

BIGGER BOAT SHOW ANCHORS IN CLEVELAND

An all-new “Boating Experience Pavilion,” more boats, more special events and more entertainment will draw an estimated 40,000-plus visitors to Ohio’s largest boating exposition, the 2017 Progressive Mid-America Boat Show in Cleveland’s I-X Center, January 12-16.

A fleet of more than 450 boats will be surrounded by events and activities that make the show what it’s intended to be – an escape from mid-winter to a boating rendezvous that will keep show goers engaged and entertained.

Besides the boats, nearly everything boaters could want to learn about -- marinas, insurance, clothing, sailing gear, waterfront properties and much more – will be on display, too.

Speaking of learning, the first-ever “Boating Experience Pavilion” (BEP) promises to be a very popular addition to the show. It will be a special area for boaters and wannabes to talk with other boaters about everything boating! Designed to engage adults and children, it covers a wide range of opportunities to learn everything from how to get started in boating to where to boat.

The new “BEP” is a special center for a variety of exhibits and activities with something for all ages! Take the helm on the power boat simulator of the U.S. Power Squadrons; climb onto the kayaks and rowing scull in the Cleveland Metroparks area; learn how to cast fishing lines from a runabout, pontoon boat or sailboat; try to properly tie-off or place spring lines; kids will build their own model boat; all while watching the popular Capt. Willie’s Pirate Show, and much more.

But it’s the stars of the show that draw the boating faithful and this year’s fleet at 450 is the largest in many years topped by the “Queen of the Fleet”, the French-built 45-foot Prestige Flybridge Motor Yacht displayed by Sima Marine. But, boats in the show will range down to the size of an inflatable yacht tender or a kayak.

Virtually every major boat brand will be included as dealers from throughout Ohio showcase their newest models. For example, larger boats will be displayed by dealers like: MarineMax (Sea Ray, Azimut, Sailfish); Skipper Bud’s (Tiara, Cruisers, Scout); South Shore Marine (Pursuit, Back Cover, Grady White, Regal); Happy Days Boating (Chaparral, Robalo, Tidewater, Parker); Clemons Boats (Boston Whaler, Cobalt, Sea Hunt, NauticStar); Marine Tech Concepts (Formula); and others.

There will also be a wide range of fishing, water skiing, wake boarding and pontoon boats on display by the largest group of dealers in the show in years. A few examples include: Buckeye Sports Center (Lund, Monterey, Harris, Mooba); Boat Masters Marine (Bennington, Chaparral, Robolo, Alumacraft); Vic's Sports (Ranger, Starcraft); Parma Marine (Alumacraft); Portage Lakes (PolarKraft, Regal); to name some.

Education is also big at the show. The "Lake Erie University" seminars run by using smartphone apps to cooking on board, all hosted by Sam Insalaco and Mark Gagyi along with corps of speakers daily. Meanwhile, over on the "Anglers Alley" side, names like Jim Stedke, Mark Brumbaugh, Randy Eyre and more will talk fishing topics from walleye to bass.

Put-In-Bay Night will rock. Traditionally held on opening night, it will feature island entertainment icons, Ray Fogg, and Westside Steve Simmons and, of course, the iconic treat of Put-In-Bay, the Boardwalk's famous Lobster Bisque, And, for hands-on entertainment and skill-testing, the Ohio Division of Watercraft will put you on their Personal Watercraft Simulator, while at the United States Power Squadrons you can take the helm of their unique boat-driving simulator.

Bring the kids! An expanded area of activities will include a casting-at-targets challenge; a special "fishing" activity from the Metroparks boat "elCee2"; the Capt. Willie Pirate Show; the Water Rollerz pool; and other hands-on activities at each exhibit in the Public Service group.

Monday is the Martin Luther King Holiday and it's also designated Lake Erie Day where \$1 from each ticket sold will go to Stone Lab at Put-In-Bay, a part of Ohio's Sea Grant program. Sea Grant will have its hands-on educational exhibit at the show again this year.

Show Hours this year are: Thursday (1/12) Noon – 9 pm; Friday (1/13) Noon to 10 pm; Saturday (1/14) 10 am – 10 pm; Sunday (1/15) 11 am – 6 pm; and Monday (Martin Luther King Holiday), 11 am – 5 pm. Admission is \$14 Adults; Seniors 60+ \$12; Children 12 and under free.

For all the latest event schedules and show details, go to: www.clevelandboatshow.com