



Contacts: Jack Hardy, APR
Communications Manager
(360) 335-3683
jack@portcw.com

David Ripp
Executive Director
(360) 835-5560
david@portcw.com

Port of Camas-Washougal Encourages Life Jacket Use During National Safe Boating Week

Painted launch ramp messages and lifejacket loaners promote boating safety

Washougal, Wash. – May 20, 2013 – The Port of Camas-Washougal joined the U.S. Coast Guard auxiliary today in a combined effort to promote boating safety with safety messages painted directly on the pavement of boat launch ramps adjacent to the port's life jacket storage box, filled with free loaner lifejackets in the marina.

"Our goal is to promote boating safety with our free life jacket loaners and a reminder message directly to boaters," said Mark Hamrick, port harbormaster.

According to Gay Sipes, with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 78, there is a concerted effort to avoid a repetition of last year's tragedy, when 13-year-old Jake Whitlock drowned in the Columbia River last Memorial Day Weekend. "We, as volunteer life savers were devastated by his loss."

"The key is to educate the boating public to wear life jackets at all times while on the water," said Sipes.

During National Safe Boating Week, May 18-24 (<http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com>) the port is one of three major launch ramps in Clark County that will highlight this safety message by painting permanent reminders, 'Life Jacket Zone,' on boat launch ramps. A photo of the stencil is here: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Port-of-Camas-Washougal/169979590926>.

News Release

24 South A Street
Washougal, WA 98671



Although the weather resistant yellow Krylon® pavement spray paint is durable, it will eventually fade after several years. The Coast Guard auxiliary will maintain and repaint the messages as needed.

The U.S. Coast Guard auxiliary teaches boating education classes monthly, in conjunction with the Clark County Marine Patrol Deputies. "We try to educate boaters about the importance of using life jackets, and will continue to find ways to remind them to just wear it! Wearing a life jacket would have saved 90 percent of boating related drowning victims," Sipes added.

The port has offered life jacket loaners for several years and recently added a dozen new life jackets, in youth and adult sizes, courtesy of a grant received from the Washington State Parks boating safety program.

The port will continue the boating safety education at the port's August 17, 2013 Riverside Family Fun and Concert event, where the Clark County Marine Patrol will provide boater education and safety, along with a demonstration by a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter and rescue swimmer.

About the Port of Camas-Washougal

The port brings jobs and recreational opportunities through a 400-acre industrial park, a 79-hangar general aviation airport and 350-slip pleasure boat marina. Grove Field is a small, general aviation airport with a state-of-the-art fueling station and 14 tie-downs in addition to the 79 hangars. The marina is the largest publicly owned marina on the Washington side of the Columbia River and has a floating restaurant, launch ramp, nearby hotel, fueling station, guest docks and is homeport to the Dolphin Yacht Club. Newly acquired and in the planning stages, are 13.25 acres of Waterfront Property connecting a 14-acre parcel of port-owned land to the east of the marina. The industrial park boasts a 90+ percent occupancy rate of more than 40 businesses with an annual payroll of \$8.9 million and is adjacent to Steigerwald Commerce Center, 120+ acres of property currently under development. The port also manages Captain William Clark Park at Cottonwood Beach, the adjacent protective levee and Parkersville National Historic site. More information is found at www.portcw.com.

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