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November 2011 Newsletter

Happy to be Here

Greetings to all our valued customers and friends;

I am happy to be back at the Manitowoc Marina! For many of you I am a familiar face from my previous years here as the Service and Operations Manager for Sailboats Inc. and to some of you I am a complete stranger. For those of you in the latter category that is something I need to start changing immediately.

To give you a brief background of me, from 1988-2006 I worked at the Manitowoc Marina as the Service and Operations Manager. In 2006, I left to take a position as VP/General Manager at Yacht Works in Sister Bay, WI. Throughout my career, one of my single, most driving, ambitions was to own and operate my own marina. Finally, on October 1, 2011 that dream came true as I purchased the Manitowoc Marina operation from Sailboats, Inc. There were many reasons why I choose to make the investment in Manitowoc as opposed to some other operation. I have to say, without any hesitation, that the single most driving force was the outstanding team that was presently in place here (almost all of whom were my hires from my previous tenure here). It is often quoted that people are a company's single largest asset. I believe that it is the "right" people that comprise a company's single largest asset and I am fortunate to have those "right" people in place today.

As one can imagine, there are some improvements that I want to make to enhance all of your experiences during your stay with us whether it is winter only, summer only, or year around. Many of the immediate improvements I will attempt to lay out for you below, but I also need your help. Included in this newsletter is a form for you to fill out which is information I need to better familiarize myself with you (and your boat) and to also ask for your input to what you like about our operation and what can I do to make it better. Please feel free to think "outside the box" in regards to improvement or enhancements. Obviously, I may not have the means to implement all of your ideas, but we need to start somewhere with a broad vision in order to get somewhere.

So let's start.....

Facilities: The Manitowoc Marina is over 25 years old. It has served boaters well during those years, but will need continuous maintenance and improvement to serve boaters well into the future. I recognize this as one of my biggest challenges, particularly given the economics of city government today. Rest assured, I am not going to wait. Already today we are in the process of cleaning and pressure washing the docks to get a jump on the project prior to next summer. Additionally, I am developing a plan to tighten up the fingers on E dock and re-float many of the piers. I am working with the city to repair the more than 50 inoperable light fixtures all around the property.

The upper deck of the administration building I think is terribly under-utilized. My plan is to "spruce it up" and to make it a space for all to enjoy and maybe even add curtains or such to make it more weather friendly. You will also notice next year that the cob webs will disappear as well!

The Service Center does not look or meet the expectations one would expect from a world class service operation. Look for a cleaned up and slightly modernized version by next spring

Bookkeeping and Technology: The world has changed and so must we. There are a number of changes underway that will be different than the way things were in the past. First of all, we are in the process of installing a new marine software package that will allow a much cleaner and, hopefully, easier to understand invoicing process for you. We will be making a gradual move to a more electronic process of communicating whether it is invoices or monthly newsletters. Speaking of invoices, all invoices will be payable upon receipt. Monthly statements will only be sent to those of you with an outstanding balance. I apologize in advance for any problems this may cause. Secondly, we will be rolling out a new website later this winter. It should be very informative and intuitive. Look for the blog within it to keep up to speed with the marina's news.

Ship's Store: I believe that a successful retail operation starts with an understanding of what your customer wants or needs and to compliment that with what product or service you have an intimate knowledge of. Look for an improved look starting with hardwood floors and improved lighting to make your shopping experience more comfortable. Also, we are diligently researching products that fit not only our boating friends, but community friends as well. Hopefully, you will be pleasantly surprised by the new look of the Ship's Store next spring.

Marina: Over the past 20 years, Manitowoc marina has built a reputation as a world-class service facility specializing in major repairs and refits. It is not surprising that this department happens to consume a lot of the energy and focus of the entire operation. My challenge, which I am firmly committed to, is to attempt to separate the 2 entities being the boatyard and the marina and to give the marina the attention and focus it deserves. You will begin to notice that with the maintenance as mentioned above and with the increased level of customer service that you deserve. Next summer you will not find random boats scattered about the parking lot and most boatyard equipment will be stored away out of sight. Our dock attendants will have bikes to help make sure that you assisted departing and returning to your slip and we will keep an eye on your boat while you are away. My plan is to step up the level of cleanliness relative to the restrooms, customer lounge, and outside areas. I am also looking for additional amenities that will make your stay much more enjoyable and family friendly.

Service: What can I say? The service department has been the backbone to the Manitowoc Marina for years. We have an outstanding team with over 150 years of combined experience that can handle any project no matter how small or large. But we can't rest on our laurels. Look for increased service department hours and an aggressive, yet affordable, mobile service to provide the outstanding service more often and further away than ever before.

Boat Sales: Whether sail or power, Manitowoc Marina will be actively assisting our friends and clients with either finding the right boat, or selling their current boat. We already have several nice listings and I am in the process of planning our marketing and boat show schedule for the winter months. Please drop me a line if you want more information.

So there you have it! That pretty much lays out my vision for your marina. I am extremely grateful for the kind words of encouragement I heard from many of you. I look forward to working with all of you to help make Manitowoc Marina one of the premier destinations on Lake Michigan. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, I am always available.

Regards,

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November Hours

Service Department M-F 7:30-4:30 weekends by appointment
Ship's Store M-F 8:00-4:00 Sat. 9:00-4:00 Sundays Closed
(Thanksgiving Weekend- service department closed Store open Friday
Saturday 9:00-4:00)

Check out our year end blow out sale in the Ship's Store