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Boating Industry Magazine names White's Marine Center to 2005 Top 100

MINNEAPOLIS -- Buying and servicing a boat has just become a much easier task for consumers around the country thanks to *Boating Industry* magazine's inaugural Top 100 Dealers, a ranking of those marine dealers that are unsurpassed in overall business operations, customer service, marketing and professionalism.

"While most industry awards are given to those dealers that sell the most boats, our Top 100 program is much more qualitatively focused," said Matt Gruhn, Editor-in-Chief of *Boating Industry*, "thereby leveling the playing field for all dealers and directing consumers to those dealers that can best deliver on the dream that boat ownership promises."

This first-of-its-kind ranking, which was highlighted in last week's release of the January issue of *Boating Industry* magazine, represents an incredibly powerful group of marine dealers. Collectively, they generated more than \$2.6 billion in retail sales, which is nearly 10 percent of the entire \$30 billion marine market. The 2005 *Boating Industry* Top 100 employ nearly 6,700 people and operate 342 retail locations across North America.

White's Marine Center, based in Casper, Wyo., ranked 80th on this elite list, which recognizes the best-of-the-best of the more than 5,000 marine dealers in North America.

"The forward-thinking strategy of well-planned goals exhibited by White's was one of the most comprehensive on our list," Gruhn said. "That's something we like to see, because it shows strong leadership and guidance."

Boating Industry's editorial staff reviewed more than 300 applications, culled from more than 2,000 nominations. The applications asked both quantitative and qualitative questions regarding all aspects of marine dealer operations.

"The *Boating Industry* Top 100 will, in short order, become the most coveted award in the marine market," explained Tammy Galvin, Group Publisher for Ehlert Publishing Group's trade magazines. "Marine dealers are on the front line with consumers every day, and this is one way we can help provide much needed benchmarking information for all other dealers to measure themselves against."

To help bring the *Boating Industry* Top 100 to life, Ehlert Publishing Group, the magazine's parent company, created the Leadership Alliance, an elite group of the marine industry's leading suppliers. These companies were invited to participate because they possess, as one of their corporate values, a true belief in and commitment to raising the bar of professionalism across all marine industry sectors, and particularly for dealers. The 2005 Leadership Alliance members include: BRP US Inc., GE Commercial Finance, Yamaha, boats.com, Watch Captain, SHURflo and the Marine Retailers Association of America.

To see the complete ranking of the Top 100 dealers, visit www.Boating-Industry.com.

