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Auxiliary Leadership Link

Dated: 17 May 2025



To All U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists,

I'm pleased to share exciting news that strengthens our mission and amplifies our impact: the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary has signed a national **Letter of Intent (LOI)** with **West Marine**, one of the nation's leading retailers serving the recreational boating public.

This Letter of Intent isn't just symbolic—it's a **game-changer**. West Marine serves more than **1 million customers** across 230+ locations in 38 states and Puerto Rico. Many flotillas have already forged successful relationships with local stores. Now, this LOI provides a **formal framework to grow those relationships with the support of the company leadership** and empowers **every flotilla where there is a store** to activate new opportunities for public outreach, **Vessel Safety Checks**, and **boating safety education** in a trusted, high-traffic venue.

What This Means for You and Your Flotilla:

- **Local Access** to host events, VSCs, or safety tables inside or outside West Marine stores
- **Promotional Support** from West Marine's marketing team and national visibility for store events
- **Safety Talks and Public Education classes** in store (facility dependent)
- **New Recruitment Pathways** to engage boaters and future Auxiliarists
- **Increased Impact** during National Safe Boating Week and year-round campaigns

Already in 2025 as part of the LOI, over 200 Flotillas have coordinated with their local West Marine store to engage in some 217 safety events including VSCs, PA events or safety talks during National Safe Boating Week May 17- May 23, 2025! Well Done!

Whether you're in a flotilla with a long-standing West Marine relationship or looking to create one, this LOI opens the door to **strategic engagement that advances our mission and saves lives.**

We encourage every flotilla to begin coordinating with store managers and planning outreach in alignment with your DSO-VE, DSO-PA, and local chain of leadership. Additional details and support are available by contacting our Recreation Boating Outreach team members, Michael Plavnicky Branch Chief-Advocacy Partners, at michael.j.plavnicky@cgauxnet.us or Rodney Janssen Division Chief, at rodney.l.janssen@cgauxnet.us.

Please take a moment to read the West Marine [official press release](#).

Let's use this partnership to show the boating community who we are—**America's Volunteer Guardians**—and how we serve with excellence, every time we wear the uniform.

Semper Paratus,

Mary Kirkwood

National Commodore

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Engagement - Integration - Innovation