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| **Water Sports Foundation, Inc.**  Division of WSIA  P.O Box 568512  Orlando, FL 32856-8512 | Text, logo  Description automatically generated | MEDIA CONTACT  Wanda Kenton Smith  Director of Communications  [wanda@WaterSportsFoundation.com](mailto:wanda@WaterSportsFoundation.com)  407.697.8055  **National Boating Safety Media Center:**  [www.watersportsfoundation.com/media/](http://www.watersportsfoundation.com/media/) |

# Water Sports Foundation’s Inaugural Boating Safety National

# Public Relations Outreach Initiative Far Exceeds Expectations

***For Immediate Release:***October 20,Orlando, FL - A national public relations campaign by the nonprofit Water Sports Foundation has far exceeded preliminary expectations, generating more than 600 million positive boating safety media impressions over a five-month period, from April – August 2021.

Designed as a proof-of-concept project funded by a modest nonprofit grant of $89,000 from the U.S. Coast Guard, the Water Sports Foundation’s PR campaign delivered a whopping 490 news stories promoting boating safety and 601,140,419 earned media impressions —nearly 10 times its initial goal of 65 million.

The campaign’s widespread coverage included media appearances and interviews on television stations including two live segments on *The Weather Channel* on the Fourth of July, along with dozens of segments on ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX affiliates; *Yahoo News* and *Yahoo Finance*; bylined articlein *Men’s Journal;* and newspaper stories in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, *Detroit News,* the *Portland Press Herald* and Patch network affiliates in multiple major market communities, among others. Marine coverage was equally robust, with targeted messaging reaching hundreds of thousands of recreational boaters during the busy summer boating season.

“The Water Sports Foundation couldn’t be more ecstatic with the outstanding results generated in promoting boating safety through our first major PR initiative,” said Jim Emmons, executive director. “Even though we worked with a scaled down project budget to start, we have more than proven the concept and smashed our original goal, resulting in high profile coverage of boating safety in hundreds of media platforms throughout the United States during the busiest boating period of the year.”

The project’s first phase included the development and launch of a robust National Boating Safety Media Resource Center [**www.watersportsfoundation.com/media/**](http://www.watersportsfoundation.com/media/) which was housed on the Water Sports Foundation website. This center served as a one-stop media hub for all things boating safety, featuring 13 different menu options with content provided and produced by the Water Sports Foundation, along with contributions from multiple marine industry and boating safety stakeholders including the National Safe Boating Council, RBFF, Sea Tow Foundation, BoatUS, NASBLA, Info-Link, the Outdoor Foundation, NauticEd, dozens of boat manufacturers and others. During the initial campaign, the site attracted 8.5k visitors, resulting in thousands of page views and downloads of free content, licensed imagery and video.

Emmons said, “We knew we had to develop a strong website as the backbone of the campaign to supply high quality content and resources free of charge for media use and consumption. We were very pleased to partner with many recreational boating and safety organizations to create a powerful repository of the best boating safety content anywhere on the web. This proved a win-win proposition for everyone as our media outreach brought thousands of journalists to our media center and provided an excellent showcase of boating safety content, resources and contacts.”

In April, the campaign announced the debut of the media center to a targeted list of 4,100 general-assignment, outdoor and marine journalists throughout the nation. The response was immediate, with follow-up calls pouring into WSF’s PR/communications team and online hotline. “On many days we were hosting multiple television and newspaper interviews from media outlets all across the country,” said Emmons.

Additional PR outreach releases featuring recreational boating safety recommendations continued throughout the summer immediately prior to the most active boating holidays of the year, including Memorial Day and Independence Day.

“Our PR and media relations team headed by veteran marine marketer Wanda Kenton Smith of Kenton Smith Marketing created sound strategy and produced some very compelling content with engaging headlines that captured media interest and response,” said Emmons. “Besides the fact that media recognized a great story and acted on it at least 490 times, the value extends far beyond our initial efforts, as these news stories will live on the Internet for years to come, reminding boaters of the importance of using simple safety precautions while boating.”

The project consistently delivered four major tenants of recreational boating safety, urging boaters to wear life jackets; avoid impairment; take a boater education course; and to use the boat’s engine cutoff switch device when underway. These priorities are based on previous U.S. Coast Guard Boating Accident Report Data.

“We appreciate the opportunity to work with the U.S. Coast Guard on projects like these to promote boating safety,” said Emmons, whose team is now gearing up for a second- year outreach initiative. “We welcome any other marine industry stakeholders to walk alongside us in this important effort to educate and empower boaters to keep them safer on our nation’s waterways.”

A final report with additional insight to the project’s overwhelming success is being prepared and will be shared with the U.S. Coast Guard before December 31, 2021.

For more information, please call the Water Sports Foundation (407) 900-9041 or email [jim@WaterSportsFoundation.com](mailto:jim@WaterSportsFoundation.com).

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