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IBEX 2024 CELEBRATES INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, AND A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THE MARINE INDUSTRY

A successful event filled with high-quality attendance and groundbreaking products

Tampa, FL – The International BoatBuilders’ Exhibition and Conference (IBEX) announced today that this year’s Show, which closed on Thursday, October 3, saw three-days of quality traffic. By all accounts, the docks and booths were busy, networking events and education sessions were well attended, and there were good concentrations of industry professionals.

IBEX 2024 welcomed 7,500 industry professionals from 70 countries around the world. In a refreshed layout, the show floor had 731 exhibitors on display, of which over 100 were new exhibiting companies, 12 emerging tech companies in the new Start-Up Pavilion, and an expanded outdoor display and demo area. In addition, IBEX welcomed 100 students from five area technical programs as part of Career Day, in collaboration with American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC).

Highlights of the Show included the annual Industry Breakfast, Innovation Awards Presentation, and Keynote, held Tuesday, October 1, which was sold out and filled the room with over 900 attendees. Exceptional technological advancements were recognized, with 13 Innovation Award winners and 5 honorable mentions from over 80 entries submitted by exhibiting marine industry companies. Products can be viewed on the [online Innovation Way Showcase](#). NMMA President and CEO Frank Hugelmeyer delivered the Industry Address, while Charlie Cook, founder of the independent, nonpartisan Cook Political Report, gave a timely keynote address that was well-received by those in attendance.

The Show’s networking events were highly attended, including Pitch the Press and the Exhibit Hall Happy Hour. The Opening Night Party and Mid-Show Mixer at The Sail Pavilion had larger participation than last year. Additionally, the Education Conference saw great success, with the new Leadership track and Main Stage events drawing in exceptional crowds.

“Every large event has its challenges, and this year was no different, with severe weather impacting parts of the Southeast and the marine industry facing a tough economic landscape,” said Mary Velline, IBEX Show Director. “In times like these, the opportunity to come together is more important than ever. IBEX provided a space for industry professionals to connect, share knowledge, and learn from one another. It’s this collaboration and shared experience that helps our industry grow stronger and more innovative, even in challenging times.”

Exhibitors and attendees had positive comments about the Show.

“This is our first time at the Show,” said Michelle Liljegren, SurfaceLiner. “We have a brand-new product that we’re bringing to market, so we entered ourselves into the Innovation Awards, and it has given us the opportunity to connect with a lot of people. We do business in several other industries, so we’re really

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trying to learn how we can bring our products to the marine industry and IBEX has been a perfect platform for us to see where our products can fit in this niche.”

“Attending IBEX has been great!” said Sean Petterson, Supersede. “We came here last year just to scope it out and immediately felt it would be an amazing experience. For us this year we have seen nonstop leads at the booth. It offers a really strong value proposition, resonates with an educated market, everyone’s very friendly, and there’s really cool boatbuilders here who are great to talk to. So far, we’ve had excellent brand exposure and fantastic leads.”

“I’ve been coming down to IBEX for quite a number of years,” said Craig Obara, Ray Hunt Design. “I participated in a lot of the seminars, trying to catch them all, and in between I go into the conference halls, and look at all of the various parts and accessories that are being offered. I highly recommend checking out the education schedule. There’s always some very good information given out in the various seminars, and they have two and a half days full of seminars scheduled, so there’s plenty to choose from. That’s really my number one reason to come.”

“Education is extremely important in our industry, because every one of my business partners, every one of my advisors, the first thing they say is: ‘what have you got, who can you give me?’” said Freddie Fowler, instructor with Manatee Technical College. “It’s extremely important that we’re training highly qualified and technically trained people to get out in the industry. Having these certification programs available gives the workforce of the future the technical knowledge for them to be successful.”

“This is my first time at IBEX,” said Trevor Rivard, student with Manatee Technical College. “I’ve had friends and family come here before. This is a lot to take in, we basically started on the third floor and worked our way down. I was amazed by how many companies are exhibiting. There’s lots of cool stuff and we saw a lot of products. It was really very interesting for me to see, as a future marine technician.”

“We’re a distributor of marine electronics, and we have had the best IBEX yet,” said Suzanne Hawley, Gemeco Marine Electronics Specialists. “One of the key features for us was being able to do Tech Talks. We did two this year, one on transducers and one on Smart Boat, and both were well-attended, and we really got our money’s worth. I’ll give you a great example, we had a Smart Boat Tech Talk yesterday at noon, and one of our team was at the booth talking to someone who’d never heard of Smart Boat. He said, ‘You know what? It’s 11:55, why don’t I walk you over to the Tech Talk and you can learn about it?’ So, he came to the Tech Talk, and it ended up being a customer that we were trying to reach on our own. He was so impressed with the product that he said, ‘This is exactly what I’ve been looking for.’ That alone, just that one contact that we made, made it a huge success for us.”

IBEX is scheduled to return to the Tampa Convention Center, with IBEX 2025 Show dates set for October 7 – 9, 2025. For more information, visit www.ibexshow.com.

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About the International BoatBuilders’ Exhibition & Conference (IBEX):

IBEX, Where Better Boats Begin (www.ibexshow.com), is the marine industry’s largest technical trade event in North America. IBEX is owned and produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (www.nmma.org) and RAI Amsterdam (www.rai.nl). The 2025 IBEX is scheduled to take place at the Tampa Convention Center, October 7 - 9, in Tampa, FL USA. For more information, please visit www.ibexshow.com.

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