

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
Sector Baltimore
Auxiliary Sector Coordinator Program

From its inception, the Auxiliary's primary mission has been to support the U.S. Coast Guard—both by promoting boating safety and by taking on additional tasks, such as boater-assistance patrols and vessel safety checks. This support role has become even more important since the September 2001 terrorist attacks, which have broadened the Coast Guard's own list of missions and have heightened the opportunities for the Auxiliary to help out.

With this in mind, the Auxiliary's national leadership is launching a new effort to increase the interaction between the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary and to find new ways for the Auxiliary to become a force-multiplier that will free more Coast Guard personnel to do more jobs. The effort will be carried out on a sector-by-sector basis, and the leadership has created the job of Auxiliary Sector Coordinator (ASC) to plan and coordinate the program in each sector. The ASC for Sector Baltimore is Art Pine.

The ASC will work for George Hagerty, the Rear Commodore for Sector Baltimore, and will report directly to him. The ASC will not function as a deputy rear commodore or a sector chief of staff, but will work to enhance opportunities for the Auxiliary to work with the Coast Guard and to coordinate them on a sectorwide basis. He will be the primary channel for working with senior Coast Guard officials in the Sector. And he will be available to help solve problems that DCPs may face in joint USCG-Auxiliary efforts.

A review of the past interaction between the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard in Sector Baltimore shows that there have been many valuable efforts upon which we can build. In recent years, the two organizations have worked together on the Trident Program, the Ready for Operations (RFO) boat crew training program, communications watchstanding (CWS) at Coast Guard stations throughout the Sector, the use by Auxiliarists of the UTL-T boats at Curtis Bay and Washington and dozens of other smaller programs.

The results have been mixed, however. The Trident Program has not yet attracted large numbers of Auxiliarists, the turnouts for the RFO and UTL-T programs was limited, and in some stations the CWS program could use new recruits. Although the UTL-T program no longer exists, we don't plan to discontinue any of these programs. Our plan is to begin by making small changes that we hope will enhance these programs, will make them more attuned to Coast Guard and Auxiliary needs, and will increase participation.

Our review suggests that there are several reasons that cooperation between the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary has been limited in previous years:

—In some cases, Coast Guard officials have not been fully aware of what the Auxiliary does, what skills its members have and how best to make use of them.

—Too often, Coast Guard personnel have little direct contact with Auxiliarists, don't have a chance to get to know them and don't think about calling on the Auxiliary when help is needed.

—The Auxiliary itself has not been organized to fit Coast Guard needs. Rarely, for an example, does an Auxiliary unit maintain a watch bill that would enable a Coast Guard unit to call out members on short notice, as a volunteer fire department might do.

—New programs sometimes have been devised in ways that require Auxiliarists to meet standards used for active-duty Coast Guard personnel without taking account of either the Auxiliarists' civilian schedules or of their prior training and experience.

—The Auxiliary's own efforts sometimes have been fragmented, and it hasn't always provided a clear liaison officer to coordinate interaction with the Coast Guard's leadership.

—In many cases, previous efforts that have been well-designed have not been adequately promoted to DCPs, FCs and Flotilla members. We need to make clear what opportunities and benefits are available in these programs and actively recruit participants.

As a first step in Sector Baltimore, we plan to place all of these efforts under a Sector-level umbrella and promote them as a new program to be known as *AUXDIRECT*. Doing so will not take control of these program away from those who have been running them before. But it will enable the Sector leadership to suggest incremental changes and to coordinate promotion in a way that is designed to provide some cohesion to these efforts and to enhance participation.

In coming months, we also plan to *increase* the number of opportunities for Auxiliarists to work directly with the Coast Guard—in both large and small ways. We will be discussing these with DCPs and VCPs.

This effort is especially important, both for enhancing the Auxiliary's role in helping the Coast Guard and for recruiting and retaining new members. Many of our recent recruits have been attracted to the Auxiliary because they want to help the nation in its post-9/11 effort to combat terrorism. Interviews show that many of those who have left the Auxiliary over the past two years have been disappointed in the opportunities that they have found to serve in such a role. Indeed, the major benefit that makes us different from other boating organizations has been: Our Coast Guard Connection.

Please call Art Pine with your questions and ideas about this new effort. His home number is 301-652-7836; his cellphone number is 301-633-4733; and his e-mail address is ap99bc@starpower.net.

We're open to your suggestions, and anxious for your support.

