



SEVENTH DISTRICT AUXILIARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2013 – 2016

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Seventh U. S. Coast Guard District is unique in its geography, diversity, and in many of its missions. It encompasses most of Georgia and Florida, and all of South Carolina, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It is supported by six (6) Sectors, twenty (20) Small Boat Stations, and four (4) Air Stations.

As a component of the Coast Guard and its Seventh District, the District Auxiliary has nearly 6,000 dedicated Auxiliarists serving in a broad range of missions and activities. It is organized into 17 divisions and 107 flotillas that are collectively supported by more than 550 surface vessels, 38 aircraft, 300 land-based radio facilities, more than 1050 Vessel Examiners, 460 Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitors, and over 900 Public Education Instructors.

The activities of the Seventh District Auxiliary are driven by its Strategic Plan. That plan provides direction for maintaining the District's unique and historic role as a cost-effective force multiplier within the Coast Guard. The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan defines the district's priorities for promoting recreational boating safety programs, provides strategies for strengthening support of Coast Guard missions, and emphasizes the importance of leadership development and practices to the district's performance. Based on assessments of the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and data obtained from surveys conducted throughout the district, the strategic issues of greatest importance and addressed by the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, are:

- Effectiveness in recreational boating safety missions.
- Leadership development and practices.
- Growth and diversity of the district's ready volunteer force.
- Joint planning and mission execution with the Coast Guard.

The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan blends proven strategies from the past with new initiatives for meeting challenges that lie ahead. The goals and strategies outlined in the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan are focused on the district's four primary strategic issues and provide guidance to district leaders on their responsibility for promoting district goals that align with the strategic imperatives of the Coast Guard, National Auxiliary and District Seven Auxiliary leadership.

2. THE MISSION OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

The primary mission of the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is Recreational Boating Safety. We also have the mission of contributing to the safety and security of our citizens, ports, waterways, and

coastal regions, as authorized by the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. We will support the overall mission by improving the quality and delivery methods of our educational products. We will work with other like-minded organizations to increase awareness of safety on the water.

3. NATIONAL COMMODORE'S VISION STATEMENT

The Coast Guard Auxiliary will continue to meet America's ever changing maritime needs through increased attention to recreational boating safety, security of America's waterways, and improved methods of educating the boating public.

4. DISTRICT COMMODORE'S VISION STATEMENT

The Seventh District Auxiliary will be the premier volunteer organization supporting Coast Guard maritime safety and security missions, a leading provider of educational programs to the recreational boating community, and a model of exemplary leadership practices.

5. DISTRICT STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Seventh District faces several issues of significant importance in its ability to complete mandated missions. Those issues, identified through assessment of the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, together with data collected from responses to several surveys, identified four issues requiring urgent action; effectiveness in completing recreational boating safety missions, leadership development and practices, increasing the size and diversity of the district's ready volunteer force, and enhancing joint planning and mission development with the Coast Guard.

A. Effectiveness in recreational boating safety missions.

The primary mission of the Seventh District Auxiliary is promoting recreational boating safety. Despite determined efforts by the district's 107 flotillas and 17 divisions to promote safe boating practices, the number of accidents and deaths has seen little decline. In fact, some areas of the district lead the nation in the number of boating accidents and fatalities.

B. Leadership development and practices

It is widely accepted that leadership practices have a significant influence on an organization's performance. Historically, the Seventh District Auxiliary has provided leadership training to Flotilla Commanders immediately following their election. Much of that training was held once a year, for a single day, with instruction focused on information needed to be an effective Flotilla Commander. Those sessions are supplemented by c-school courses as elected leaders move to Vice Division Commander or Division Commander. Assessments and responses to surveys of

flotilla and division commanders however show there is an urgent need to develop a more comprehensive program of continuous learning in leadership and management skills. Development of such a program must include evaluation and use of the latest technology available through electronic and internet based sources.

C. Growth and diversity of the district's ready volunteer force.

The demographics of the Seventh District Auxiliary membership shows that slightly more than half the membership is between the age of sixty and eighty. This group also represents a large percentage of the most experienced members. But while many of those members have skills needed for mandated Auxiliary missions, they are sometimes overlooked for the more demanding missions as a consequence of their age. Regrettably, this has led some members to become disheartened by their seeming lack of importance. To counter this situation, a new initiative to promote, support and retain longer serving members is needed.

