

[Presentation by Steven M. Budar, National Commodore of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary to the Senior Executive Leadership Conference, US Coast Guard, 14 November 2007, Miami , FL]

Good Morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you this morning on the state, of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

I stand before you today as the 28th National Commodore to serve the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, following my being sworn in just 14 days ago. In years past this may have signaled a new direction, causing our membership to pause, waiting for the new course. But not this year.

I want very much to avoid the “take one step forward, two steps back” syndrome.

Therefore for the past 2 years and 14 days we have worked hard to build a solid foundation based on our strategic and tactical plans that facilitate a smooth transition in leadership while at the same time providing consistency to our members and a seamless continuation of Mission Execution,

My message to the Auxiliary is to “Stand-on “, to continue doing the programs and missions that our auxiliaries have chosen to do.

To continue to balance our efforts in Recreational Boating Safety and Maritime Domain Awareness Managing our resources so we don’t overextend our ability to maintain mission balance.

In short, follow our business plan, and as part of every business plan we will maintain situational awareness and make adjustments necessitated by changes occurring around us or in anticipation of events ahead.

One of the biggest drivers of change for the Auxiliary is the Coast Guard and as changes are required to address new missions, organization, policy or procedure we will make the adjustments necessary.

The key for us is to anticipate and manage change when ever possible. Creating a state of constant change, LEADING TO A new normalcy.

Let me share some of the key areas of my focus for the coming year...

Recruiting

Recruiting is the life blood of any volunteer organization and we have been bleeding a lot lately:

I anticipate that the Auxiliary will lose approximately 4000 members at the end of this year as a direct result of the Personal Security Investigations required of all our personnel.

- We understand the necessity OF PSI AND REALIZE

- This will be good for our organization

In the long run

It has been presumed that the majority of THE members LOST were not active in recent years and that their loss while having a profound financial effect on our organization would not have much of an effect on our ability to meet our mission goals.

However small the effect of their loss may be, a loss is a loss and it is our responsibility to focus on recruiting to rebuild our membership to ensure a ready source of new ideas, leadership and manpower.

You would think that with so many missions that it would be easy to attract and keep members. Well we are learning along with most other volunteer organizations that the way we recruited and retained volunteers from the World War II Generation and the Baby Boomers doesn't work with the Generation X or Generation Y people.

We are putting a lot of effort into studying and understanding the unique characteristics of four very specific generations that make up our membership, the World War II Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y.

Each is different.

- WE NEED TO CHANGE HOW WE APPROACH NEW PEOPLE,

-WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT WE PROVIDE A CHALLENGING AND REWARDING EXPERIENCE OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY IN THE CONTEXT THAT OUR NEW MEMBERS UNDERSTAND.

Our staff and leadership are beginning to focus on this issue and over the next year we will continue to educate ourselves on this. I have made a major change to our "long range planning committee" to prepare us to pursue solutions to the generational and technical challenges ahead.

Retention & training

Retaining our members is as important as recruiting them, perhaps more so.

I have tasked our training department to focus on reengineering some of our core training programs and expanding our catalogue of training to better reflect the many and varied mission sets auxiliaries participate in today.

In 60 days I expect to receive their proposal covering, resource requirements and a time line for the project so it can be reviewed and implemented at our staff meeting in January.

Our volunteers join the coast guard auxiliary in part to improve their boating skills, Education and training is a key factor in our ability to retain these auxiliaries.

Electronic communication and distribution of information is no longer new technology, its just everyday business, and an on going challenge for our organization is to keep private information safe and secure. Our IT department is tasked to establish a new secure web site for auxiliary use that protects the personal information we need wide access to. ... Like membership directories and at a cost we can afford.

In support of this we have recently signed a MOU with an Auxiliary owned company called Global Security Systems, that is providing \$2.5 million dollars worth of software to help us in managing and securing the data we have.

Finding, mentoring and training leaders is an on going effort needed to support our enterprise.

In support of this effort, I have established the leadership guidance team or LGT.

I have asked Commodore Gene Seibert to lead the LGT and he will be assisted by COMO Carol Urgola. I have little doubt that this all star team leading this critical enterprise will reap substantial results for us.

The LGT will design and oversee the implementation of a bottom to top leadership training curriculum for the Auxiliary. Beginning with our Flotilla Commanders, and building up through Division Captains, Rear Commodores, Vice Commodores and Commodores.

Many of the people being recruited into the auxiliary today have not served in the military and may not have been exposed to the skills and protocol useful in leading our organization.

Internationally,

We have re-organized our international affairs directorate adding key personnel to better manage our efforts with our international partners in the Caribbean, Canada, Europe, Philippines and new Zealand and providing added attention to our important interrupter corp.,

In our more traditional missions,

Recreational boating safety is ever present in all we do.

Our RBS staff is working hard to build relationship with our many industry partners like, boating show organizations, magazines, and community groups

Next month, we are releasing our newest edition of the boating skills and seamanship course, a 6 week classroom delivered course aimed at the recreational power boater these boaters have traditionally been a reliable source of recruiting new members into the auxiliary.

We have on going negotiations with boating education partners to leverage existing products and distribution channels to get our safe boating message out.

So far this year, over 80,000 people have graduated from one of our public education classes or what I like to call preventative SAR classes. Of special note, 50% of these graduates are under age 17.

Vessel Safety Checks

Our vessel safety check program is moving forward and slowly gaining momentum. The dept is focused on maximizing the boats we inspect and is working hard to improve the effectiveness of this program.

So far in 2006 the auxiliary and its partners have conducted over 100,000 vessel safety checks, this doesn't even make a dent in how many boats we really need to be inspecting.

We are seeking a new partner to underwrite the cost of the vessel safety check decals beginning in 2008.

It costs approximately \$100,000 a year

As we speak, my staff is approaching a number of companies either individually or in a consortium to see if we can convince them to provide a funding commitment for at least 3 yrs.

Readiness

Operations is the other reason many of us joined the auxiliary. We currently have

2540 radio facilities

4400 surface facilities

290 aircraft facilities

10,000 air & boat crews

With the issues of fuel money pretty much resolved around the country, our districts continue to provide

-necessary SAR and training platforms

-Qualified and well trained crews to ensure the auxiliary's ready response.

Expectations

Of continued importance is the need to set our expectations. This is especially important in the districts where we have many new commodores. I ask the district commanders to work with the district commodores **to set** the expectations for the auxiliary in your district.

Ask to see the revised business plans they have created and to hold the auxiliary accountable to perform the missions you need them to do for you.

The last 14 days have been hectic, challenging and exciting. Our leadership team has hit the ground running and we will continue to run for the remaining 716 days of our watch.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Steven M. Budar, National Commodore