

NEWS RELEASE

Chicagoland In-Water Boat Show

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CHICAGOLAND SUCCESSFULLY KICKS OFF FALL SHOW SEASON

There was rain in most surrounding areas but according to dealers in the Progressive Chicagoland In-Water Boat Show at Michigan City, which actually saw very few showers, the docks were filled with serious buyers last weekend.

The Chicagoland event was the first of many major in-water shows scheduled around the country this fall leading to the final event in St. Petersburg (FL) in early December. And, the results at this first show make the fall circuit look promising.

“What we really like about this in-water show is it brings out the boaters,” said Kyle Stenzel of Spring Brook Marina (Prestige Yachts, Jeanneau Powerboats). “Weather may have hurt a bit on opening day but traffic has been steady with a great crowd on Saturday. They’re very qualified prospects; most of them have a boat of some kind. That’s who we want to be in front of.”

Stenzel noted they closed a pair of million-dollar deals on their Prestige 50’s during the show and he has 6 very solid prospects already scheduled for this week.

“We currently have 14 boats sold totaling \$1.75 million,” reported Rod Bensch, Director of Sales/Owner of B & E Marine (Sea Ray, Boston Whaler), and we took in 5 good trade-ins. We closed our largest boat on display, a 470 Sundancer, and had excellent reception on several of our new Sea Ray models, like the new 400 Sundancer and the 310 SLX.

“Our Friday night Owner’s Party was well attended despite a threat of rain,” continued Bensch, “and the fact is there’s no way we could ever be face-to-face with so many people without being here at the show.”

The show is produced by the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association, and the new president, Bryan Ralston, made some major changes this year, to the apparent delight of everyone. “It’s all about the experience these days,” contends Ralston, “so we changed our image to a summer rendezvous for boaters. The atmosphere was fun, which is what boating is all about.”

To do it, Ralston added things like daily stage shows starring popular singer-songwriter Jeff Tucker; a first-ever interactive BoatKidz Zone featuring Twiggy the Water Skiing Squirrel; a food truck rally built around the popular Blue Chip Casino Food Trailer; and other features to round out a rendezvous feeling.

“I think the improvements to the show this year,” said Stenzel. “They gave the people that came out a great experience. They’ll remember it, talk about it and that will pay dividends in future years. It’s opened a new era for this show.”