

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
Eighth District, Eastern Region



Strategic Plan

2009

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VISION STATEMENT

To make the Eighth District, Eastern Region, the best trained and most valued volunteers in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, effective during normal operations and ready for any emergencies within the scope of our mission capabilities.

MISSION STATEMENT

To recruit, organize, train and retain U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers to provide delivery of Recreational Boating Safety to the boating public and to assist the U.S. Coast Guard in the implementation of their Marine Homeland Security mission during normal operations as well as in times of emergency.

STRATEGIC ISSUES:

- Provide greater focus on those roles and missions for which the Congress, the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard grant us the authority to fulfill.
- District members will serve the country as individuals or teams by:
 1. participating in Auxiliary programs and activities.
 2. augmenting the Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security.
 3. working with the public as well as the states, partner agencies and boating organizations.
- Provide a capable, reliable and sustainable workforce to fulfill any mission we agree to undertake, keeping in mind that no member unit is required to participate in all of the wide variety of missions we are authorized to undertake.
- To value the contributions of all members, regardless of their level or type of participation.
- Seek new members and leaders who have the interests, skills, capabilities and dedication to serve in any role, and in any manner, that contributes to our goals and is consistent with our Auxiliary traditions and our values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty.
- The Auxiliary leadership will support the mission by”
 1. articulating the vision to the membership,
 2. providing strategic and tactical leadership,
 3. obtain resources critical to our continued success.
 4. recognize and seize valued opportunities to execute national and local initiatives.
 - 3.

5. remain responsive, responsible and accountable for creditable results.

- To review our restructured organization to reflect changes in the Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security as well as the requirements of our emerging roles and missions.
- To develop a sustainable operating business plan that addresses the financial and other resource realities of our traditional and emerging roles in the effective completion of our mission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The scope of this plan shall encompass the District Vision, Mission and the Strategic Issues affecting the Eighth District, Eastern Region, as identified by the District Board and Staff. It sets forth goals and strategies to define the District's response to the Vision, Mission and Issues facing the District.
- This plan was developed for the Eighth District, Eastern Region by focusing on the Strategic imperatives set forth by the National Commodore in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary National Program for 2009 as well as the initiatives for the Auxiliary stated in Sector Ohio Valley Strategic Plan.
- A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat Analysis) was conducted in 2006 and again in 2007 seeking inputs from the District Board and District Staff. The current Strategic Plan (developed in 2007) was reviewed in light of the data received from this group. Another SWOT was conducted in October of 2008 and will be used to review the current plan.
- The Vision Statement has been developed as the desired outcome for the District. This Strategic Plan provides supporting goals and strategies to realize this vision.
- Specific District action items, to accomplish the strategic goals, will be reviewed by the incoming EXCOM and the District Board at the spring conference in March 2009. A plan will be developed, at that time, to track the progress of the development of Action Items at Division and Flotilla levels, as well as the implementation of same. Until that time, planning and District efforts will be tailored to this current plan.

INTRODUCTION

As noted in the Executive Summary, the process of developing Action Items to implement this plan will be initiated at the spring conference in March 2009 with the 14 Division Commanders and the District Staff. Division Commanders and District Section Chiefs will be asked to manage this process. The three regional District Captains will be asked to work with their Division Commanders to develop initiatives that would include Flotilla Commanders in this process. This process will be one component of the regional Flotilla Commanders' Course which will be conducted in November 2008, for newly elected Flotilla Commanders.

The District's concept is to "RECRUIT and RETAIN" and we believe that this can be best accomplished by improving communication, motivating members to get involved and to provide appropriate training within reach of all members. The District theme for 2009 will be "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR A STRONGER AUXILIARY"

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT ASSESSMENT (SWOT) ANALYSIS EIGHTH DISTRICT, EASTERN REGION

A summary of Strategic Issues that affect the District are grouped into four general areas: operations / service delivery, human resources, organization / management, and technology. Each of these areas has strengths and weaknesses. Resolution of many of these issues will take place at the Division and Flotilla levels.

