

Practice safe boating skills this summer

Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial kick-off for the boating season in Oregon, and the Oregon State Marine Board wants to remind boaters heading to the water to stay sober, wear a life jacket and be courteous to other boaters.

"With the beautiful weather, people are lured to the water for relaxation and fun" said Ashley Massey, OSMB public affairs specialist. "Every year, a fun day can turn tragic because of alcohol. It impairs your judgment and you take risks you normally wouldn't. We see a lot of reckless operation and discourteous behavior, not to mention people jumping into freezing water when they are drinking."

For decades, Coast Guard statistics have shown that 50 percent of boating accidents and one-third of boating fatalities each year are alcohol-related.

Alcohol or other substances impair judgment, vision, balance and coordination and the effects are amplified on the water due to the motion of the boat and environmental stressors such as glare, wind and sun – increasing the likelihood of boating accidents and fatalities. The reality is that any

amount of alcohol impairs a person to some degree, usually starting with their inhibitions.

In Oregon, a boater is considered legally "under the influence" with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent or higher. What this means is the boater will automatically lose boating privileges and pay a hefty fine. Marine deputies can still arrest boaters for observed impairment below 0.08 percent BAC, which can still lead to a boating under the influence of intoxicants (BUI) conviction. An impaired boat operator who is arrested for BUI faces fines of up to \$6,250 and/or up to one year in jail, loss of boat operation privileges and suspension of boat registration for up to three years.

"Reckless operation is taken very seriously," said Massey. "We have to be tough on violators to keep Oregon's waterways safe for everyone, because innocent people are usually the victims."

To avoid receiving a BUI citation and to prevent boating accidents and fatalities, the Marine Board offers the following tips:

- Leave alcohol at home or

on the shore. Instead, take along a variety of non-alcoholic beverages.

- If you are feeling fatigued, take a break on land and return to the water when you are re-energized and alert.

- If you dock somewhere to eat and choose to drink alcohol with your meal, wait a minimum of one hour for each drink consumed before operating your watercraft.

- Being alcohol-free while onboard is the safest way to enjoy the water. Intoxicated passengers are equally at risk of injury and death.

- Operators and passengers should wear properly fitting personal flotation devices (life jackets). A full description of life jackets can be found at <http://www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/safety/safety.shtml>.

- Take a boating safety course. In Oregon, all boaters must now take a boating safety course and carry a boater education card when operating a powerboat greater than 10 horsepower.

For more information about safe boating in Oregon, contact Ashley Massey, OSMB public affairs specialist, 503-378-2623 or visit www.boatoregon.com.

Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer, General Manager,
West Oregon Electric Cooperative



It's hard to be greener than we are at WOEC – but we're trying.

In the past year, climate change has been in the news on a daily basis. Advertising campaigns are now all about "being green." One thing is certain: It's hard to be much greener than West Oregon Electric Cooperative (WOEC).

Only three states have a lower carbon footprint in the country than Oregon. As a member of West Oregon Electric Co-op, you are using electricity that is 97 percent carbon free. Your co-op purchases primarily clean, renewable hydropower with a mix of wind, nuclear, gas and a small portion of coal. It all adds up to affordable electricity and a very small carbon footprint.

Your co-op has been very involved in discussions about climate change through our state and federal associations that advocate for electric co-op members. Our message to elected officials is to focus on affordable, workable and sustainable programs to meet carbon objectives. Climate change is a global problem and Oregonians cannot solve the problem alone.

We are, however, willing to do our part – and more. Oregon electric co-ops have brought forward legislation to increase our energy efficiency and conservation programs in a way that makes sense for small utilities and rural communities. We believe this approach is superior to a complicated, bureaucratic cap and trade program that will simply drive up the cost of electricity and create wealth for Wall Street investors.

Through its involvement in PNGC, West Oregon Electric Co-op has owned part of a Coffin Butte, a project that produces electricity from methane output at a landfill near Corvallis since 1995. WOEC through PNGC is also involved in a project to produce electricity from waves in the ocean, a solar project, and is in the beginning stages of looking into a biomass project. By working together with 14 other electric cooperatives in three states, WOEC can participate in renewable energy projects that make sense both from an energy and an environmental standpoint.

West Oregon Electric Cooperative offers the opportunity to purchase "green power" through our Green Power program. We also provide rebates for the purchase of energy efficient clothes washers, electric water heaters, and weatherization (windows and insulation). Please contact us if you want to learn more about ways our efficiency programs can save you electricity and money or to sign up for our Green Power program.

Oregon co-ops and WOEC are proud of our record of providing reliable, affordable electricity while protecting the environment. It's harder to be greener than your electric cooperative. But we're always trying.

You can learn how to make yourself heard

by the American Counseling Association

When we were young most of us were told to "speak up," to "say what's on your mind," and to "tell us what you think." But many of us find that advice hard to follow as we mature. Instead, we hold our silence and end up feeling frustrated or embarrassed because we didn't express what we really felt or believed.

Speaking up can and should be a positive experience. Done correctly, it demonstrates our willingness to share our experiences, perspectives and suggestions. And while speaking up may sometimes bring a negative reaction, it still can leave us feeling satisfied by knowing that we shared what we believe to be right or helpful.

If you find it hard to express your thoughts, some simple principles might make it easier to speak your mind.

The first one is simply to be courageous. We often don't speak out simply because of self-doubt. It may have us fearing that what we have to say will be resisted, or rejected, or might even bring retaliation. Those are all very real fears, but giving in to them will leave you feeling powerless and frustrated.

Instead, acknowledge your self-doubt and fears, then step up and be courageous enough to express yourself. Often you'll find that there really was no basis for that self-doubt, and even when your words bring a negative reaction, you'll still feel good for having had the courage to make your views known.

Along with being courageous, it's important to be respectful. Rather than just speaking out, first take the time to listen. When you do speak you want to show that you understand and respect the views

and values of others before expressing your own. Your intention is not to convince others, but rather to express the differences that you're feeling. Acknowledge that what others are feeling and believing also has legitimacy.

Finally, speaking out successfully requires you to be decisive. Speaking up is your decision to voice your convictions without being preoccupied with the outcome. You can be polite and respectful of others, while still being clear about what you feel and believe.

It takes time and practice to get used to speaking up and expressing your views, but it's worth the effort. Your goal is not to always get your way or force your views on others, but rather to share what you truly think and feel. Speaking up is an important part of sharing and participating in the human experience.



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