

# Boating Industry Magazine Announces 2008 Top 100 and Leadership Alliance

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., June 24 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – With the boating market facing some of the most difficult economic conditions in recent history, it is of vital importance that boating consumers are directed toward the most stable and professional dealers to buy and service their boats. Thanks to Boating Industry magazine and its soon-to-be-published list of the 2008 Top 100 Dealers, consumers will have access to the best of the best dealers at their fingertips in short order.



The Top 100 Dealers, a ranking of those marine dealers that are unsurpassed in overall business operations, customer service, marketing and professionalism, has developed a growing reputation not only for celebrating dealer successes, but for aiding the marine dealer community in its efforts to improve. And to help bring the Boating Industry Top 100 to life, Affinity, the magazine's parent company, created the Leadership Alliance-an elite group of the marine industry's leading suppliers. These companies were invited to participate because they possess as one of their corporate values a true belief in, and commitment to, raising the bar of professionalism across all marine industry sectors, particularly dealers.

"The Boating Industry Top 100 has, in short order, become the most coveted award in the marine market," explained Tammy Galvin, vice president of Affinity Boating Media. "Marine dealers are on the front line with consumers every day, and this is one way we can help provide much needed benchmarking information for all other dealers to measure themselves against."

"While most industry awards are given to those dealers that sell the most boats, our Top 100 program is much more qualitatively focused," said Matt Gruhn, Editor-in-Chief of Boating Industry, "thereby leveling the playing field for all dealers and directing consumers to those dealers that can best deliver on the dream that boat ownership promises."

The 2008 Leadership Alliance members include: BRP US Inc./Evinrude, GE Capital Solutions, BoatTrader.com, Volvo Penta, ADP Lightspeed, Honda Marine, Channel Blade Technologies, Manheim Specialty Auctions and the Marine Retailers Association of America.

Boating Industry magazine, along with the Leadership Alliance, will announce the 2008 Top 100 at an invitation-only gala awards ceremony in Las Vegas on

Nov. 19, 2008.

### **Meet the 2008 Leadership Alliance:**

Boating Industry magazine, a 79-year-old business-to-business publication owned by Affinity Boating Media Group, a subsidiary of Ventura, Calif.-based Affinity Group Inc., is the most authoritative and widely respected magazine serving the marine industry. Visit [www.boating-industry.com](http://www.boating-industry.com) to learn more about the Top 100 and view past years' winners.

BRP U.S. Inc./Evinrude, Sturtevant, Wis., combines 100 years of Evinrude experience with 50 years of Ski-Doo snowmobiles, 40 years of Sea-Doo personal watercraft, and nearly 90 years of Rotax engines. Today, its Evinrude E-TEC two-stroke direct injection outboard engines deliver an unmatched boating experience, with more power, better fuel efficiency and less maintenance than any other engine. All this means more of what boaters want most: spending more time on the water to create lasting memories. Visit [www.evinrude.com](http://www.evinrude.com).

GE Capital Solutions, Hoffman Estates, Ill., as a recognized leader in the marine industry for more than 30 years, supports its customers with knowledgeable staff, focused on providing outstanding service. Its Commercial Distribution Finance unit creates customized financing programs to help its marine manufacturer and dealer customers grow their businesses. Its array of financing programs and services include inventory finance and seasonal credit lines, pre-owned & pre-sold programs, real estate financing, equipment financing and business credit card. For more information about CDF, call 888/873-8232 or visit [www.ge.com/cdf](http://www.ge.com/cdf).

Boat Trader is the buying and selling resource for dealers and consumers in print and online, attracting 19.8 million visitors to its Web site and offering more than 400,000 magazines in 2007 alone. Headquartered in Norfolk, Va., BoatTrader.com provides inventory listings to nearly 3,200 watercraft dealers, generating more than 1 million leads each year. With more than 125,000 new and used listings, Boat Trader is the consumer resource for their next boat purchase. For more information, visit: [www.BoatTrader.com](http://www.BoatTrader.com).

Volvo Penta, Chesapeake, Va., has become the fastest growing marine engine company in the world by constantly developing innovative new products and services. The company, founded in 1907, introduced its first outboard engine in 1922, the first in-line 6-cylinder diesel in 1946, the first sterndrive in 1959, the first duo-prop in 1982 and Electronic Diesel Control in 1995. Then, in 2004 Volvo Penta changed the face of marine propulsion forever with the Volvo Penta Inboard Performance System (IPS), followed by the Volvo Penta IPS Joystick. Today, a total of 91 boat builders producing 130 plus models worldwide incorporate the system. Visit [www.volvopenta.com](http://www.volvopenta.com).

Backed by the Automatic Data Processing Company, the LightspeedMarine dealer management system features five integrated modules to help dealers run their businesses more effectively and profitably. They allow a dealer to manage transaction data on sales, parts and service departments, organize each department as its own profit center, automatically track assets and liabilities, analyze departmental and overall dealership performance and

track accounts payables and receivables as well as handle payroll. For more information, call 800/521-0309 or visit [www.adplightspeed.com](http://www.adplightspeed.com).

Working to change the shape of the marine industry, Honda Marine offered the industry's first full line of four-stroke outboards long before its competitors followed suit. Honda Marine, Alpharetta, Ga., continues to improve its engine line by incorporating technologies from its highly advanced automotive and racing heritage. For example, Honda Marine outboards are based on technology derived from Formula I and Indy cars, racing motorcycles and street vehicles. In addition, many Honda Marine outboards include exclusive technological features found in automobile engines used in the Honda Accord, CR-V, Element and Civic. Visit: [www.hondamarine.com](http://www.hondamarine.com).

Channel Blade Technologies, Virginia Beach, Va., provides online marketing, lead management and sales education solutions that drive customers from the Web to the showroom, increasing traffic and sales for thousands of manufacturers and dealers in the marine, RV and powersports industries. Channel Blade's Web-based solutions eliminate the need for costly hardware, on-site support and software upgrades while helping marine companies grow their businesses profitably. For more information, call (877) CH-BLADE, or visit [www.channelblade.com](http://www.channelblade.com).

Manheim Specialty Auctions, a division of 60-plus-year-old auction provider Manheim, offers auctions with sales dedicated to boats, RVs, motorcycles, recreational vehicles and powersport vehicles at 20 locations in North America. Benefits for dealers who participate in the auction process include a critical mass of buyers and sellers, credible pricing, market liquidity, affordable participation and technology applications. Customers can take advantage of on-site and online bidding using a variety of technologies such as Manheim Simulcast, which allows dealers to participate in live auctions online. Visit [www.manheim.com](http://www.manheim.com).

The Marine Retailers Association of America is the leading not-for-profit organization aimed at promoting the recreational marine industry and the welfare of the marine retailer. The association raises the standards of retailing within the industry, provides its members a common source of information concerning all aspects of marine retailing and serves as the voice within the industry and in Washington regarding issues concerning marine dealers nationwide. Visit: [www.mraa.com](http://www.mraa.com).

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