Additionally, many of the district's younger members are still employed and do not have the luxury of giving 24/7 support to the Coast Guard. As the number of younger members grows, limitations on their availability due to work and family requirements may become an increasing constraint on the completion of district missions.

As a result of assessments and feed-back from surveys, it is clear the district must devote greater effort to recruiting individuals with the time and unique skills needed for supporting Coast Guard and Auxiliary missions.

D. Joint planning and mission development with the Coast Guard.

While the district has completed its modernization program to align flotillas and divisions geographically with Coast Guard units and sectors, joint planning and mission development with some sectors and Coast Guard District Headquarters is not fully integrated. Although some sectors have included Auxiliary support in their Standard Operational Planning Process, much remains to be done to include the Auxiliary's capabilities in planning by all Seventh District Coast Guard Sectors.

6. DISTRICT GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Based on the Commodore's Vision Statement, guidance from National, District and local sources, and assessment of the district's strategic imperatives, the issues of greatest strategic importance to the district are: 1) effectiveness in recreational safe boating missions, 2) leadership development and practices, 3) the size and diversity of the district's ready volunteer force, and 4) joint planning and mission development with the Coast Guard. The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan is focused on these four strategic issues and outlines the strategies needed to achieve successful outcomes.

12/09/2012

A. INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS IN RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY MISSIONS

This goal addresses the critical need to reduce the large number of boating accidents and fatalities in the Seventh District. While the accompanying strategies addressing mission effectiveness are intended to help reduce the number of boating accidents and deaths by two percent per year, they are equally important to strengthening the Auxiliary's mission of promoting recreational boating safety.

Goal: Increase effectiveness in recreational boating safety missions to achieve a two percent per year reduction in boating accidents and fatalities in the Seventh District during the plan's four year period.

Strategies:

- a. Establish a working committee of district staff officers responsible for Public Affairs, Public Education, Program Visitation and Vessel Examination to recommend programs and tactics for reducing boating accidents and fatalities by two percent a year for five years. Divisions should form similar teams to promote collaboration among staff for events such as National Safe Boating Week, Coast Guard unit open houses, and area safe boating events.
- b. Task flotilla Public Affairs officers with increasing the level of publicity in areas with a high number of boating related accidents and fatalities.
- c. Partner with commercial, recreational, civic and governmental organizations to promote boating safety events.
- d. Conduct annual skills workshops for Instructors, utilizing technologies such as internet based learning.
- e. Develop and implement a program to encourage flotillas to increase their Vessel Examinations and Program Visits by two percent each year.
- f. Give high priority to Partner Visits to paddle craft sales and rental outlets, and the use of boat rental education kits.
- g. Encourage members no longer able to participate in operational activities to join the campaign for greater effectiveness in recreational boating safety missions.

B. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICES

It is widely recognized that leadership practices have a direct influence on an organization's performance. This occurs regardless of an organization's composition and objectives. The Coast Guard recognized the influence of leadership practices on a unit's performance when it created the Alexander Hamilton Award to recognize Coast Guard units that achieve outstanding performance through use of exemplary leadership practices. Based on the Coast Guard's success with leadership development, the Seventh District Auxiliary has a strategic goal of enhancing leadership practices through application of the Coast Guard's Alexander Hamilton Award criteria.

Achieving this goal will require extensive leadership training, wide-spread deployment of exemplary practices, and greater recognition of individual and unit achievement. It will however bring about a more change-centric culture that embraces best leadership practices.

Goal: Develop and implement a structured program for training flotilla and division officers in the use of exemplary leadership practices.

Strategies:

- a. Support a district Organizational Performance Committee (OPC) that recommends and reviews strategies for promoting exemplary leadership practices. The OPC will also recommend mission activities for inclusion in performance measurement information provided to flotillas and divisions.
- b. Collect, analyze and distribute performance data in a "dashboard" format to all units.
- c. Train unit leaders to use data in assessing their unit's progress against goals.
- d. Develop a communications plan and supporting materials for promoting the use of "dashboard" formatted performance data.
- e. Task the Member Training department with developing modules for training unit officers in criteria associated with the Alexander Hamilton Award and leadership practices.
- f. Develop programs to recognize individuals and units for performance and progress with leadership and management practices.
- g. Conduct periodic surveys to measure support and opportunities for improvement.

