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SAIL AMERICA CONFERENCE REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

Warren, RI – June 5, 2017: The biennial Sail America Industry Conference (SAIC) wrapped up a productive two days in Milwaukee last week, leaving over one hundred attendees excited about the industry and engaged with each other. “With sailing, learning, brainstorming, and laughing, what was the best part of the Sail America Industry Conference?” asked Jim Abel, Regional Vice President, West Marine and Sail America President. The answer was a resounding, “The people.” Attendees hailed from Washington to Tennessee to Newport to Los Angeles with nearly a third attending for their first time.

On Wednesday afternoon in Chamber of Commerce weather, the highly contested industry regatta was held in six Ensigns on Lake Michigan and set the tone for next two days of content. Bright and early on Thursday and Friday mornings, attendees were treated to a mix of marketing ideas from outside the industry, insightful data from within the industry, and a brainstorm session designed to work on common challenges. On the final day, keynote speaker Bill Wagner from ARI Leadership shared current ideas about our business’ digital marketing. When asked “What is an integrated marketing plan?” he used a bingo card analogy to stress the need to use multiple channels to get your message out. “You now have the ability to reach your customer 24/7 – it’s an unprecedented opportunity,” he continued, sharing specific tips for small businesses.

The previous day, Heather Idema from Bonnier Corporation (Sailing World/Cruising World) introduced “the Sailor’s Voice” - new data from a study conducted exclusively for SAIC earlier this spring. Among the multi-faceted findings, respondents’ concerns for future participation include higher costs, environmental concerns, and rules and regulations. They define themselves as advocates for sailing, mentors, influencers, and educators. And 13% sail with a pet. Sail America and Sailing World/Cruising World will distribute the full results this summer.

“This conference was full of useful ideas, and actionable content. I encourage anyone involved in the sailing industry to plan on attending in 2019,” Laurent Fabre, President of Beneteau America. According to Katie Kelly, Association Manager of Sail America, the biennial Sail America Industry conference will next be presented in 2019, with dates and location to be announced by early 2018.

The Sail America Industry Conference was presented by B& with additional sponsors support from LH-Finance, Gill, The Moorings, West Marine, New England Ropes/Robline, Yanmar, Beneteau, Ronstan, Cruising World/Sailing World, Imtra Corporation, J/Boats, Elan Yachts, National Marine Manufacturers Association, The Hilb Group, US Sailing, and partners Association of Yacht Sales Professionals and Certified Professional Yacht Broker.

About Sail America:

Sail America is the trade association for the US sailing industry, providing leadership and a unified voice. Established in 1990 by members of the sailing industry, Sail America now has over 200 members representing all segments of the sailing market. For more information, visit SailAmerica.com