

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

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Suffolk Police Department and U. S. Coast Guard Join Forces to Make Waterways Safe

SUFFOLK, Va. (May 18, 2010) – Suffolk has a new tool to fight crime, and protect its waterways, thanks to a generous grant from the Coast Guard. On May 7, 2010, the Suffolk Police Department took delivery of its new SAFE boat, as part of a no-match American Recovery and Reinvestment grant through the United States Coast Guard. The Suffolk Police Department was awarded this grant with the understanding that the boat would be able to be deployed in a regional fashion.

The Police Department intends to assist the Coast Guard in regional efforts such as search and rescue missions, escorts, regional Coast Guard training operations, and responses to calls for service received by the Coast Guard to which the Suffolk Police Marine Patrol is in close proximity. The Coast Guard monitors the marine channel so they frequently receive calls regarding capsized boats, boating under the influence, and other calls, to which a quick response is desired. By funding the Suffolk Police Marine Patrol, the Department can assist the Coast Guard with a more rapid response to incidents such as this. When not assisting the Coast Guard, the Department will have a boat on the Suffolk waterways almost daily from May 15th through September 15th.

This specific boat was chosen because it is designed for use in police patrol boating, while being custom fitted to conduct dive operations. It has walk around capacity, while at the same time providing enough space for dive equipment used in recovery operations.

The Suffolk Police Department spent some time interfacing with members of the boating community, soliciting their concerns in advance of receiving the new vessel. Their intent will be to educate the boating community on issues of safety, as well as strictly enforce laws regarding Boating While Intoxicated and other more significant boating violations.

“We are very fortunate to have this boat, and a great partnership with the U. S. Coastguard. Regional initiatives such as this allow both our agencies to maximize our response capabilities. “ said Chief Thomas Bennett of the Suffolk Police Department. Lt. Chris White, Chief Enforcement Branch of the U. S. Coast Guard remarked, “The Suffolk Police Department is an agency the Coast Guard has come to rely on. This new

SAFE Boat is a tremendous asset to have in the port. The citizens of Hampton Roads deserve a safe waterway to work and play and the Suffolk Police Department is committed to providing a secure environment.”

Press Opportunity

The Suffolk Police Department invites members of the press to tour the boat, take a ride, and interview our staff members on this new collaborative initiative. **This media event is scheduled for Thursday May 20th from 1pm to 3pm at Constant’s Wharf, located behind the Hilton Garden Inn on E. Constance Rd.** Members of the Coast Guard were unable to participate in this event due to previously scheduled events. Lt. Chris White, Chief, Enforcement Branch of the Hampton Roads Sector of U. S. Coast Guard may be contacted for interviews or comments at 434-8973 (cell) or 295-2043 (work). We encourage you to make contact with him, as his agency is integral to this partnership.