

Marine Task Force Kicks off Jr. Officer Program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Marine task force kicks off Jr. Officer Program at Fort Myers Boat Show

Fort Myers, Fla., Nov. 7, 2008 – The Lee County Marine Law Enforcement Task Force is set to debut its newest tool for spreading the word on water safety – a Web site designed to educate kids about the importance of wearing life jackets as they become "Junior Task Force Officers."

Task force members will hand out special items to kids who attend the Fort Myers Boat Show, which runs Thursday, Nov. 13, through Sunday, Nov. 16, at Harborside Convention Center, the Fort Myers City Yacht Basin and Edwards Drive. These items will direct kids to the official Task Force Jr. Officer Web page, www.jrmarinetaskforce.com.

Kids can become Jr. Task Force members by taking a water safety quiz and taking a pledge to always wear their life jacket. With parental permission, Jr. Task Force members will receive a certificate and an official Jr. Task Force Officer badge in the mail. High resolution artwork of badge (left) and webpage is available upon request to VERVAECKEJ@leegov.com.

The Lee County Marine Law Enforcement Task Force main Web site will also make its debut at the Fort Myers Boat Show. The main task force website, www.marinetaskforce.com, serves as a portal where boaters can find links to agencies in the task force and links to a variety of boating and marine-related resources. Both websites will go live on Tuesday, November 11th, in honor of Veterans day.

The task force is supporting Florida's "Wear it" campaign. The campaign goal is to increase the number of recreational boaters who consistently wear life jackets while on the water. The task force urges all boaters to set a good example by wearing a life jacket.

For more information on the Wear It Florida campaign, go to www.wearitflorida.com/index.htm.

The Lee County Marine Law Enforcement Task Force was formed in 2003 to put forth a unified effort of marine law enforcement. Every law enforcement agency that conducts waterborne operations is a member of the task force. Member agencies include: Lee County Sheriff's Office, Fort Myers Police Department, Cape Coral Police Department, Sanibel Police Department, U.S. Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Marlin, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

CALENDAR LISTING

Nov. 13-16: Release of Jr. Officer Web site and invitation to area youth to stop by the Lee County Marine Law Enforcement Task Force booth. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13, through Saturday, Nov. 15, and 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 16 at Harborside Convention Center, 1375 Monroe St., Fort Myers. Show admission is free to those 12 and under; adults, \$9. Program participation is free. (239) 533-8109 or (239) 656-7083.

Note to media: Boats will be available upon request for media needing on-water video or photo opportunities. Contact Justin McBride at 239-292-5467 if you would like to reserve a spot aboard a law enforcement vessel.

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