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60 Year Anniversary Celebration Planned for The Detroit Boat Show

Livonia, MI – January 30, 2018 – The year 2018 marks the 60-year anniversary of the Detroit Boat Show, produced by the MBIA and held annually at Cobo Center in Detroit, Mich. The Detroit Boat Show has a dynamic 60-year history as an event that has grown to serve the changing needs of the boating industry in the state of Michigan. Prior to MBIA, the first Detroit Boat Show dates back to 1908.

Owned and sponsored by the Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA) since 1958, the Detroit Boat Show continues to showcase the best the boating industry has to offer. For the 2018 show, approximately 1,000 boats will be on display from 10 – 50 feet in length.

The MBIA is a non-profit trade association representing the recreational boating industry in Michigan. In 1958, the MBIA's primary focus was to promote the annual Greater Michigan Boat Show, as it was named at the time, at the Detroit Artillery Armory on Eight Mile Road. Since then, the MBIA has continued to promote boating through boat shows, governmental relations in Lansing and Washington, and services to its members.

Over the years, the boat show grew in popularity and was moved to Cobo Hall and Exhibition Center in downtown Detroit in 1972 to accommodate more exhibitors and the crowds of consumers who were drawn to the show. Through 1983 to 1990 the boat show was re-named the Detroit Boat and Fishing Show to encompass recreational fishing and various aspects of the sport of boating. This reflected the MBIA's interest to expand its promotional efforts which included sponsoring The Blue Water Spring Salmon Classic, a major fishing tournament, for three years.

The early 1990s represented a stall in growth of the boat show due to an overall consumer lag in boat sales, which caused the show to shrink. The Great Recession in 2008 and 2009 also brought the show down to 200,000 square feet of exhibit space as dealers took less space due to slow boat sales. The Show has experienced 8 consecutive years of growth since 2010 and has now grown to nearly 450,000 square feet of all things boating for 2018.

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The year 1998 marked the 40th Annual Detroit Boat Show. This year also saw the start of the "Friends of Distinction" luncheon held at Cobo Hall during the show, where all Michigan legislators are invited to learn about the boating industry and its impact on the state.

The Detroit Boat Show has fluctuated between 200,000 and 600,000 square feet depending on market and social conditions in Michigan and in the U.S. However, the focus of the 2018 boat show is the same as that of the initial event in 1958: To act as the point of introduction of new model boats and boating products; to provide consumers with a one-stop shopping boating extravaganza; and to provide a service to MBIA members by creating a first-class show that would draw a consumer base ready to buy boats.

While the focus of the boat show has remained the same, the products have changed dramatically to meet new customer demands, especially pontoon boats, personal watercraft, and now the very popular tow boat segment. Center Console fishing boats are also a very popular boat type not typically sold in this market 20 years ago. Boats, in general, continue to offer more room, better performance and added amenities, and feature crossover features allowing you to fish, cruise and tow all from one boat.

Driven by the consumer's challenge to find time for recreation, industry representatives speculate that the sail boat market has not grown equally with the powerboat market because it is more time-consuming to sail. Additionally, "Day-Boating" has surpassed cruising, which has led to larger boats with open bow designs allowing for more people onboard to join the fun.

The Detroit Boat Show and its exhibitors continue to keep pace with boating trends and provides an exhibition of boats and boating products to suit the needs of all who want to shop or learn about the boating lifestyle.

Special promotions for the 2018 show include Rail Jam Wakeboard Demos, Twiggy the Waterskiing Squirrel, Kids Zone with crafts, Water Rollers and a live mermaid, contests and giveaways, and more.

The 60th annual Detroit Boat Show is February 17-25 at Cobo Center in Detroit. Admission to the boat show is \$13 for adults; children 12 and under are free with an adult, and seniors 65 and older receive free admission on Monday. Tickets, other special admission days and hotel accommodations provided by the Courtyard Detroit Downtown are available at Detroitboatshow.net. HOURS: Saturdays: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Sundays & Monday: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.; and Tuesday through Friday: 3 p.m. – 9 p.m. Parking is available at Cobo Center and surrounding lots. The Detroit Boat Show is sponsored by Great Lakes Scuttlebutt, Official Magazine of the Detroit Boat Show and the Courtyard Detroit Downtown, Official Hotel of the Detroit Boat Show and Michigan Golf Cart. FOR MORE INFORMATION visit Detroitboatshow.net or call 1.800.932.2628.