OPERATIONS / SERVICE DELIVERY:

- Boat crews are generally well staffed, surface and air operations are being met effectively, units excel in Public Education, but more vessel examiners, instructors and boat crews are needed.
- The District includes a ten state area encompassing the Ohio, Tennessee and the Lower Mississippi River systems, as well as numerous inland lakes and other sole state waters. Jurisdictional issues are present, which cause an issue of prioritization of the use of limited resources.
- The wide geographical separation of divisions and flotillas within divisions is an issue when considering centralized training.
- The District needs more air and water facilities to meet increasing support needs of the Coast Guard, states and other entities.
- The Coast Guard has been receiving more money for the Auxiliary for training and equipment, although, maintenance requirements for air facilities is causing the loss of some units due to inadequate funding.
- There is almost a universal shortfall of training in the boat crew, technology, AUXDATA, POMS and QE's areas. All have been noted as needing greater support. The District has implemented a QE training program and some of these areas will be built into the training at District Conferences. Although some of this training can be done at the District level, most must be carried on at the unit level. The geographical issues discussed above affect the time and reimbursement available for such training.
- Sector realignment has changed the traditional liaison role. Rather than dealing with several groups, stations, MSOs and MSDs, Sector Ohio Valley has become our principal focus resulting in more direct involvement in Coast Guard issues and missions. A significant problem results in that the normal rotation of Coast Guard personnel results in Sector "loosing its institutional memory". The Auxiliary Sector Coordinator becomes critical in this situation.
- In the wake of post 9/11 events and Homeland Security reorganization, the Coast Guard is presenting an increasing variety of missions in which the Auxiliary can participate, and in which we are being specifically asked to support. In order to meet these requests the issues of people, training and resources noted above take on a greater significance

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Members are generally enthusiastic, well trained and bring multiple skills and a diversity of knowledge to the organization.
- All divisions are suffering declines in membership. In some cases there are inadequate numbers of people to perform the mission on a sustained basis. The District lacks an overall recruiting plan, therefore; recruiting continues to be driven by personal contacts by existing members.
- The PSI has negatively affected accessioning new members, because of the extremely long period of time before a person can be accepted as a full fledged member. The waiting causes some candidates to loose interest in membership.
- The “80% - 20% Rule” is found throughout the District with regard to participation. Most of the work is done by a few people.
- The relationship with local Coast Guard stations is generally very positive. Coast Guard requirements tend not to take into account that this is a volunteer organization and short deadlines cannot be effectively met in all cases.

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT:

- The current leadership is generally regarded as strong and moving in a very positive direction.
- Future leadership will need improved leadership development programs. Given the geographic extent of the District, regional training programs need to be considered to affect this training.

TECHNOLOGY:

- Communications systems are marginal. FM radios are often masked due to the vagaries of the terrain. Inadequate high sites exist to provide reliable communication with Coast Guard Operation Centers within the AOR.
- Many members currently have access to computers and e-mail, which improves the speed of communication. However, at the same time some of the active members do not have access to such technology and they feel disenfranchised when not provided with alternative means of delivery of routine messages, manuals, and forms. We need to bring all of our members along by thoughtful means of providing such alternatives.
- There is little or no standardization of software packages used for communications, reports, literature, etc. In some cases items are created using the “latest and greatest” software version and it becomes virtually worthless to the recipient who may not have a compatible system.
- Members must update their software at their own expense to stay current. However, there is no central listing of products and versions that should be used throughout the organization. This results in members upgrades that may not work with the technology commonly used.

- Some agencies do not take into account that all members, even though they have computers, do not have high speed network access. It therefore may take hours to download items that are graphic intensive. Many members do not have CD writers, and when downloading documents and presentations that exceed 1.44 MB they cannot be downloaded to a disc and made transportable for training purposes. Guidelines about file size need to be established.

DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOALS

Based upon the input gained from the SWOT analysis the following issues will need to be addressed if the District is to meet its stated mission objectives.

