



MITEC

Making Progress to Strengthen Industry

By Caroline Chetelat, Director of ABYC Marketing and Communication

By now, it should be no secret that our industry is facing a shortage of skilled workers. There have been two conferences on Marine Industry Technical Training (COMITT) over the past two years, articles have been written in the trade publications and many regional initiatives to combat this shortage have recently been implemented. However, the newly-formed Marine Industry Technical Education Council (MITEC), which was created as a result of the 2005 Conference on Marine Industry Technical Training, is attempting to tackle this critical issue from a national perspective.

MITEC has accomplished a lot in its first few months in existence, and we are

making good progress on the strategic plan, or “Play Book,” we crafted. While the work is being accomplished by each of MITEC’s five divisions, we are not afraid to admit that MITEC has been somewhat of a stealth operation. By that, I mean we have been out of the limelight. MITEC has been quietly directing our efforts to several key initiatives on which we would like to update you. It is our hope that the motto “Do first and talk later” will provide a high level of credibility for MITEC.

A major accomplishment was the launch of the MITEC website, www.boatingcareerinfo.org, targeted towards educators, counselors, young people looking for career direction,

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career changers and anyone else looking for information on the boating industry as a possible career path. If you visit this site, you will find:

- facts, figures and information that show the relative trends of the marine industry;
- a career listing where visitors can find descriptions of the various jobs available to those interested in the industry, as well as a career outlook for each;
- a section with frequently asked questions;
- an information and assistance page for workforce development initiatives in each state that provides insight on how companies, dealerships, associations, etc., can tap into their local workforce development boards or organization to obtain money for technical training;
- a searchable educational provider catalog that provides a list of marine technical training programs for the U.S. and Canada that is a key component of the site.

We believe this searchable educational provider catalog is the first and most comprehensive listing of high school, college and technical schools, as well as incumbent worker training, to include certification and professional development opportunities within the marine industry. This catalog can be used by those looking for training opportunities, employers interested in building relationships with schools and marine career programs and as an additional avenue for employers to locate and recruit new employees.

And while this is a first step, we know that it will not be the final version of this Web site. MITEC will continue to update www.boatingcareerinfo.org to ensure it provides the most up-to-date career information. In the future, MITEC would like to add items such as salary information and an online career pathing function that will help identify the sequential steps in education, skills and experience building needed to attain specific career goals.

MITEC is also on its way to completing a comprehensive technical skills analysis of the marine industry in early 2007. This is an important first step for building better technical training. Such an analysis will be able to provide employers and educators with information such as what an individual needs to know to perform a specific job, what tools they need to accomplish the job/task and how proficient that person should be in that task. And while the skills analysis can show what skills an individual does or does not have and/or is necessary for a job, MITEC would also like to take the next steps toward conducting an industry needs analysis. This analysis would reveal what the true industry situation is in terms of training requirements as well as workforce sector needs.

Additionally, MITEC feels that the time is right to start exploring some form of industry-wide workforce “certification” pathway. Such a certification is crucial for our industry if we are to successfully compete in the global marketplace. On January 18, 2007 in Orlando, Fla., MITEC will host a Workforce Certification workshop the day before the National Marine Service Expo (NMSE) begins. Although there are a number of options available for the industry to address certification and accreditation, one of the options the MITEC is considering is to open up a dialog with auto industry experts. As a first step, MITEC has invited the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), and its accreditation division, the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), to discuss their program and how it might be adapted to meet marine industry needs. *Your thoughts and input would greatly assist MITEC develop a program best suited for the marine industry, and we encourage attendance by all interested parties.* Please check the MITEC website, www.boatingcareerinfo.org, for event particulars. Customers have begun to be educated in the buying process to look for certified boats, sold and serviced by

certified dealers, kept in certified marinas, and their expectation is that a “certified technician” is repairing or servicing their certified boat. The marine industry needs to make that a reality.

And while many organizations, such as ABYC, have a certified technician program, many aspects of boat maintenance, constructions, overhaul and repair are not subject to a recognized certification process. For example, if you have an entry level technician trained by an institution that developed its curriculum based on an industry standard skill set to meet the expectations of their employer, doesn't that entry level person deserve some form of certification? Should there not be industry-recognized accreditation granted to the institution who trained or produced the entry-level employee? MITEC believes that a recognized certification and accreditation program for the industry, as well as training programs, will improve the quality of our training programs and the quality and safety of the end product.

In addition to the Workforce Certification workshop being held in January, MITEC will hold the 2007 Conference on Marine Industry Technical Training later in the year to allow for us to expand participation. Anyone interested in our industry's future workforce is encouraged to attend both of these events – check for details as they become available on the website, www.boatingcareerinfo.org.

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