

Now is perfect time to get boats ready

The sun is starting to shine a little more and the days are getting longer, which means it's time to de-winterize your boat and plan for your spring and summer water adventures. The Oregon State Marine Board offers some reminders and suggestions for getting your boat ready for the first excursion this season.

First, make sure you have your boater education card. "All boaters who operate a motorboat over 10 horse power need to carry their boater education card with them out on the water," said Ashley Massey, Public Affairs Specialist for the Marine Board. "Youth ranging from 12 to 15 years of age will need a card to operate a boat on their own, if the motor is under 10 horse power. If the boat is over 10 horse power, youth must be supervised directly by a card-holding adult (16 or older). When operating a personal watercraft (PWC), youth 12 to 15 will need a card and be directly supervised by a card-holding adult over 18." Visit www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/BoatEd/questions.shtml to learn more about the mandatory education program.

Second, make sure your boat registration is current. "A second renewal reminder will be mailed to boaters toward the end of April. The renewal notification has a special identification number on it allowing boaters to renew their registration online. It's simple and there's no online processing fee. The best part is you can print a temporary permit after ordering online, so you can go

boating right away," Massey said. "For folks new to boating or who didn't renew for a few years, you can contact the Marine Board and speak with a registration specialist who can help you, or simply send in your payment to us," Massey adds. The cost for registering your boat is a flat, \$3 per foot fee, rounded up.

Third, make sure your boat is good shape before you get to the water. "Prepare ahead of time to ensure a stress-free excursion. We have links on our website to do-it-yourself instructions online, including engine maintenance and information on blended fuels," said Massey. For the not-so-mechanically inclined, many marine centers and boat dealers will de-winterize your boat. The U.S. Coast Guard created a pre-underway checklist to help boaters prepare for their first outing at www.uscgauxnh.org/forms/PreUnderwayChecklist.pdf.

Fourth, be sure to carry an aquatic invasive species prevention permit if you're operating a paddle craft. Permits are required for operators of boats 10 feet long and longer when the boat is in use. Annual paper permits cost \$7 through ODFW license agents, field offices and online at www.dfw.state.or.us. One year and two year Tyvek tags are also available from the Marine Board office in Salem for \$5 and \$10. These tags can also be ordered online at http://www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/Clean/docs/Boating_public_order_form_2011.pdf.

For operators of state-regis-

tered boats, the permit fee is already rolled into the cost of registering your motor boat. For more information about this program, visit www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/Clean/AISPP/main.shtml.

Finally, be sure to check your equipment. "Safety is paramount," Massey says. "Make sure your life jackets are in good condition (no mold, broken buckles, tears, etc.) and that there are enough to properly fit everyone on board. It's strongly recommended to wear a life jacket because even though the air temperature may be warm, the water is cold. Also be sure to have fire extinguishers, a sound producing device, and visual distress signals. If you are going out to fish, be sure to have a good anchor with plenty of line and a buoy. Another reminder is to ALWAYS anchor from the bow, not the stern, which can easily cause a boat to swamp and capsize.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadrons conduct free vessel safety checks around the state and alert the boater if any safety equipment is needed.

One last reminder is to watch the weather and be ready to head in if the wind picks up. There's also a lot of debris in the water, so keep a sharp lookout for any hazards.

Boaters can get all this information and more by visiting www.boatoregon.com or calling 503-378-8587. Registration payments can be mailed to OSMB, P.O. Box 14145, Salem, OR 97309.

Turtle alert: Some turtles illegal to own

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) biologists warn Oregonians not to buy red-eared sliders, nonnative invasive turtles which are illegal in the state. Red-eared sliders, named for the red "ear" (markings) on the side of their heads, are offered for sale on Internet sites, by street vendors and in some pet stores.

"This time of year, we seem to see more illegal turtles for sale, although it's a year-round problem," said Rick Boatner, ODFW Invasive Species Coordinator. "We are especially concerned about small turtles that

are sold as pets for children and commonly carry the bacteria salmonella on their skin and shells."

Turtles less than four inches in shell length are banned from sale and distribution by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to protect infants, young children, pregnant women and others. Under Oregon Department of Agriculture rules, it is illegal to import turtles less than four inches into Oregon.

If you are in possession of a red-eared slider, contact your local ODFW office for advice. Never release a nonnative tur-

tle into the wild; it hurts both native habitat and species.

Red-eared sliders are native to the East Coast of the United States. In Oregon, they compete with native turtles for food and habitat, especially nesting and basking sites, and can spread diseases to which the state's native turtles have no immunity.

Oregon has only two native turtles: the western painted and the western pond, both are listed on the state sensitive species list and highlighted in the Oregon Conservation Strat-

See Red-eared on page 20

Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer, General Manager,
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I Can Dig It!

Once used as Seventies slang, it also fits during the Spring and Summer months for those who become anxiously engaged in gardening, landscaping, construction projects, the honey-do lists, road repairs, and so forth. It is a time of concern for us here as we inevitably incur outages from those who dig where our power lines are located. This creates a safety hazard and puts lives in jeopardy. It also causes additional work for our crews who have to drop everything to go repair the line and restore power to our affected members. To save us all from harm, and save time and money, let me share with you information on a new number you can call before you start digging. It is as easy as it gets as it has only three numbers – 811.

The new 811 number is a national "Call Before You Dig" phone number designated by the FCC to eliminate the confusion of multiple "Call Before You Dig" numbers, and to help save lives, costs, and minimize damages to underground utilities. The call will be directed to a Local One Call Center where personnel will notify affected utility companies, who will send crews to mark underground lines for free.

Knowing where underground utility lines are buried before you dig helps prevent injury, expense, and penalties. Every year, almost 700,000 utility lines across the U.S. are hit by digging projects. Only 52% of people planning to dig are likely to call to have lines marked before digging. The penalties for not calling before hand are significant. The person causing the damage to underground facilities, (it is the same for telephone, gas, electric, cable), will be charged for the repair of the facilities. They will also be subject to enforcement actions by the Oregon Public Utilities Commission and Civil penalties of up to \$1,000 for the first violation and up to \$5,000 for each subsequent violation. Civil penalties for intentional violations of the Oregon Excavation Law are up to \$5,000 for the first violation and up to \$10,000 for each subsequent violation.

So, let's all be safe and call the 811 number before any digging around underground utility lines. It will end up saving us all a lot of time, money, and possible injuries.

On the same token, it is also a time that a lot of folks trim or fall trees on their property. We invariably end up putting lines back up that someone has dropped a tree across or a limb has fallen upon. If you are falling any trees that have the potential of falling across our power lines, please notify us and we can make arrangements to drop the line until the tree is down. It is free if we drop the line, but it will cost you if you drop the line. We charge the full costs of repairs to anyone who damages any of our lines by negligence. If you notice limbs or trees that pose an imminent danger to our lines, please give us a call so we can notify our tree trimmers to put it on their schedule. This will help us be proactive rather than reactive and have to come out during a storm or after hours to repair a downed or damaged line.

Together, we can keep our lines and our people safe, our costs down, and the system up and on. Thank you for helping us to help you.

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