- h. Make leadership training a core activity for division and district meetings.
- I. Provide leadership skills training to division Member Training officers.

C. GROW THE DISTRICT'S READY VOLUNTEER FORCE

Recent studies of member resignations show that most occur within the first two years of service, or immediately following completion of 15 years of service. Several factors for this, identified through surveys and assessments, include an ageing membership, a large number of seasonal members, younger members with a heavy work load and family obligations, and general economic conditions that may limit availability of discretionary funds for Auxiliary activities.

All these factors point to an urgent need for new programs that help retain longer-serving members as vital resources and contributors, while also promoting the recruiting of younger, highly skilled individuals who can help the district meet current and future needs.

During the past few years leadership has examined the benefits that come from recruiting individuals with special skills needed to augment and backfill selected functions billeted by active duty personnel. Although the district's recruiting will continue to focus on individuals interested in serving their country, the Coast Guard and the boating public, it will increasingly work to recruit individuals who may be helpful in meeting special and on-going needs of the Coast Guard and Auxiliary.

Goal: Increase the growth and diversity of the district's ready volunteer force by a net two percent a year.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a "Human Resources "training team" to conduct recruiting and retention workshops at division meetings.
- b. Communicate the district Human Resources plan to all units.
- c. Develop materials for recruiting individuals with special skills needed to backfill active duty billets.
- d. Develop materials for recruiting individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- e. Give priority to recruiting individuals with leadership experience who plan to remain within the district for much of the year.

D. JOINT PLANNING AND MISSION DEVELOPMENT WITH THE COAST GUARD

The “modernization” and geographic realignment of District Seven Auxiliary units with Coast Guard units and sectors has been completed. The district has also added Directorate Chiefs to oversee staff departments and provide oversight of District Staff Officers within their respective directorate. Unfortunately, joint planning and mission development with Coast Guard sectors that was envisioned as part of the modernization program has not been fully completed. This important goal is included in the district’s 2013-2016 Strategic Plan.

Goal: Ensure joint planning and mission development with the district’s six Sectors, four Air Stations, and Seventh Coast Guard District headquarters.

Strategies:

- a. Work with Coast Guard Sector Planning departments to create an expected outcome environment in joint planning.
- b. Leverage off “Senior Officer” relationships among Auxiliary and active duty officers.
- c. Engage the Auxiliary Sector Coordinators in support of Auxiliary inclusion in Sector planning.
- d. Develop a “parallel officer” relationship model with Coast Guard District planning staff and market that to the Auxiliary and Coast Guard.
- e. Include Sector AUXLOs in district training and planning programs.
- f. Develop a program on “Auxiliary Capabilities” for new AUXLOS and Coast Guard District/Sector/Station senior officers.
- g. Build confidence in Auxiliary capabilities by demonstrating availability of skills valued by active duty units.
- h. Promote joint operational planning and mission development with Coast Guard units.

7. DESIRED OUTCOMES

Seventh District Auxiliary leaders will employ exemplary leadership practices guided by Alexander Hamilton Award criteria.

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The Seventh District Auxiliary will be the premier volunteer organization supporting Coast Guard missions.

Through increased effectiveness in recreational boating safety missions the district will help bring about a reduction of two percent or more a year in the number of boating fatalities in the Seventh District.

New programs in leadership development will result in increasing numbers of officers who are better prepared to accept positions of greater responsibility.

Revitalized flotillas at inland locations will make a greater contribution to the reduction of boating accidents and fatalities.

Clearly defined strategies for recruiting and retention will bring a larger, more diverse membership that is better able to meet expanding Auxiliary and Coast Guard needs.

Increased joint planning and mission development with the Coast Guard will bring increased opportunities for service.

CONCLUSION

This 2013-2016 Strategic Plan establishes a basis for the District to become a more effective and diverse organization, but will remain a work in progress over which the District Executive Committee will conduct periodic reviews. Some strategies may require refining, others may need to be revised or replaced. One certainty however is District leadership is committed to seeing the Plan through and will make whatever changes are necessary to achieve desired outcomes.