- Maintain an emphasis on recruiting and retention especially in the core mission areas (operations, public education, program visitor / vessel examiner).
- Improve communication at all levels.
- Provide appropriate and timely training for all members.
- Motivate the membership to become more involved in the auxiliary programs.
- Seek ways to encourage members to accept leadership positions.
- Develop emergency response plans at all levels.
- Embrace opportunities to support the Coast Guard and other marine safety agencies.
- Enhance the Auxiliary image in the local communities.

DISTRICT ACTION ITEMS AND STRATEGIES

OPERATIONS / SERVICE DELIVERY:

- Maintain core competencies in surface and air operations, public education and vessel safety checks.
- Ensure states and other organizations needing Auxiliary support make their needs known in writing to facilitate prioritization of the use of limited resources.
- Plan training events well in advance. Request travel orders when training requires over night travel.
- Recruit new members with needed facilities and skills to help overcome shortfalls in facilities and personnel necessary to support mission requirements.
- Keep “wish lists” current with the Director’s Office, so Coast Guard funds can be earmarked for training and needed equipment.
- District Staff Officers must monitor training in the areas under their purview. We need to ensure that adequate training is being provided, either at a District, Division or Flotilla level. “Best Practices” should be gathered and disseminated to all organizations. Current focus should be on boat crew training, technology, ICS, AUXDATA, AUXINFO, POMS and QE training.
- In order to support the increasing need for support from the Coast Guard and other agencies, the need for people, training and resources must be monitored by the ASC the DSO-OP and DDC - R and relayed through the DCOS to the DCO for action.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Recruiting and retention efforts are of paramount importance to keep the numbers and skills of the membership at a level necessary to support current and projected mission needs. A District recruiting / retention plan should be developed, reviewed and implemented by all District organizations to meet this need.
- Leaders need to motivate all members to provide wider participation among the existing membership. “Ask and they shall come” might be the operative watchword. Consider that every member is valuable and we need to build personal relationships to encourage participation.

ORGANIZATIONAL / MANAGEMENT:

- The reorganization of the District staff has been undertaken to reduce the span of control for the District Chief of Staff and to facilitate coordination with Sector Ohio Valley via the Auxiliary Sector Coordinator.. District Directorate Chiefs Prevention, Response and Logistic have been appointed and will aggressively carry out their role to facilitate District events. This will enhance mission response time and improve District services.

- The District is embarking upon a concept of “regional training” to facilitate attendance and reduce finance costs. A Flotilla Commanders Leadership course was instituted in November 2007. Initial evaluation deemed this a valuable tool and was again offered in November and December 2008. This program will be an integral part of the District’s efforts to train and retain leaders at the “deck plate level”.
- Leadership development courses need to be stressed. Every elected leader shall be encouraged to attend the courses appropriate to the leadership level for the office they are about to assume.

TECHNOLOGY:

- We need to ensure that the CS (Web Watchers) staff officers relay items of interest to members who do not have computers.
- Assist non-computer owners to obtain surplus computers from businesses and Federal agencies so that they can have access to e-mail.
- Work with the National Departments of Information and Communications Services to develop a plan for a national software management plan that will include standardized application software and version control.
- Work with the National Department of Information and Communications Services to develop plans for a national policy regarding file size by regulating graphic content in order to accommodate members who do not have high speed networks or CD writers.
- Review and take advantage of the various telecommunication applications available, select one that best fits District needs so that an effective teleconferencing program can be initiated.

Although a new SWOT Analysis was conducted in October 2008, it is felt by the incoming District leaders that many of the same issues noted earlier are still with us. As such we have elected to continue to pursue this plan and look for some slight modifications to same in March 2009. With limited resources being the current situation, District activities and training opportunities will be conducted on a more regional basis to insure that more members can take advantage of these opportunities. We will look to a closer working relationship with Sector Ohio Valley and we will encourage partnerships with other marine safety minded organizations. “BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR A STRONGER AUXILIARY” both internally and externally will make us a stronger organization and we hope, assist us in meeting the goals set forth in this plan.