



# Bonner County Sheriff's Office

## MEDIA RELEASE

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## Local Instructor Wins Western Region Boating Safety Educator of the Year Award

Charley Schaefer of Newport, Washington won the Western States Boating Administrators Association (WSBAA) Boating Safety Educator of the Year Award sponsored by BOAT-Ed. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in, or contributions to, the field of boating safety education. Any person who is actively involved in boating safety education is eligible. State nominations are selected by the WSBAA Boating Law Administrators and forwarded to the WSBAA Awards Chair. This year's recipient was nominated by two states, Washington and Idaho.

Charlie Schaefer has been a boat safety instructor for the State of Idaho since 1991 and for the State of Washington since 2007 (when they instituted mandatory education). In Idaho, Charlie has coordinated his efforts with the Bonner County Sheriff's Office. Charlie has taught hundreds of Idaho students the "Boat Idaho" boating safety course over the years. In Washington he partnered with the Pend Oreille County Sheriff's Office and has taught 1,300 students Washington's "Adventures in Boating" course.

In 1999 Charlie received an Award of Merit from the National Water Safety Congress for his efforts to promote safe boating on Lake Pend Oreille and other waters in northern Idaho. He has also been recognized by the Pend Oreille County Sheriffs in Washington for his involvement in their boating safety education program.

Charlie has a true passion for boating safety, and he uses interactive methods to demonstrate the dangers of using alcohol while boating. His “Captain Alcohol” skit is very popular with both young and old students. It hits home the difficulties of trying to put on a life jacket while under the influence of alcohol.

Charlie enjoys teaching children about water safety and has conducted numerous safety talks for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other organizations. Charlie uses “Aqua Bear” to highlight the importance of wearing a life jacket to children. Every year Charlie promotes National Safe Boating Week in conjunction with local partners, such as the Army Corp of Engineers and county marine deputies in Idaho and Washington.

Charlie has helped establish 12 life jacket loaners programs in Washington the past few years. He has traveled all over the state, including to Grand Coulee, Vancouver and Everett to teach classes and to certify new instructors.

In addition to teaching boating safety courses, Charlie was a volunteer with the Bonner County Search and Rescue unit for 13 years. Most recently, Charlie has started teaching boating safety to local Boy Scout Troops and their parents. The response has been phenomenal – his first class had 61 students!

As winner of the western region award, Charlie will be flown, expenses paid, by Boater Exam to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) national conference in Wichita, Kansas. The conference will be held September 13 through 16. The national award winner will be announced during that conference.