right in the middle of over 60,000 of them with an eye-catching life jacket exhibit. The Bassmaster Classic is the Super Bowl of fishing, attracting inland waterways anglers from across the country. The February 2010 Expo, held February 19-21 at the Convention Center in Birmingham, Alabama, offered autograph sessions with pro anglers, kids’ activities, boats, motors, product demonstrations, fishing accessories galore, and tips and techniques from industry experts.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Coast Guard Auxiliary’s National Marketing Group had a presence at the Expo. Thanks to ESPN/Bass’ donation of exhibit space, the colorful life jacket

display at the end of a high traffic aisle enticed several hundred visitors to stop, touch, try on and ask questions. A rack of children’s life jackets held a variety of alluring models that included a Type II Dora the Explorer.® A stuffed dog wearing a Critters Inflatable® topped off the display.

Eighth District Coast Guard Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Specialist Kevin Kelly and his Seventh District counterpart, Bruce Wright, hosted the exhibit. Both wore Coast Guard RBS tournament shirts and worked the Expo floor and launch area. Kelly presented an HQ Boating Safety Division coin to Bradley Thaxton, Commander, Flotilla 88, Coosa River, Alabama, in recognition his success in staffing the event with members from across Division Eight, including Curtis Cantrell, Flotilla

85, West Alabama; Zachary Kosan, Flotilla 87, Birmingham; and David Ihle and Christine Beal-Kaplin, also of the Coosa River flotilla.

“Wear It!” was the primary exhibit message, since 90 percent of people lost to fatal recreational boating drownings over the past ten years were not wearing a life jacket and anglers are among the highest risk. By displaying a selection of inherently buoyant models for anglers and children and adult inflatable life jackets, exhibit visitors were able to compare them side-by-side. Auxiliarists staffing the exhibit read the Auxiliary’s Inflatable Life Jackets Basics before the show and answered questions about hydrostatic inflatable technology and bobbin-activated inflatable re-arming. The February 2011 Bassmaster Classic Expo will be held in New Orleans. ☺