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**NEW INDUSTRY REPORT SHOWS MORE BOATERS
HITTING THE WATER WHILE BOOSTING LOCAL ECONOMIES**
73 million Americans went boating in 2006, spent \$16 billion on boating trips

CHICAGO (May 22, 2007) — The recreational boating industry today released its annual sales and participation data compiled by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA). The report shows one-third of U.S. adults went boating in 2006, an increase of 1.3 million Americans to more than 73 million, and spent approximately \$16 billion on food, drinks, groceries, restaurants and fuel associated with their boating excursions.

Coinciding with the increase in participation, the number of boats in use also increased to nearly 18 million and boat registrations surpassed 13 million for the first time since 2001. What's more, the industry grew to an all-time high of \$39.5 billion in U.S. sales and services in 2006, a six percent increase from the previous year.

"We were excited to see boater participation increase to 73 million last year because it reinforces our belief that more and more people are finding out that getting out on the water is one of the best ways to relax, have fun and enjoy time with friends and family," said Thom Dammrich, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association. "We are proud of the contribution the boating industry and boat owners make to the U.S. economy and the marine industry is dedicated to sharing the fun and relaxation of being on the water with as many people as possible."

While total boat unit and dollar sales were up more than five percent — buoyed by growth in ski/wakeboard boats, personal watercraft, canoes and kayaks — the traditional powerboat segment saw a decrease in unit sales of nearly five percent to 291,900 total units in 2006.

"Though new powerboat sales were down slightly, the increase in boating participation bodes well for better sales in the years ahead," noted Dammrich. "We anticipated flat to slightly down powerboat sales as higher interest rates and the malaise in the housing market impacted consumer confidence throughout the year."

Total new boat dollar sales edged upward two percent to \$11.5 billion, reflective of an overall increase in the price of traditional powerboats, which also increased two percent to \$9.6 billion. The NMMA attributes these increases to the rise in production costs to manufacturers, such as the rising price of petroleum-based inputs and efforts to develop cleaner, more fuel-efficient engine technology. In addition, new boaters are also demanding more comforts of home aboard their boats and, as a result, manufacturers are installing additional features and amenities, allowing a boater to use their boat in a variety of ways including all-day excursions, multiple water sports and group entertaining.

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Additional key findings from the *2006 Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract* include:

- The average price of a new outboard boat, motor, trailer package in 2006 was \$26,085, a three percent increase over 2005.
- Three out of four current boat owners have an average household income under \$100,000.
- Florida was the top state for total expenditures for new powerboats, motors, trailers and accessories followed by California, Texas, North Carolina and New York.
- Boat registrations increased in five of the eight designated boating regions of the U.S.
- Outboard boats were most popular, comprising two-thirds of registered boats in 2006.
- Registrations for vessels greater than 39 feet increased two percent, as did boats 26-39 feet. Registered boats 16-25 feet increased three percent.
- Florida was the top state for marinas, followed by New York, Michigan, Vermont and California. The top five states account for nearly half of the marinas in the U.S. (49 percent) and four out of 10 slips.

“These numbers clearly show boating is well within the reach of average Americans, allowing them an opportunity to make life long memories with their families aboard a boat,” said Dammrich. “The Discover Boating campaign, an integrated marketing campaign funded by the recreational boating industry, is in its second year and we believe it will further increase sales in 2008, 2009 and beyond by demonstrating to would-be boaters the many lifestyle benefits of spending time on the water.”

For more information visit DiscoverBoating.com.

About the National Marine Manufacturers Association

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is the leading association representing the recreational boating industry. NMMA member companies produce more than 80 percent of the boats, engines, trailers, accessories and gear used by boaters in the United States. The association is dedicated to industry growth through programs in public policy, market research and data, product quality assurance and marketing communications. (*NMMA.org*)

About Discover Boating

Discover Boating is a national awareness campaign developed by the recreational boating industry and managed by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA.) Discover Boating programs focus on increasing participation and building interest in recreational boating by demonstrating the benefits, affordability and accessibility of the boating lifestyle, while helping potential boaters experience why life is better with a boat. Each year more than 73 million people in the U.S. enjoy boating. (*DiscoverBoating.com*)

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