



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators
for Response Towing

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C-PORT Presents Lifesaving Awards Eight Captains Honored

C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) presented its lifesaving awards to eight captains, representing C-PORT's member companies at the 30th C-PORT Conference Awards Luncheon held on November 14, 2016 at Orlando, FL. Tina Cardone, C-PORT executive director, announced, "We are honored to present lifesaving awards to these deserving representatives of the marine assistance industry. They demonstrate the professional standards that our association promotes." C-PORT was honored to have Captain Christina Davidson, Chief, USCG Office of Search and Rescue, present the C-PORT Distinguished Service Awards to these deserving individuals. "We congratulate all of these captains for their heroic efforts in serving the boating community," stated John Ward, C-PORT chairman.

Distinguished Service Awards are presented to those exhibiting Extraordinary Assistance and were presented to the following operators:

Captain Robert DiSanto, Safe Sea/TowBoatU.S. RI – On August 20, 2016, DiSanto responded to a call reporting two individuals were in the water and being swept out to sea. DiSanto spotted one person trying to stay afloat and quickly losing strength as he was being dragged farther out to sea. As he made his way to the struggling swimmer, DiSanto shouted encouragement over the loud hailer, letting the victim know he was coming and pleading with him not to give up. DiSanto successfully recovered the individual, saving a life that day. Captain DiSanto also received Honorary mention by AFRAS (Association for Rescue at Sea) for his efforts that day.

Captain James Givens, Sea Tow St. Catherines – On March 11, 2016, Givens heard a distress call as he was returning home after working a long, offshore salvage. Although Givens was low on fuel, he answered the call and headed in the direction of the distressed vessel. Givens found the swamped vessel with 2 adults, 1 child, and a dog on the flybridge with waves crashing alongside the boat. On the sandbar, but not close enough to safely transfer the child and dog, Givens inflated a lift bag and instructed the parents to put the child and dog on the lift bag. With the child and dog safely aboard Givens vessel, the adults jumped to his vessel, as their vessel sank. Givens' selfless act of searching for this family, regardless of his own condition, saved their lives.

Captain Eric Laury and Captain Steve Reuss, TowBoatU.S. Fort Lauderdale – On June 17, 2016, Laury and Reuss responded to a May Day that occurred during a storm. Kayakers were in the water and caught in whiteout conditions and 40 knot winds. Both captains remained calm and focused, and persevered through the winds and rain, successfully locating and rescuing the 4 kayakers. Laury and Reuss are commended for their immediate response in storm conditions, calm demeanor, and actions that resulted in these lives saved.

Captain Luis Rodas, Sea Tow Fort Lauderdale – On July 17, 2016, Rodas observed a small 18' vessel with 5 passengers onboard, attempting to exit Hillsboro Inlet. The small vessel was having trouble and found itself listing severely to starboard with waves crashing over the beam. Rodas approached the distressed vessel and began shouting instructions to the passengers, realizing then



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that they did not speak English. Rodas spoke to the passengers in Spanish, and while keeping his own vessel out of danger, successfully recovered all 5 passengers prior to their vessel capsizing. Rodas' quick, decisive actions saved these people from serious injury or worse. Captain Rodas also received Honorable mention by AFRAS (Association for Rescue at Sea) for his efforts that day.

Captain Luis Rodas, Sea Tow Fort Lauderdale – On February 21, 2016, Rodas observed a small boat with 2 passengers attempting to exit Hillsboro Inlet, with had breaking waves across the north and south jetties during a USCG Small Craft Advisory. The small vessel was hit with a sizable wave, pushing it farther offshore, onto the rock and coral reef, eventually capsizing the small vessel. Rodas skillfully maneuvered his vessel to the reef area, rescuing the passengers. Captain Rodas' quick, decisive actions are to be commended.

Captain Cole Sisler, TowBoatU.S. Fort Lauderdale – On November 20, 2015, Sisler heard a cry of help on the VHF radio. Responding immediately, Sisler discovered that a man had fallen overboard and his wife was not able to maneuver the vessel to her husband. Sisler found the man, barely treading water battling to keep his head above water. Sisler threw a life line to the man, but he was too weak to grab it. Sisler turned off his engines, unable to anchor in that depth of water, and entered the water knowing if he didn't, the man would drown. A local sheriff's boat came on scene and helped Sisler get the man into his boat. Sisler rode with the victim, keeping his body and head stationary during the rough ride to shore. Sisler did everything he could to keep the man awake during the journey. After 2 days in the hospital, the man was released and made a complete recovery. Sisler's selfless actions, calm demeanor and exact actions saved a life that day. Captain Sisler was awarded the 2016 AFRAS-C-PORT Lifesaving Award for this rescue.

Captain Brian Wood, Sea Tow Marina del Rey – On May 1, 2016, Wood heard a distress call for a vessel sinking. He immediately responded requesting coordinates from US Coast Guard while enroute. Once on scene, Wood saw the vessel sunk with its bow out of the water. Water temperatures hovered at approximately 60 degrees, and Wood saw multiple people in the water. Wood recovered 8 persons with a local sheriff's vessel recovering the remaining 4 persons. All persons were treated for mild hypothermia. Wood's prompt response resulted in a successful rescue with minimal injury to the 8 people he recovered, and the additional 4 persons he was in a position to help.

C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional and timely assistance to all boaters and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. They are professionals, dedicated to the growth and development of their respective businesses and committed to furthering the advancement of our waterways and the boating community. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit www.cport.us.